

My Return to Motor Sport's Circuits of Competition.

A Monthly Series

By Geoffrey 'Grumpy' O'Connell. 2019 Part 12

I met Tony Ditheridge in this or that paddock on any number of occasions.

He raced a 1958 single seater, mid-engined (straight 4, twin overhead camshaft, 1964cc Coventry Climax) 'Cooper T45'.

In business life he ran 'Hawker Restorations' which built replica aircraft as well as rebuilding and restoring 'old' aeroplanes.

Amongst those were: making a replica single seater, rotary engined, WW1 Bristol M1C, armed with a Vickers machine gun, and having a top speed of 130mph; restoring single seater Hawker Hurricanes (1937-1944 - by 1940 powered with Rolls Royce Merlin XX engine producing up to 1,490hp - by 1941 armed with 12 Browning machine guns and with the top speed reduced from the original 328mph to 301mph); a (Supermarine) Spitfire single seater fighter (1938-1948 - by 1941 powered by a 12 cylinder Merlin 45 [RM 5S]) engine producing 1,515hp - by 1940 armed with 8 Browning machine guns - with a top speed of 370mph); a Mustang single seater (1942- end of WW2 - powered by the Packard Motor Car Company produced Rolls Royce Merlin XX [V-1650-1] engine - armed with 6 AN/M2 Browning machine guns - with a top speed of 440mph); a Bleriot XI monoplane with some two seaters built (1909-early WW1 - various power units fitted with a top speed of circa



Tony Ditheridge

50mph); and a biplane Avro 504K fighter/bomber (1913-1932) and later a training aircraft.

Whilst researching I noticed that in 2012 Tony Ditheridge set-up 'Hawker Racing' which rebuilds, maintains and race-prepares classic, historic and thoroughbred racing cars.

I also believe that a Peter Russell has joined him in that enterprise.



1951 Frazer Nash Replica

I am sure that is the same Peter Russell who some 6 or 8 years previously used to carry out race preparation work on the most desirable 1951 'Frazer Nash Le Mans Replica' owned by Peter Mann, a gentleman and most likeable motor racing companion.

Another fellow competitor at many of our race meetings was the elegantly attired, always cordial Hubert Fabri (born 1952). He was described by one observer as a larger-than-life Belgian gentleman driver- which says it all. His entourage would arrive in his motorhome with the car with which I associate him – his extremely eye-catching 1959 F1 'Aston Martin DBR4 (250)'. The single seater was the last of the four built and thus was chassis number 4. It was powered, as they

all originally were, by a straight 6, dohc, 2493cc Aston Martin engine. Hubert was a member of the board of directors of some 38 companies, a number of which were based in the African continent. Apart from the detailed attributes, he was often accompanied by extremely attractive ladies. And why not?

One more thought-provoking if somewhat withdrawn character that I met-up with again in the 2000s was Malcolm 'Willie' Green (born 1943). I had shared a paddock



Hubert Fabri driving the Aston Martin DBR4

or three with him in the 1960s. He chose not to join his family business of textiles and commenced motor racing in 1963 in a 'Triumph Spitfire'. That was followed by a 'Mini' in 1964, a 'Lotus Elite' in 1965 and then a 'Ginetta G12'. In that 997cc, sohc, Cosworth SCA* powered 'Ginetta' he achieved 21 overall wins and 2 Class

victories in 23 races. From then on he raced many remarkable cars over the years. The most prominent owner for whom he raced was a friend and associate – one Anthony Bamford of 'JCB' ('J.C. Bamford Excavators Ltd'). Among his vehicles were such as the: ex-

cockpit, onto the bonnet and then onto the track. Very unfortunately the car ran over his lower body causing damage to his legs, knees and ankles. He had to undergo some seven hours of surgery to make good the damage and spent some three weeks in hospital. Subsequently he 'took-to-the-

law', suing the television production company (who had placed the film camera where it was), the 'Goodwood Circuit' owners and the BARC (British Automobile Racing Club). Unfortunately for 'Willie Green' the Judge at the High Court of Appeal (January 2011) found that it was



1948 Maserati 4CLT

Raymond Mays 'ERA RD4W'; the 'Maserati 250F' known as the 'Piccolo' super-lightweight model (chassis no. 2534); the 1957 Le Mans winning 2 seater 'D-Type Jaguar' (straight 6, dohc, 3781cc engine) that had been raced by Ron Flockhart & Ivor Bueb; and a 2 seater sports 'Ferrari Daytona 365 GTB/4' fitted with a V12, dohc, 4390cc, engine. 'Willie' Green co-drove that car with Neil Corner at the 1973 'Le Mans'. By 1973 he was recorded as having his own Garage business in Ashbourne, Derbyshire.

