



VANTAGE

Autumn-2012



Editor Tom Johnston Chats With the
Legendary Walter Wolf at the 2012
BCHMR at Mission



Well the 2012 BCHMR has come and gone. You will see a report on the event in this newsletter but there is more detail and complete results posted on the club website www.vrcbc.ca and the event website www.bchmr.ca.

In summary; we had a good entry, two new race events, a legend of Canadian motor sport as a special guest, it was too hot for most people and we did ok financially. Lots of people work hard on this event each year and it has become a fixture for gearheads in these parts.

Looking forward to what next year may bring.

In this issue we also report on a couple of racing tours by club members at two legendary California Circuits; Laguna Seca and Sonoma.



Your Editor at Work

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In This Issue:

Geezer Central	2
President's Report	3
BCHMR	4
Fairservice on Elvas	9
GVMPS Inductees	13
Mike Tate	14
Tom's photo Page	17
IOCO Hill Climb	18
Geezer Central at Rolex	20
Ian's Sonoma Race	22
Photo Contest	24
About VRCBC	24

GVMPS INDUCTION CEREMONY

Saturday September 22, 2012



Shannon Hall - Cloverdale Exhibition Grounds

See page 13

President's Message

A lot has happened since the Spring edition of Vantage. Competitively, we've had three REVS races and some VRCBC members tackled the Knox Mountain Hill-climb. We also had our usual, popular racing car display and booth at the All British Field Meet, as well as Club meetings at Terry Johnson's museum in Langley and Jellybean Autocrafters in Surrey. But of course, our biggest event of all was the 25th running of the BC Historic Motor Races over the August long weekend.

As is described elsewhere in this issue, overall, the BCHMR was very successful – although it was a little too warm! On behalf of all of the Club members, I want to thank Chairman Tom Johnston for all of his time and effort in leading the BCHMR team again this year.

Personally, I had a great time racing our 'Bucket List Racing Team' Formula Vee in both the Vintage and the (F.A.R.T.) Formula Vee Invitational groups. But, without a doubt, the highlight of my BCHMR weekend (and probably of this decade!) was the opportunity to do some lunch time demo laps in Calgary VRCBC member Jim Robinson's Bugatti Type 51. It was a very generous offer by Jim and I really appreciated it.

I have since found it very interesting to compare this 1931 Bugatti Grand Prix car with my own 2005 Mini Cooper S. Although the Bu-



President Stan doing his Achille Varzi thing

gatti's engine is significantly larger (a 2.3 litre straight eight versus a 1.6 litre four), both are supercharged and produce the same power (approx. 165 hp) in the same rev band (5,500 - 6,000 rpm). Both cars also have the same top speed (about 140 mph) but since the Mini is 50% heavier (2,500 lb versus 1,650 lb.) the T51 should (in theory) easily win a drag race. At 10 lb./hp, the Bugatti's power to weight ratio is pretty close to that of a typical, current Formula Ford! The cable-operated, four wheel drum brakes do require a (slightly!) longer braking zone however, so hopefully there would be a big difference in lap times!

Jim told me (and I agree) that he can't imagine how those famous drivers of the past could actually drive one of these cars at racing speeds of well over 100 mph – often on gravel roads – for many long hours. For example, Louis Chiron and Achille Varzi combined to drive 782 miles (!) to win the 1931 French Grand Prix with a T51. Unbelievable; my shoulders were sore after only a few 'parade' laps around Mission!

That great experience reminded me of why we enjoy Vintage racing so much. For a modern car, the Cooper S is actually a lot of fun, but is it more enjoyable on the track than a typical VRCBC member's racer like a Vintage Formula Ford or a MGB, or a 'you name it' – never mind a Bugatti? For me, it's not even close; the modern Mini comes out second best every time. I think that is because each of those older cars has its own distinct 'personality' (AKA: 'imperfections') which means that they are much more entertaining to race, and to watch race each other. Keeping the uniqueness of these cars alive on the track is what the spirit of Vintage racing and the purpose of the VRCBC is all about. Actually, we think Vintage is the ultimate form of racing, but then we are biased of course!

