Vol: XXXVIIII NO. 3 DECEMBER 2011



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VARAC, the Vintage Automobile Racing Association of Canada, was formed in 1976 to provide a central organizing body through which Vintage Race enthusiasts could communicate and organize race meetings for eligible Vintage and Historic racing and sports cars.

The Spirit of VARAC can be expressed as a wish to preserve, restore and race historically significant cars in a form as close to the original specification as possible. Of course, there have been many improvements in motor racing safety equipment, circuits and technical advancements in materials since these cars were built.

Those restoring and preparing cars for Vintage Racing are encouraged to incorporate and take advantage of these improvements where they can be incorporated without diminishing the vintage character of the car. We feel that Vintage Racing should be enjoyable and rewarding to both the participant and spectator with a minimum emphasis on trophies and awards. Let's keep the fun in Vintage Racing. If you are interested, call any of the directors listed on this page. The opinions and suggestions expressed by contributors to Vintage Racer are those of the author, without authentication by or liability to the editors, or the Directors or VARAC. To subscribe FREE, send an e-mail to Walter Davies at walter.davies@varac.ca with your membership number.

Contacts

Please contact our club executive below for any queries. For information related to the preparation and eligibility of a car for vintage racing, please contact our Eligibility Committee chair.

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Our front page art is by friend Paul Chenard, showing Paddy Hopkirk's Mini Cooper S, on the way to winning the 1964 Monte Carlo Rally. Thanks, Paul!



Santa! Please deliver a Hans device to address below, thanks. J.



E-mail: jeremy.sale@varac.ca

WEBSITE: WWW.VARAC.CA

In This Holiday Edition...

Some random notes

James Hinchcliffe and father Jeremy came to the AGM

where the young fella was a big hit

discussing his Indy car exploits. Robert Morrison was prevailed upon to write a report, (thank you, sir!) Little did we know that the news would come out Dec 1 that Newman/ Haas Racing was ceasing operations and that Hinch and Oriol Servia would be looking for rides for the 2012 IZOD IndyCar Series. Hope it all works out soon....

My friend John Sambrook introduced me to Peter Keith at the Festival and we got to talking about his exploits behind the wheel in the sixties racing

against Walt MacKay and many others. Always trolling for stories I naturally asked if Keith would write a piece for the VR. He sent me a very nice bit of nostalgia and you can see it in this issue! Thanks, Keith.

Bob English kindly contributed the story on the AC

Ace, which also led me to contacting Ron Kielbisky, who responded by sending me some wonderful photos from

> the sixties. Incidentally, the very fortunate Mr. English was recently at the Bahamas Speed Week Revival and has promised us a Congratulations to Joe Lightfoot, winner of the McGregor "Spirit of Sportsmanship Award", also to Andrew Celovsky winner of the Gord Lowe Award. It was appropriate that Andrew won the latter as it reminded me of a joke Gordini once told.... Seems young Andrew, top Polish driver in VARAC, went to get his eye test done for his race license. The doctor showed him the eye chart and asked if Andrew could read it. Andrew said "Yes, actually I KNOW the guy!" Badaboom! Thangyaverramuch Gord!

story on that event.

Don't forget folks, I'm always looking for

content, photos and ideas for the VR and Pit Signals, so if you get the urge please send your story to jeremy.sale@varac.ca.

> Thanks, Jeremy.



A NOSTALGIC RETURN TO MOSPORT

Wandering Up Memory Lane

By Peter Keith

One Friday afternoon in May 2008, as I drove back to Toronto from a court appearance in Belleville as an expert witness regarding a motor vehicle accident, I reached the intersection to Highways 35/115 that we used to take up to Mosport. So on the spur of the moment I decided to wander up memory lane and visit the track.

I turned off Highway 115 onto Highway 35, and then turned left onto Concession Road 10, which leads west to the track, and sure enough most of it is still gravel. I remembered driving along that road in June 1961 in my red AC Ace Bristol towing my new Lotus 18 Formula Junior to the B.E.M.C. 11th Annual Sports Car Races, which was the second race ever held at the track, on June 9 & 10, 1961. I turned left onto Mosport Road and parked my little Chevy Cobalt rental car at the gate opposite Turn 1, hopped over the gates, still in the blazer and tie from my court appearance, and walked up to the fence on the outside of Turn 1. It was a track day and some road cars were being driven around, but I hadn't been there long before a corner marshal blew his whistle at me. So I walked up to his post overlooking Turn 1 and explained that this was just a nostalgia trip for me, and how I had first raced there 47 years ago. His name was Jim and he had been marshalling since the early 70's, so we had a good chat about old times and, when I mentioned that I had 8 mm movies of early international races at Mosport, he said that the senior marshal, Reid, was very interested in historical stuff and would like to meet me. So when the track day ended at five, we drove into the infield and I met the other marshals in the cafeteria, where we reminisced about the early days of



(Above) Peter Keith gets the checkered flag on June 10, 1961

(Below) "Walt MacKay and me at Mosport. As you know, apart from Dan Gurney all of the best drivers are fairly short, and that is 'shorty' Walt on the left!"



racing at Mosport. Reid told me to get in touch with Ross de St. Croix and send him the old movies for the archives, and when I can unearth them I will surely do that.