His motor racing career ended dramatically and very painfully at the 2005 'Goodwood Revival' meeting. Driving a 1948 'Maserati 4CLT' (1947-1950; straight 4, twin supercharged, dohc, 1491cc engine) in the Goodwood Trophy event it was said he took the Woodcote bend too wide on lap three. In so doing the Maserati ran over a track-side film camera. That caused the car to rear-up throwing Willie Green out of the

Green's 'own error of judgement in taking

TALK CURVE
BY DAVID HARRISON

Remaking history

Willie Green's decision to quit racing brings the curtain down on an amazing career spent almost entirely in a historical town by Bill Lawrence

The 2005 Goodwood Revival meeting will surely be remembered as the last time Willie Green raced. The 66-year-old driver, who has been racing since the age of 16, was seen in the cockpit of a 1948 Maserati 4CLT at the start of the 1973 Le Mans 24 Hours. It was his last race. The car was driven by Green and Neil Corner. The pair finished the race in 11th place. Green's decision to quit racing in 2005 was a surprise. He had been racing for over 40 years. The article discusses his career and the reasons behind his decision to quit.

Willie Green

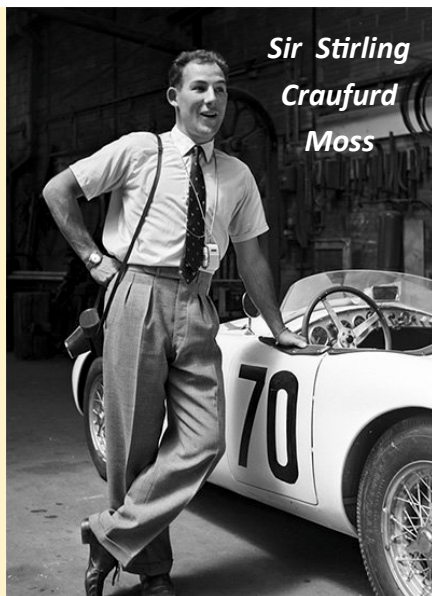
I suppose I might have won 600 or 700 races...

the line he chose and at the speed he did into a double apex right-hand bend'. Subsequently he vowed not to motor race again but I believe he was planning to take to the circuits once more in 2010/2011.

The greatest racing driver I competed with was none other than Sir Stirling Craufurd Moss (born 1929). He was a 'Sir' in my motor racing meetings with him as he had been knighted in the 2000 New Year's Honours List as a 'Knights Bachelor'. I raced against him and his two seater 'OSCA FS 372'* (1957-1958/9; straight 4, dohc, 1490cc engine) some three or four times in the middle 2000's. My experience was that he did not take prisoners! It would be remiss of me not to aside that when he was motor racing my Mother adored him! He competed between 1951 and 1962, the first 2¾ years of which were driving in the then 'Formula 3' cars powered by 500cc motorcycle engines. However by September 1962 he competed in the 'RAC Tourist Trophy' in Tommy Wisdom's 'Jaguar XK120' and won.

From then on Stirling Moss motor raced with the big boys in big events. In the F1 World Championships he was runner-up four times and third in the other three years. Aptly he was described as 'the greatest driver never to win the World Championship'. One reason given was that he favoured racing British cars in the F1 events whilst another reason put forward was that he was 'unforgiving of his cars failings'.

On the 23rd April 1962 he was entered by the 'UDT- Laystall Racing' team to drive a 'Lotus 18/21' powered by a Coventry Climax V8 FWMV (dohc, 1.5 litre engine) at the 'Goodwood Circuit' Easter Monday race meeting. His event was the forty two lap Glover Trophy. On his 37th lap, at St Mary's corner, he had a horrific crash which caused him to be in a coma for a



month. That accident terminated his 'serious' motor racing at the comparatively young age of 32¾. His later appearances at Historic motor racing events 'took a tumble' when in 2010 the lift of his Shepherd Street, Mayfair house malfunctioned. He fell down the empty lift shaft incurring 4 chipped vertebrae, 2 broken ankles and broken bones in his feet.

**O.S.C.A. was derived from the official title: 'Officine Specializzate Costruzione Automobili – Fratelli Maserati S.p.A'. The firm run by the Maserati brothers Ernesto, Ettore and Bindo operated from 1947 through to 1963. It was then sold to Count Vincenzo Agusta and his brother Domenico, owners of MV Agusta which was an Italian manufacturer of motorcycles*

Geoffrey