As I write this, we have one more REVS race and two more meetings – guests are always welcome – plus our season-ending Annual Gala on Saturday, November 17th left to go this year. I hope you can make them all.

Stanton Guy, President



The 25th running of the BC Historic Motor Races was one hot event – in more ways than one! This year's BCHMR was unique, adding two new features; the fifth annual Children's Charities Grand Prix (CCGP) and the third annual Formula Vee Invitational. It made for a very complete weekend of racing. The VRCBC's objective is to host a weekend which is fun for competitors and teams, workers, supporters and also a good show for the spectators. This year, in addition to the racing, there were barbecues, special guest; Canadian former F1 team owner Walter Wolf, a Car Corral, Demonstration Laps and the always popular, Lunch Hour Rides 4 Kidz.

The Family Affair Racing Team (F.A.R.T.) added a lot with their Third Annual Formula Vee Invitational. Not only were there great battles all the way down the field from the front to the tail end, but the camaraderie and fun atmosphere they brought fit right into the traditional Vintage racing environment. The only 'fly in the ointment' was that the podium was swept by those 'invaders' from south of the border. Dennis Andrade was the winner and took the Abbotsford trophy, followed by Quinn Posner and Robert Posner in second and third respectively. Adam Ingram

was the first of our local heroes in fifth place.

Vintage Groups 1 and 2 were for the Closed Wheel series production based cars. Attrition slowly took its toll on the initial 39 car entry – drivetrains seeming to be particularly vulnerable – and the Sunday feature race had 26 starters. They put on a great show however with the heavy metal trio of Paul Kuckein (Camaro), Doug Yip (Sunbeam Tiger) and Dennis Repel (Camaro) taking the first three places on the podium, followed by Mark Brown (Lotus Seven) and John McCoy (Escort). The SCCBC Trophy was awarded to Doug Yip for his spirited drive.

Vintage Groups 3 and 4 for the Sports Racers / Open Wheel cars had 19 entrants ranging from Ian Wood's Rawlson to some Vintage Vees. It was especially gratifying to see evidence of the local resurgence of Formula Fords, with ten making it through the initial qualifying session. And we should make special mention of 'rookie' Steve Hocaluk, making his single seater debut. Ian Wood won all three races, with Alan McColl, Dave McKay and Tony Carruthers mixing and matching the other two podium positions. Tony was presented with the Pete Lovely Memorial Award in recognition of his excellent performance overall.

The number of entrants in the CCGP was disappointing but the race itself was a real old-fashioned battle of attrition in the heat. Only

half of the ten starters managed to make it to the finish. Jack Zarowny had a trouble-free run, leading from start to finish and was awarded the Westwood Cup. Harry Watson finished second overall and won the P2 class. It would probably be fair to say that nobody expected Ryan O'Connor to even finish the race in Mike Bailey's newly acquired former Trans Am Camaro. Mike had just 'rescued' it from long term storage in the U.S., with almost no time for preparation, so to finish third overall in those challenging conditions was a great achievement.

The complete results are posted on the event website (www.bchmr.ca), where you can also find the hard luck story of the 'winners' of The Battered Cup, some excellent in-car videos, plus links to the literally thousands of excellent photos taken on the weekend by several photographers.

Thanks from the VRCBC to everyone who helped us put on the event; the SCCBC, the CACC, META and all of the on-track and off-track officials, and of course the racers and their teams. We particularly appreciate those individuals who stepped in to give us a hand at key moments. We hope to see everyone next year, maybe with the thermostat turned down a little.

- Tom Johnston and Stanton Guy









Robin Fairservice on Elva Cars

"ELLE VA" – SHE GOES – THE STORY OF THE ELVA CAR COMPANY

I was at Crystal Place in South London in September 1954 working as a "Go-Fer" in the Paddock when I first saw a neat little car called a C.S.M. The car was entered and driven by a Frank Nichols.