After a while I asked if someone could drive me around the track, just for old time's sake, and Reid very kindly offered to do so. As we walked out of the cafeteria, he asked if I wanted to go in his minivan or my rental car, and I

wondered - was this a trick question? So off we went in the little blue Chevy along the new (to me) pit exit lane protected by a high wall from the main track. I fired up my Nikon and started taking pictures, and as we came over the hill on Corner 2 we met a green tractor that was helping with the clean-up.

However, the rest of the track was clear and as he drove around the circuit Reid described what changes had been made since the early days. The actual track itself looks exactly the same, apart from the pit straight, but the run off areas have been upgraded and safety is obviously much more important now than it used to be.

All too soon we stopped back on the pit straight, and so I asked Reid if perhaps we could swap seats, and he very kindly (foolishly?) said Yes! As I started off I assured him that of course I wouldn't drive fast, but you know us old gaffers have terrible problems with our short-term memories. It's odd how I have difficulty recalling what I did last week, but back on the track I was immediately on the racing line, the tires were humming - and somehow those 47 years just melted away!

Slowly over the hill on Corner 2 to avoid the tractor; and I recalled coming over that hill in the rain in the Lotus 18 (no rain tires then, just rock hard Dunlop R5 D9s), when someone ahead lost it and instantly we all went off the track in every direction.

Around the long right-hander of Corner 3 before starting into the sweeping downhill left-hander of Corner 4; brake hard on the uphill approach to Moss's Corner, where the front drum brakes on the Lotus 18 tended to lock up, sending its 880 lb skittering about; throw the little Cobalt somewhat sideways up and over the crest of the first right-hander, and then hard right again and head for the next apex.

Heavens to Betsy, the apexes are all raised and painted red and white now - what will they think of next! Then floor it up the main straight and relax, where I used to reach for the squeeze bottle of water (or even better, iced tea) for a quick refreshing squirt before having to get back to work at the Esses. I remembered like it was yesterday driving up the back straight in that first race in the Lotus 18 with Walt MacKay and John Headon in their factory built Lotus 18s in hot pursuit (I had to build mine up from a kit without any instruction sheets, so when I saw theirs at the track I had had to make some quick alterations!).

A few years later I was chasing a very fast Austin Healey 3000 up this long, long hill in my works-prepared racing Lotus Elan. But soon enough aerodynamics came to our help and, when his car hit the aero. wall, we just floated on by (Thanks Colin, wherever you are!).

Into the second lap and things were going even more smoothly, and Reid had gone strangely quiet! Mind the damned tractor at Corner 2, which was now joined by a truck so that they were almost completely blocking the width of the track at the bottom of the hill.

Over to the left of the track for the start of Corner 3, right front wheel over another of those funny red and white coloured apexes, and off to the far left edge on the exit (still more of that red and white coloured stuff). Then blast down the left turn into the hollow before the right turn at the start of Moss's Corner. Didn't brake so hard this time, so we drifted wide right to the far left edge before swinging right

and flooring it back up the long straight for the last time. I turned to Reid and said: "I just can't believe I'm here!", but for some reason he still said nothing. Hit the brakes hard at the end of the straight before starting that wonderful long sweeping right turn of Corner 8 to catch the right hand edge of the track just in time to swing back left to start into Corner 9. Then turn right and head for the pit straight. The rear of the Lotus 18 was really twitchy, and one time it was coming through that final corner onto the pit straight that I made the classic over-correction error: back end swings out to the lef T rigGHT - LEFT, and the next instant I was going completely backwards down the pit straight at almost undiminished speed! I imagine the crowds loved it, but I was far too busy hitting the clutch and brake pedals, before cranking the wheel over to complete the 360 and going on my merry way without losing too much time. But the crowded grandstands are long gone now - only the old foundations remain sticking mutely up out of the ground.

But two laps only take about five minutes, even in the little Chevy, and so suddenly it was all over. I drove slowly back to the paddock where I thanked

Reid (what a great guy) and told him: "You have no idea how much that meant to me!" I was still almost in a state of disbelief that this had actually happened.

Then I was heading through the tunnel under the track, and in no time I was back on the gravel road and in the 21st century once again.

