

# BONHAM'S CLASSIC SILVERSTONE – JULY 27TH TO 29TH, 2007



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This year saw the twenty-fifth anniversary of the first race appearance of the Group C Porsche 956 (coincidentally at Silverstone), and the Group C/GTP association in England, led by Henry Pearman and Ian Dawson, with Derek Bell as it's honorary chairman, put on the most incredible display of these cars with some fifty plus cars on display (twenty-five were Porsche 956/962 variants), with another thirty plus taking part in two races over the weekend at Silverstone, on the Grand Prix circuit.

I took a stroll (several actually!) down the lines of the cars on display and, apart from the serried rows of Porsche 956/962s and TWR Jaguars, there were some interesting cars, that had been "one-offs" or of which only a few had been made, such as the ADA, a solitary Lola T600, a March 84G, a Lancia LC2, a Group 44 Jaguar, a Ford Probe and sundry others. Where, I thought, were the many Tigas and Spices? Sauber-Mercedes?



the URD? the Stethmo? Courage? Toyota? (there was a plethora of Nissans!), the Grid? an Alba? All these cars are out there somewhere and Lord knows there are not many GTP/Group C cars left over here now, so many having chased the Euro or the Pound over to Europe.

Enough of a very small gripe! Silverstone and the Group C/GTP organizers are to be congratulated for assembling such a fabulous (in the truest sense of the word!) display. Where the racing was concerned, there was a very full menu of historic racing going on over the weekend, with a couple of races devoted to Vintage motorcycles.

On the Saturday evening, the Denny Hulme Silverstone Endurance Trophy race for the Hagerty World Sportscar Masters, was held and Lola's owner, Martin Birrane (partnered by Ron Cumming), took the win in one of the Lola T70 Mk3B continuation series cars. No less than nine Lola cars, including seven T70's, were entered amongst the forty-five racecars from the late 1960s up to 1974. The ninety minutes race saw a very good result for Lola cars, as they finished first, third and fifth with another two more cars finishing in the top ten. For an account of the Group C/GTP races, I advise the reader to go to: <http://www.groupcracing.com> but in case you don't do that (!):



On Pole position for both the 30-minute Saturday sprint and Sunday's 40-minute endurance race was Mark Sumpter's Joest FAT Turbo Express Porsche 962C (seen for many years over here in America in Aaron Hsu's capable hands), with David Mercer's Spice-Cosworth C1 up next. Brian de Vries was third fastest in his Chevrolet-powered Intrepid GTP rounding out the top positions.

From the start, Mark Sumpter's 1989 Dijon-winning 962C led the field but he hit the Leyton House Kremer Porsche of Janine Payne whilst lapping her and lost two laps. David Mercer's Spice now led until Gary Pearson passed the Spice in his TWR XJR11 to take the win. Justin Law took third in his 1990 V12-engined XJR. C2 was won by Ian Stinton in a 1986 Spice-Cosworth, whilst second went to Alasdair McCaig, in the Ecurie Ecosse Rover.

Sunday's race saw an immediate "coming together" at Copse corner right after the start when Mark Sumpter and David Mercer hit each other, forcing Sumpter almost broadside but he recovered. Richard Eyre hit Freddy Kumschick's Spice and Kent Abrahamson's Kremer Porsche 962, and all three cars were out almost before the race had begun. Mark Sumpter set yet another fastest lap on his battle back to the lead and then pitted for Derek Bell to get in but Derek didn't like the car's handling and retired. David Mercer's Spice C1 retired when the engine went off-song, and Gary Pearson also retired after his XJR11 had electrical problems. A lot of attrition amongst the field



saw several more cars retire with various problems. Andy Purdie drove Richard Lloyd's 1988 RLR 962 to the win with a good lead over Charlie Agg's "FromA" Lola-Nissan and the Spice-Chevrolet GTP of Mark Gillies. Tony Wood took "Pat", his Ecurie Ecosse Swiftair car to win C2.

So a great racing weekend came to a close. Next, I'm off to Spa to race George Tuma's Guards Red RSR (exactly the same as the RSR I used to race!) in the CER race supporting the ELMS meeting in Belgium. I'm looking forward to racing at that great circuit again after several years away.





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