Frank had left school at fourteen and then worked for a shop where his father worked, but later spent some time supporting the war effort. His war efforts were rewarded by receiving severe injuries in the North African desert which took some while to heal. Having left the Army with a gratuity and some mechanical skills, he bought a small garage business at Westham in 1947. This was successful and he moved to another bigger garage in London Road, Bexhill where there was a good local following for motor sport. Bexhill (Sussex, England) was the town responsible for the very first road race on a public highway. Club racing in the early fifties was cheap and cheerful, with many specials constructed by innovative enthusiasts looking for maximum performance at minimum cost. One such enthusiast was Frank. After gaining some racing experience in a Lotus VI, in 1954 he ordered a 'CSM' from a Mike Chapman (no relation to Colin), and achieved some notable successes particularly at Goodwood, and attracted



Elva Courier

attention from like-minded enthusiasts. His business sense soon tuned into the need to respond to enquiries about similar sports racing cars, and ELVA was born in 1955.

From a quite humble start, the business quickly grew, helped by the production of a simple but effective Overhead Head Inlet Valve modification kit for the Ford side-valve engines. From an 1172 cc engine, over 80 bhp could be obtained! In 1954, Frank Nichols built his first sports racers. They were designed by Mike Chapman and created specifically for competition and they competed with similar small displacement Lotus cars. With the cars showing tremendous promise, Nichols

decided to emulate its design with the first few Elva live rear axle sports-racers.

An early Elva even found its way to B.C.! Ron Moscrop raced a Mk 1 Elva at Abbotsford and Westwood in late 1950s and early 1960s.

MK II featured a de Dion rear axle, a modified version, the MK III followed. The MK IV had fully independent suspension and was the first Elva with a tubular space frame.

The ultimate front-engined, drum-brake Elva sports racer was the small displacement sports-racer MK V. Only thirteen examples were produced. Power for most of these Elva sports racing cars was from the Coventry-Climax FVB single overhead camshaft engine, and they were competitive

(perhaps better), than Chapman's Lotus 11.

Twenty-eight Elva MKVI models were produced from December of 1961 to October of 1962. Most were powered by the Coventry Climax FWA 1100cc engine, although a few were given Ford push-rod power and other engines. One car even had one of Butterworth's "swing valve" engines! Drum brakes were standard as their low weight and small displacement engines did not necessitate a need for discs.

The MK VI were the first of the modern ultra low 'lay down' sports racers. They made their debut at the Brands Hatch Boxing day race in England on December of 1961. They were popular in the US as a club racer in the G-Modified class. They enjoyed much success through the 1962 season but were soon eclipsed by the Lotus 23 and its successor, the Elva MK VII.

There were a total of around 69-72 examples of the MKVII produced between 1963 through 1965. Engine options varied, some were fitted with Lotus/Ford 1600cc, Ford Cosworth 1100cc, (Porsche, Climax, Lotus Twin Cam, and BMW) and various other units.

The last Elva Sports Racers were the Mark VIII. They were based on the highly successful MK VII and VIIS, and fitted with the most state-of-the-art-technology of the era. They were sold without engines and never officially used as factory competition cars; they were raced with much



Elva 100 Formula Junior

success by privateers, such as Carl Haas. The MKVIII had rocker arm front suspension, a rigid chassis design, aerodynamic body, and a number of other innovations making them formidable competition against the Lotus 23s and other 2-liter competitors.

Having produced a series of sports racers and Formula Junior cars, many of which were extremely successful in the States, it was suggested by an American agent that Elva Engineering should produce a road-going sports racer and the prototype Elva Courier was built in early 1958.