Now some people might think that speeding around a racing circuit in a jacket and tie might seem a little eccentric, but I well recall that back in the 60's an American driver, Tom Payne, used to race his Cobra at Mont Tremblant in a light maroon sports jacket, shirt and tie, the lot. But at least he had the smarts to wear a crash helmet! I guess I'll have to try and remember that for next time - if there ever is to be a next time.

Some memories - some lane!

In not much over an hour I was back in my hotel in Toronto, and headed down to the bar with my mind still back at St Eugene, Mont Tremblant, Mosport, Lime Rock, Sebring, Nassau and Maranello, all those years ago. And I ordered a large Glenfiddich, and then another, and another. And slowly out of the depths of my mind arose memories of all those wonderful, carefree, crazy days of my youth. The friends, the cars, the races, the parties, the joys, the sorrows, and all the extraordinary fun we had, when we were young! Even if, God forbid, I should live for a thousand years, I would still say those were my finest hours!

And I quietly lifted my glass in a silent toast, To distant memories, and absent friends! Peter Keith, Calgary.

RISING STAR JAMES HINCHCLIFFE

By Robert Morrison

My greatest fear is that during a VARAC AGM, after listening to the annual (eternal?) tire debate, the pointless calls for points-of-order, etcetera, I might fall asleep, snore outrageously and become the object of derision of all my mates. Indeed, I might find that I had provided the only entertainment thereby. At this year's AGM I did notice certain of the somnambulant repairing to the adjacent room for hits of coffee as the club business droned on.

But this time there was a delightful difference. The suffocating seriousness was punctuated in a most excellent way a talk given by James Hinchcliffe. This IndyCar rising-star rookie pop-riveted our attention to the front of the room as he answered an enormous number of questions from our members.

All questions, from the most erudite to the most inane were given equal billing in the diplomatic, knowledgeable manner of the consummate salesman Mr. Hinchcliffe has informed us he has had to become in order to secure the all-important sponsorship for an IndyCar effort. As Mr.

Hinchcliffe informed us, one must be 80% salesperson and 20% driver to secure such sponsors as the asset management and financial services firm of SPROTT INC. the primary sponsor of Newman Haas Racing for whom Mr. Hinchcliffe drove car no.6 this season.

This prompted the question, "How much does one need to spend on an IndyCar racing effort?". His answer came back in a nanosecond, "How fast do you want to go?". This kind of quick thinking surely underscores the commensurately fast decision making behind the wheel which, in pre-Indy junior formulas, gave him 16 wins and 21 pole positions. Indeed, Mr. Hinchcliffe regaled us with a story of car set-up, determining steering corrections, brake balance etc. all performed at 225 mph.

Taking little credit for himself, Mr. Hinchcliffe gave credit where he thought it was due – to his father and



Hinch great at VARAC AGM



As of press time Hinch is keeping an eye out for a 2012 drive....

VARAC member Jeremy Hinchcliffe who introduced him to racing by buying him a go-kart at age nine as well as bringing him to race courses as early as the age of 18 months. Jeremy Hinchcliffe did have to answer a question directed at him in which he explained that James's mother behaved, pretty well, as a mother.

It was in his sportsman-like handling of a question regarding fellow competitor Danica Patrick that Mr. Hinchcliffe actually revealed his own philosophy, "Be consistent, make no mistakes and you will finish in the top ten." This of course is a good sponsorship garnering attitude as SPROTT INC., TW STEEL et al are encouraged when they see their names circulating lap after lap and, of course, up on the podium.

Thanks James, for making our day.

The Gord Lowe Award

"Awarded periodically or annually to the driver who, in the opinion of the selection committee, represents VARAC's goals of competitor and sportsman combined; while competing both in VARAC and other racing disciplines, and maintaining an active involvement within the vintage racing community." Our congratulations to the award winner this year, Andrew Celovsky!

"Earlier this November, I attended the VARAC Annual General Meeting. Generally I was just having a great time talking to friends and enjoying the banter about mixing V/H cars with G70 cars, a 55 series tire, how to vote for a Director and other contentious issues. Clearly many people are passionate about the club and passionate about racing. I just consider myself lucky to be allowed to participate in racing. So imagine how thrilled I was to receive the Gord Lowe memorial award. People remember Gord for his politically incorrect sense of humour. but Gord was also a fierce competitor and passionate about safety on the track. Gord made me a better diver, "watch for the flags, know the flags, and follow the flags." More than once did I get coaching from Gord about watching for the flags (and the occasional comment about my poor choice of cars). Today, I like to think I see and follow the flags very well. Thanks Gord! " Andrew Celovsky.

