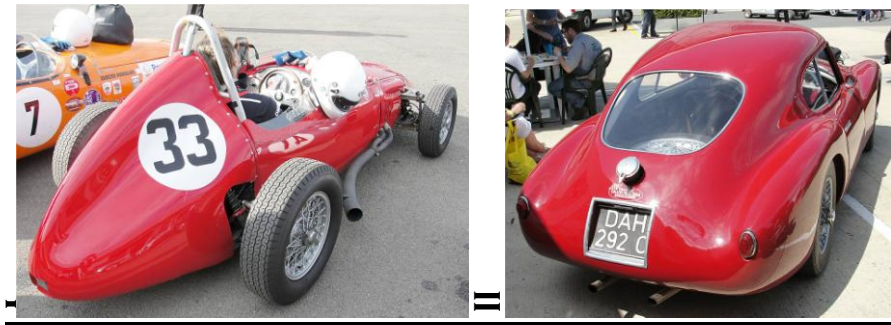


MAD WEEKEND



As things sometimes do, it all started in a friend's kitchen in Bristol after an *Avenue Drivers Club* meeting. He had been given a weekend pass to the Castle Combe *Classic 50* meeting in two weeks time, so



instead of just going on one day I too decided to go on both. That evening I went online and decided to book for the August BH meeting as well as I had a two-for-one discount code, but was surprised to find this also applied to the *Classic 50*. However, despite the booking form and the receipt stating that this applied to both days, what I actually received was one+one free tickets for the Sunday only.



Upon querying this I was told that the code should never have applied to the *50* anyway, so I resolved to enjoy the good fortune of the free ticket and to also buy a Saturday ticket. However, before I was able to do this I was surprised to get a call telling me that I had won two tickets to the *Silverstone Classic* meeting in a long-forgotten prize draw, although when I checked the date I found that it was on the same weekend! When the tickets arrived they proved to be for the Sunday, yes, the same day as the Castle Combe items already purchased, although CC very kindly allowed me to exchange them for some for Saturday, at least solving that problem.



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The only remaining 'problem' was two days of racing at two widely spaced locations -I live 30 minutes West of Castle Combe and two hours South-West of Silverstone- but any historic motorsport enthusiast is not going to let small matters like early starts, strenuous

days, lack of sleep and geographical inconvenience get in the way of a good time! In fact, Castle Combe provided some excellent weather and racing to start the weekend and the few Italian cars competing are pictured above. It was then home for a (for me) early night, partly due to tiredness and partly due to having to be up by 4.30am the next day!



Luckily, one of the Clubs to which I belong had reserved infield parking at Silverstone and the circuit kindly sent me a pass for this. The make in question had to be the weapon of choice for the trip (first race: 9am!), although despite having an engine five times more powerful than our Fiat it does not always make a vast difference to cross-country journey times due to the general traffic conditions and camera-regulated road speeds of the present: It certainly makes overtaking easier, though! (As an aside, how does restricting speed unreasonably on straights and dual-carriageways contribute to road safety? Surely it just makes people drive faster elsewhere?).



Above: Alfa/ Abarth/ Ferrari

Below: Vespa/ Alfa/ Lancia



A 6am start saw me gain easy access to the infield display area, which was only slightly moist compared to the 'building site' conditions which some clubs were experiencing and shortly after 8am I was wandering around the open paddock and pit garages, coffee in one hand and camera in the other. Having first attended Silverstone in the 1970s but latterly not for some time I found the new circuit and internal layout more confusing than if I had never been there before, although as I moved around during the day it became easier to orientate myself. I have to say, though, that while the spaciousness which the location provides is essential for an event of this magnitude, the latest incarnation of track is less than kind to the characteristics of many historic vehicles and the perennial problem of constantly spectating from behind wire fencing seems worse than ever. The good news was that grandstand seating was available FOC, the bad news being that -for reasons not apparent- not all of the grandstands were unlocked! With the old and new paddocks being in use -and these are so far apart that a (vintage) bus ride connects them- I found that a fair bit of time was spent travelling or waiting and I wondered how we managed for space back in the days of the equivalent *Coys* meetings in the 1990s.



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Above L: *Ferrari F40 gathering* Above R: *Lancia LC2*



Above: *Fiat 8V/Alfa 156*

Below: *Ferrari 312s/Maserati 250F*



Anyway, there was some exciting racing and some that was less so and while it was a pleasure to see some great cars in action -the

Group C sportscars of the 1980s brought back many happy memories of being at Le Mans during that decade- I enjoyed wandering around the paddocks, getting close to the cars and chatting to the drivers, just as much as I did the action, perhaps even more so. Above are some pictures of a few of the more unusual Italian vehicles to be seen that day, but if I go next year it will have to be for two days, one to watch the racing and one just to look around!

MJB