Frank and a young engineer Peter Nott designed the Courier with a ladder frame type chassis. It had to be a sports car that was relatively simple to manufacture, be competitive on the track, and easy to maintain or repair. The pretty prototype aluminium bodywork was built around

the chassis by Williams & Pritchard, but production cars used fiber glass bodywork moulded from the original. Much of the car was produced in-house by Elva - the power unit being the MGA 1500cc unit with matching gearbox. Three early cars were raced with considerable verve in club races in the UK, while most went to satisfy orders from eager customers in the States. The standard car was quoted at just under 14cwt (about 700 kg) with a 0-60 time of 11.2 seconds and a top speed of 100 mph.

Steve Clark, a VRCBC member from Victoria, purchased his 1959 Elva Courier Mk 1 from Franklin Rudolph in 2005. It had been raced at Laguna Seca and in the Sonoma area with CSRG. Franklin had the car restored by the famous Courier racer and restorer Butch Gilbert. Prior to him the car was owned by Don Orasco a well known collector, who

restores and racer out of Monterey. Steve's car has been pretty much a race car from the early 60s

Steve believes that they were better race cars than street cars. Because they were very light with a. Fiberglass body and a space frame on a two three inch tube frame chassis and as a result they only weigh approximately 1350 lbs. There is room for a larger tyre without modifying the wheel wells, and they came with disk brakes on the front. They have almost a perfect 50% / 50% weight distribution. Steve learned about Elva's from Thor Thorson at VRM Motors in Bellevue Washington. He said "they are perfect and very competitive for Group 1 Vintage grids".

With an increase in demand, a new factory was built in Hastings and soon the improved Mk.II Courier appeared - together with the racing version named the Courier Spyder. There were many detail changes as production continued and providing the Courier in kit form, avoiding purchase tax, satisfied the home market. The car was supplied fully trimmed and wired, and required just eighteen hours to complete. By this time the Courier was being built by a staff of over sixty and produced at around three per week.

However, there were problems ahead when the expected money draft for the latest cars shipped to the US failed to materialise. It appeared that the distributor

had financial difficulties and cars were both on route and awaiting delivery on the dockside in New York. Despite desperate attempts to recover the situation, Elva Cars was forced into voluntary liquidation and as a result Trojan Limited bought the rights to the Courier in 1961. Trojan continued to develop the Courier and produced several models until the mid-sixties.

Whereas the original Courier had a tubular chassis with the 'GRP' bodywork bonded into place, Trojan decided to use a stiffer square section frame and try to make the car a little more practical. As they wanted to build the Courier in big numbers (at least five hundred per year), they decided to use Triumph front suspension with disc brakes and the later MGA 1622cc power unit. However, there was not all the race expertise that had existed at Hastings and handling suffered when they tried to reposition the engine further forward in the chassis to provide more cockpit room.

Lessons were soon learnt and, having built a few of the tubular cars from stock parts, the Mk III Courier and Mk IV coupe prototypes were shown to the Press at the RAC Country Club, Epsom in September 1962. The Press release stated "young people were looking for a car with known engine quality, with coach built sports body giving a maximum power to weight ratio and a top speed equal to cars costing perhaps three times the price and, on

that basis, the Elva Courier is a car with a future".

By April 1963, there were eighty cars on the order books, and it was not long before the Mk.IV roadster was on the drawing board. This new car, with new chassis, different body styling and the option of 'Tru-Track' all-independent suspension, was offered with either the MGB 1798cc or the Ford 1500GT units. In October 1963, this car was announced as the first 100mph plus sports car with four wheel independent suspension at under £1000 including tax.

Records show that Trojan built 210 Couriers, including four 'Sebring' race versions of the Mk.IV 'T' Type. There were 175 roadsters, just 35 coupes, and 152 were LHD.