The Jim McGregor Spirit of Sportsmanship Award

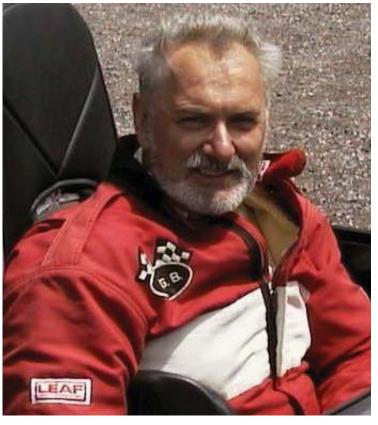
Every year the membership of VARAC votes for the club member most deserving of the McGregor "Spirit of Sportsmanship Award". The wording on the trophy as follows: "Given annually to the individual who in the opinion of the racing members of VARAC best exemplifies the spirit of and dedication to vintage automobile racing in Canada." Our congratulations to the award winner this year, Joe Lightfoot!

"Being the recipient of this years' McGregor award truly caught me off guard. It is humbling (and I'm not easily humbled) to receive this vote from the membership. Thank you very much, it means a lot to me."

Joe Lightfoot



Andrew explains racing to his adoring fans



Joe not easily humbled, on the track at least....

James Hunt and "The Punch" at Mosport.

By Jeremy Sale.

I came across a report of the Canadian GP in 1977 the other day. It reminded me of a story I wrote which included a report of the infamous incident when James Hunt punched out a marshal. Here's the context of the episode:

"By lap 60 Andretti was still leading with Hunt in hot pursuit. In fact, so quick was their pace that they had lapped everyone

except Hunt's team mate, Jochen Mass. As the two leaders came up behind him Mass managed to impede Andretti at Moss Turn and Hunt quickly took advantage, getting by Andretti and into the lead. But Hunt was still behind his about to be lapped team mate Mass and somehow at turn three the two came together and Hunt was put out of the race.

Hunt, after standing trackside, angrily shaking his fist at "Herman the German" as he called his team mate, tried to cross the track and was restrained by a marshal. Still furious, Hunt punched the marshal, who went down for the count. Hunt was fined \$2,750. Mass went on to finish third."

Re-reading the story I decided it might be interesting to see if anyone knew the marshal's name and if he might still be around today. I put out an inquiry on the Canadian Motor Sports History Group chat line. George Webster of CMSHG quickly replied:

"I was the chairman of the committee of sporting stewards that day. The marshal's name is Ernie Strong. He was an active leader in Watkins Glen's Race Communications Association (RCA) and remained active in RCA for many years after that. I believe that he has moved away from his upstate

NY location -- and that RCA has been displaced by an in-house organization controlled by ISC. As I recall it we assessed a pair

of penalties against Hunt. I'm not sure of the other one now. Also we were unanimous in assessing him the maximum fine allowed in the rules (which I think was 1,000 Swiss francs or about \$1,000). At the time I thought it was the largest fine ever handed out by the stewards at a Grand Prix." George Webster

Thanks George, that was easy! Next I Googled "Watkins Glen

Race Communications Association". This led me to their Facebook site where I found and contacted Mary Ellen Patterson Kunst. She emailed me back as follows;

"Hello Jeremy, Yes, I know the story quite well. I still chuckle over it. I will send this information to Ernie and have him contact you."

Great! This is amazing! Sure enough I get an email from Ernie as follows.

"Jeremy, I was one surprised corner worker! I was watching approaching race traffic into turn three and saw Hunt and Mass come together. Hunt spun off on driver's left. The impact and momentum were enough for Hunt to lose a driver's shoe. I was first to the incident. James

was headed back to the racing surface,

I had no idea what was going on in his head. I was thinking he was disoriented, and grabbed him from behind by the shoulders. Then came the surprising uppercut!

If I said anything to him I can't remember. Hunt gave me a "Sorry, old man" and headed back to the pits and I went back to my corner station. Someone else on the corner saw the cut under my jaw and the blood trickling from it. Next came a ride track side in the ambulance to Race Med. How did I feel?

Wronged, blindsided, did that really happen? Ron Dennis came into Race Med to check on me and apologized. Never heard from James personally but his brother, who was his personal manager, wrote me a letter of apology." See Hunt vs Ernie at Mosport:

CONTEST INTEST I



Ernie Strong- James Hunt Stronger!

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DpZnE7gj0gY



Congrats to June and Van! J. Greenwood, Esq. VR Social Reporter.

June and Van Worsdale had a surprise sprung on them by their daughter, Melanie and son, Shane when they arrived at Jersey Joe's pub on Yonge Street in Aurora. Melanie and Shane had arranged for some 60 old friends of the happy couple (including VARAC'S John Greenwood and Mike Salter) to be there to help celebrate their 50th, or Golden, wedding anniversary. The party lasted all afternoon and of course there were lots and lots of OLD racing lies told ...

Now a little background on Van ...real name Vance!! Van Started racing in 1957 driving a MG TD. Van associated with VARAC members Walt MacKay, Dick Baker, and John Greenwood from 1959 onwards at the NTMC (North Toronto Motorsports Club). Van and June were married in September 1961, and of course Van continued racing at Harewood, Greenacres, and now Mosport!

Van joined VARAC in 1978 just two years after VARAC was founded. There were fewer than 20 members in 1978. Over the last 36 years Van has served VARAC in every position on the Board, as president on more than one occasion. He the horrible luck to be presiding president at the wars fought at the various AGM's during the years of "the growing pains"! First introducing "Mini's" and then "Formula Ford" and then Historic sports cars'....(believe me AGM meetings were like battlegrounds back then!)

Farewell day at the 2011 VARAC Festival at Mosport



PicsbyVicsr.com

We'll Miss You Too!!

Left to right: Tara Christensen-Watson, Pete Christensen, Sharon Christensen and Traci Christensen-Gemmell.

The "Soozie" Racing Team consisting of the 3 red Cooper Minis with eyes would like to thank the VARAC members for all of their support and fun that we have had over the years. My sisters and I would also like to thank all of the faster race cars that were patient and careful going around us on the track!! We will miss you all!! Tara (303), Traci (03), Tonni (30) andPete (Daddy - the financial manager).

10 Top Movie and T.V. Cars

Ten of the 100 Greatest Movie and TV Cars of All Time from Insideline.com in order starting with #1.

The Dukes of Hazzard 1969 Dodge Charger: More than 300 Chargers portrayed the General Lee during the series 145 episodes (1979-'86). Today it's the ultimate Hollywood star car. (Yeah, but only in Hollywood and NASCAR-land.... VR Editor)

Goldfinger 1963 Aston Martin DB5: The greatest James Bond car is fitted by Q with "modifications" for this 1964 movie. The standard against which all spy, movie and TV cars are judged. Last year RM sold it at auction for \$4.6 million. (Bet that's more than the Dodge Charger, hmmm... wonder if Jack Boxstrom got any commission on that deal?)

The Spy Who Loved Me 1977 Lotus Esprit: In this 1977 film, it's a Lotus that turns into a submarine. Enough to make it the third greatest movie/TV car of all time. (Well only if you like driving Loti underwater...come to think of it, driving a Seven in the rain at Mosport must be quite similar..... VR Editor)

Smokey and the Bandit 1977 Pontiac Trans Am: 1977's second most popular film. (Remember when Burt Reynolds stuck his head out the window-and his wig came off?)

American Graffiti 1932 Ford Coupe: When this movie appeared in 1973, street-rodding was almost dead. John Milner's yellow '32 five-window made it relevant again.

Bullitt 1968 Ford Mustang GT 390: Even before the legendary chase begins, it was dented and tough-looking. This Mustang has defined cool for more than 40 years.



Knight Rider 1982 Pontiac Trans Am: The Knight Industries Two Thousand (KITT) was a supercar that talked to David Hasselhoff for four seasons between 1982 and 1986. (Have you finished with that burger yet David...?)

Gone in Sixty Seconds 1967 Shelby GT500: Steve Stanford designed this exaggerated GT500 "Eleanor" and it's been copied and copied ever since the 2000 movie hit. (Yeah? Well there's no way that thing can run in V/H....)

Mad Max 1973 Ford XB Falcon: Australia's greatest export is George Miller's 1979 vision of a dystopian future, which includes the last of the V8 interceptors. (You mean Australia's greatest export after Elle McPherson, right?)

Batman 1955 Lincoln Futura Batmobile: George Barris' crew reworked and restyled an old Ford concept car into the



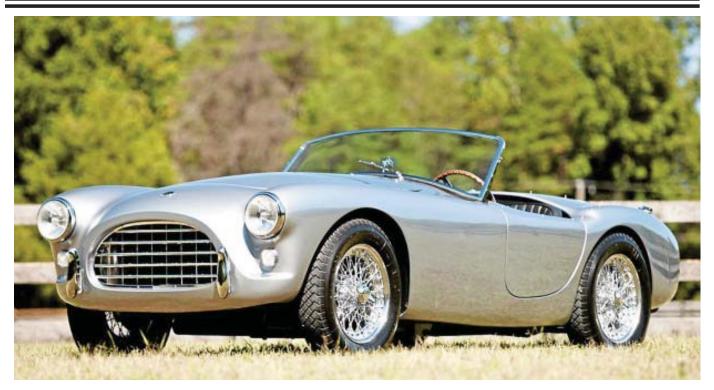


great Batmobile for the campy 1966-'68 TV series.
A few others from the VR Editor for your consideration.....

Get Smart's 1965 Sunbeam Tiger. The Saint's 1962 Volvo P1800. The Viva Las Vegas 1962 Elva Mk. VI driven by the Pelvis. (Remember when he came into the pits for a cheeseburger?) The Prisoner, 1967 Lotus 7 Series II (VR Editor's favourite). The Italian Job 1968 Mini Coopers, (gotta love Minis). Le Mans 1970 Porsche 911S (recently sold for \$1.37 million.) Route 66 1961 Chevrolet Corvette. (Remember that theme song? Da..de da de dada deda.... dedoodleydodo dedoodlydodo.....ahfergedit..) The Gumball Rally 1972 Ferrari Daytona Spyder: "The first rule of Italian driving," says Raul Julia as he rips off the real Daytona

Spyder's rearview mirror. "What's behind me is not important." (Sounds like the typical VARAC Italian driver attitude, eh Chrustopher Crouton?) Back to the Future 1981 DeLorean DMC-12. Magnum, P.I. 1978 Ferrari 308 GTS: (I rented an identical car in Hawaii in the '80's, had to put it on two credit cards, it hurt like hell to pay off the Visa bill but worth every nickel...VR Editor) Le Mans 1970 Ferrari 512S, it ran with the Porsche 917s in Steve McQueen's 1971 film with the 1970 Porsche 917K, perhaps the greatest Porsche of them all. Remember it running full speed down the Mulsanne Straight with McQueen at the wheel....then he destroys it in a spectacular wreck. (All together now, give Steve the two finger sign...Ed)





1958 AC ACE-BRISTOL

SHELBY'S BRITISH PAST

By Bob English

The names Shelby and Cobra are inextricably linked in the minds of most North American car enthusiasts, and that's fair enough as Texan racer and chicken farmer Carroll Shelby, who once wore bib overalls as a driving suit, came up with the notion that resulted in the legendary Cobra sports car.

Unless they're Cobra cognoscenti, however, few will likely recall it was British company AC Cars Ltd. that created the AC Ace sports car it was based on and actually built the car.

The Cobra was born when Shelby decided in 1961 that stuffing an American V-8 in a lightweight British sports car would likely create a race winner. He talked Ford into providing its new 260 cubic inch V-8 and AC Cars into modifying one of its Ace's to accept this new powerplant.

The result, which appeared a year later, was the Cobra that AC built in 260, 289 and 427 cubic inch engined versions and which tore up American tracks and streets until Ford and Shelby (apparently not making any money on them), stopped importing them in 1967. AC continued building them for another two years.

Which brings us back to AC Cars and what proved to be the Ace up its sleeve.

AC began building three-wheeled delivery vehicles called Auto-Carriers in 1904 and shortly after that the AC Sociable, a lightweight cycle-car. This was followed post-war by larger more conventional cars in the 1920s and 30s powered by an

in-house designed and pretty clever for the times overhead camshaft inline six cylinder engine. This engine, that first ran in 1919, would be produced until 1961, one of the longest runs of any auto engine design.

Largely due to the engine's performance AC cars developed a sporting reputation with wins at Brooklands and in the Brighton Speed Trials, broke the 2-litre 24 hour record (running 1,949.3 miles) at Montlhery in France and won the Monte Carlo rally. The company failed in 1929 but was reconstituted and by 1932 building a new range of cars at the rate of about 100 a year.

After the Second World War it struggled back into the car business with the AC 2-Litre, built in a variety of sporting body styles into the early 1950s, employing basically leftover 30s technology and powered by its then venerable six.

AC's defining moment came at the 1953 Earls Court Motor Show in London where it impressed the punters and press alike by stepping out of character and unveiling a thoroughly modern looking and advanced two-seat sports car called the Ace.

AC had turned to engineer and increasingly respected racing "special" builder John Tojiero for help in creating the Ace and this chassis specialist conjured up a stiff, light, steel tube frame with independent suspension provided front and rear by transverse leaf springs and lower wishbones.



Trevor Allen AC Ace Bristol, 1962 Indian Summer Trophy Race." Kielbiski collection: Steve Stevens

The AC six was tweaked yet again, with the addition of three SU carburettors, to produce 85hp which was applied through a four-speed gearbox. Drum brakes supplied decent stopping power, in 1957 upgraded to Girling front discs. All this was wrapped in very pretty aluminum two-seater roadster bodywork and the specs indicate it weighed just 16cwt (cwt standing for "hundredweight" in arcane Imperial measure which, of course, is actually112lbs.)

The Ace was soon winning races - no surprise as it was basically a sports racer in street clothes - but it was obvious the ancient six wasn't going to let it do so for long. After looking around AC chose another 2.0-litre six, this one from aircraft manufacturer turned carmaker Bristol Cars Ltd. which had acquired the rights to the engine BMW had used in its great pre-war 328 sports car.

This was an unusual design with complicated crossed pushrod valve actuation that allowed it to rev to 6,000 plus rpm and triple Solex carbs. Depending on state of tune it produced from 105hp to 128 hp in the Ace. A contemporary report says that with 120hp engine it could run up to 60mph in 7.5 seconds and had a top speed of 115mph.

With this hot six under its hood (the old six was still also available) the car was known as the Ace-Bristol and its power and handling made it a popular choice with racers, particularly in the U.S. where in the 1950s it won more 2-litre class events than any other make. It was literally in a class by itself, and a special series set up to recognize that. An Ace-Bristol finished second to a Ferrari in the 2-litre class at Le Man in 1957.

So it's no wonder Shelby turned to AC when he went shopping for a car to insert a Ford V-8 into.

The Ace was soon joined by the equally pretty Aceca coupe and when production ended in 1963 AC had produced 723 examples of the Ace, 463 of them Ace-Bristols, and 328 Acecas.

In the 60s the company also produced the AC 428 a good-looking and luxurious GT car based on the new chassis developed by Shelby and Ford for the Cobra 427. AC soldiered on into the 70s – helped by a government contract for three-wheeled invalid carriages – then sort of survived the 80s and 90s with ownership changes and sporadic outbursts of limited production. Its current iteration is involved with Iconic Motors in the U.S. which is producing the Iconic AC Cobra a "kit-car" evolution of the original which it is asking \$475,000 a copy for.

The silver 1958 AC Ace-Bristol pictured here was originally shipped to France, arrived in the U.S. in the early 70s, later fully restored and re-sold. It underwent a full concours rerestoration a few years ago and was sold for \$258,000 at Gooding & Company's Scottsdale auction earlier this year.

Many thanks to Bob English for this story and also to Ron Kielbiski who kindly provided the Vintage Racer with the photo of the AC Ace at Mosport



Mentoring-with Keith Jewel and Richard Navin

"I've been around the track helping Gord Ballantine since he began racing in his Triumph TR8. This year I got my own race license and began running a MGB. I've owned one since 1987.

Richard Navin called me and offered some words of encouragement and said we'd talk at the Festival. Unfortunately on the Sunday at Mt-Tremblant I melted a piston so it was not until the Labour Day weekend that it was all back together. As Richard runs much faster he told me to hook up with a slower car and follow it around the track to learn the line.

The following weekend we were at Watkins Glen. Richard offered me some tire pressure advice, as we run the same tires. The first day during practice I was able to follow both Richard and Joe Lightfoot for a short distance before they were long gone. I then had another chance when they lapped me! But by the end of the weekend I was able to stay on the same lap, which I felt was a good start, though Richard might say it was due to a bad tire choice on his part!

I would also say that, through the advice I received from many of the other drivers out at the track, I learned quite a lot in my first season of racing. I ran races on three great tracks and am planning on adding at least one more to the list next year, make that two, Calabogie and Mid-Ohio.

Further to the mentoring program, I would like to say

that all the VARAC drivers are doing it, even if they don't realize it, by giving words of advice and by leading the way around the track, however short a distance it may be!"

Cheers, Keith Jewell

"Mentoring is a big word for just doing what we do anyway, just with a new driver. We all love to talk about or re-hash a track session, and sharing that experience with a new driver is hardly an effort, just a new audience. It makes it easier if you have similar cars and you can offer simple advise about the car or how it behaves on the track.

I do know that when I started vintage racing, a number of VARAC members were helpful in making me feel welcome. It is no effort to return the favour, in fact it is a pleasure. From my experience, it is explaining the simple things that can be most helpful. Things like where to go for "tech", where to line up going on track, grid procedure, etc. After that, it is just reinforcing the basics and be clear that asking any question is OK and no bother.

Keith Jewell had some kind comments, but if mentoring is a responsibility, sign me up, because I never noticed I was working. For me, we have a new racing buddy, and even better, we have the same car, and a new car on our grid."

Richard Navin.



Howie Freeman 2011 VARAC Club Champion

Congratulations to all the award winners for their results racing this year. The Vintage Racer asked the overall champion for a few words...

"Many factors make racing an especially enjoyable sport: the camaraderie among good people engaged in a challenging competition; the hard-working people who organize and dedicate their energies to the smooth execution of the enjoyable events; the many committed volunteers in every aspect of the sport; and the skilled people who keep our cars fast and safe. In my case, I have much to appreciate in John Dodd's work, and the warm friendships that have grown during the past several decades." Howard Freeman.

Canada Class Mystery Car....

I am a new VARAC member for about a week. My brother Steve and I have been attending races since the 1950's first at Harewood, then Mosport and other tracks. We thought it was about time we actually tried racing. Our Dad, Bill, belonged to the Sports Car Club, and hill climbed his MGTC at Rattlesnake Point. So we bought a car. It's a sports racer, possibly a Canada Class from the early 1960's. It's got a 998cc? BMC engine mated to a Porsche transaxle, and we think was built by Willy Cleland. Don't expect to see it at the track anytime soon, as the previous owner has adapted it to a FF1600 engine and a Hewland. We would like to return it to original specs, but we don't know much about the car. Any info, or photos would be appreciated!!

Thanks, Gord White gwhite1@bell.net





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Classifieds



1985 IROC Camaro G70 VARAC G70 legal

2011 CASC tech GT Sprints GT4 classDocumented 1:36 Mosport by previous owner before suspension and motor improvements. Documented 1:38.3 by old guy. LOL!Tons of money poured into this car. You know the story, you can never build a car for what you can buy one for. I have kept the power windows installed for secure open dry trailering. This car is very well set up and surprisingly easy and fun to drive. Life started as a street car so no history of damage. 3rd owner. Long list of new equipment. Asking \$10.500

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SVRA also – Watkins Glen, VIR, Road America, Mid-Ohio, Gingerman and Grattan. Delivery possible in mid-west US at cost. Will sell for \$20K. Sebring styling with fiberglass front fenders and bonnet- New engine with 8 races on it- Comptune spec head and Crane cam-Mallory Unilite ignition- Venolia Pistons

- Carillo Rods- Roller rockers and larger valves- Lightened streamlined crank- Aluminum flywheel. The car is located In US at the moment please email me for more info. Contact Benoit Laflamme e-mail: blaflamme007@sympatico.ca

Weber 45DCOE w/ Manifold for MGB

Almost new (2 races) set up for MGB vintage race car with mildly ported manifold (Dave Headley). Includes small selection of tuning parts, K&N filter assy., braided fuel hose & air horns with screens. Stayed with my SU setup. 650 + shipping. Contact Jeff Devine – jeffbracer@hotmail.com

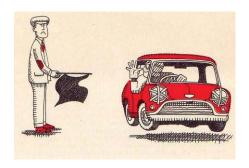
1969 Alexis Mk. 15

This is your opportunity to own one of the best restored Alexis in the country. Nearing the conclusion of a pain staking five year restoration, this car is now offered for sale with the best of everything. Acquired from the UK after only one year of public racing, this car spent a further year as a trainer at the Mosport Racing School before disappearing. I found it 10 years ago. The car is believed to be the car James Hunt started his racing career in, but I can't substantiate it - yet! Just look at the list of great stuff this car comes with: - Full ground up frame restoration by Wolf Engineering - Brand new full body work and windshield - unpainted - All new suspension build by Lead Motorsport - from original jigs - All new rod ends throughout - Newly rebuilt Mk. 8 Hewland, built by Lambrechts **Engineering and Development – New** fire system - New Britain West engine

- Aeroquiped throughout - All new master cylinders and calipers - All new or rebuilt original gauges - New fuel cell - New headers - New Weller Wheels - New Seat Belts Everything on this car has been chromed, plated or replaced!!! Car is 90% completed. Just needs a new owner with the time and space to finish her. Recent financial challenges and space constraints cause this sad sale. Asking \$15,000 but no reasonable offer refused. Contact: Alastair Taylor - T 905-837-5499 C 416-520-6019 or email: consult4ideas@aol.com

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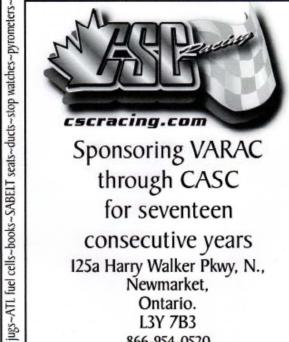
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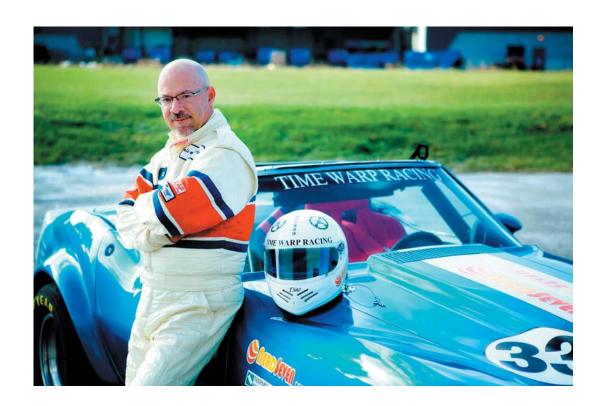
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