After the sale of the Courier, Carl Haas became closely involved with Elva in helping to sell cars already in the States, and re-establishing Frank Nichols (with a much reduced staff at a factory in Rye) to continue producing the sports racing and Formula Junior models in Rye with outstanding success, with the Porsche engined Mk.7 and later with the Mk.7S BMW. With the advent of the U.S.R.R.C. in 1963 and the fact that under 2 liter sports racing cars could compete for overall honors in the 1964 championship season against their larger-engine counterparts on a points basis, the Elva-Porsche was conceived by Midwest Porsche distributor, Oliver Schmidt, Elva importer Carl

Haas, and Elva designer, Frank Nicholls. Light, nimble and powered by a reliable, yet powerful Porsche Carrera engine of 1700 cc, the Elva-Porsche stunned the racing world by winning its inaugural race in the U.S., the prestigious Road America 500 in August of 1964.

About this time Frank Nichols sold his interest in Elva to Trojan and left the motor sport scene to concentrate on a game fishing club in the south of France. About 18 months later he joined forces with racing car designer Len Terry to form a new design company called Transatlantic Automotive Consultants at Staplecross in Sussex, England. Their first client was Carroll Shelby, but that is another story.

Frank described himself as a man's man and could be sometimes less than easy to deal with. He had great character and determination, an eye for quality and detail, but an amazing gift for building a team around him. He was very clever at getting others to do what he thought was right, but he was greatly respected and was affectionately known as father by those who worked under his guidance at Elva. Frank passed away on 5 July 1997 after a long period of illness. He was 76.

Elva will surely be remembered for the beautiful Elva-BMW GT160 coupes, of which only a handful were built, but were certainly the 'stars of the show' at both the '64 Earls Court and Turin motor shows. Their demise



Elva Mk 7S at Mission

was announced in February 1965 and Trojan had now turned its attention to Bruce McLaren as a deal had been struck in December 1964 for Elva to build the first production McLaren cars, although the two litre Elva-BMW continued to be built at their Rye works. But over the next year, however, the Elva name was gently dropped as Trojan planned to build their own F1 cars.

However, the Courier had not died. Ken Sheppard took on the production of the final thirty-eight cars, and these were probably the very best of the Mk.IV IRS cars built. It is perhaps ironic that at last the car was once more being put together by someone who understood motor racing, in very much a hand-built fashion - and the results showed. Parts and servicing was undertaken by Tony Ellis in Eaton Wick and he worked hard to produce his 'ultimate' Courier - the Cougar, powered by a tuned Ford V6.

It was extremely quick and stable at speed, but finance was not forthcoming and this proved to be the last Courier built in the sixties.

Now Elva cars are cherished in Europe and in the United States, where a 40 year Elva Reunion took place in September 1995.

Robin A. Fairservice.

Based upon information found on various web sites; in particular <http://www.elva.com/index.php>

Additional information was also obtained from a recently published book: "ELVA THE CARS THE PEOPLE THE HISTORY"



The Greater Vancouver Motorsport Pioneers Society (GVMPs) held its 2012 Induction Ceremony, on the afternoon of Saturday, September 22nd. The three inductees in the Sports Car Racing category – Tom Johnston, Ian Wood and Roger Salomon – are VRCBC members. Adrian Ratcliff, one of the founders of the VRCBC and a former racer, but probably better known these days as one of our merry group of BCHMR race commentators, was inducted into the new Collector Car and Restoration category.

The long term contribution of each of these four gentlemen to motorsport in this region is very well known. Our congratulations on this well-deserved recognition.

The keynote speaker for the evening was Nigel Matthews, classic car columnist with the Vancouver Province newspaper, an internationally recognized

Concours d'Elegance judge and the Marketing Manager for Hagerty Classic Car Insurance in Canada.



Adrian Ratcliff



Ian Wood



Roger Salomon



Tom, Davidson Sask., 1964

Mike Tate's 'Tate á Tate'

Interview with Walter Wolf



Your author interviews Walter Wolf in Broadcast Booth at Mission Raceway

There were all sorts of rumours that the great Canadian Formula One team owner Walter Wolf was turning up at the British Columbia Historic Motor Races this year. Knowing just how busy folks like that are in their business and personal lives I have to admit to being a bit of a sceptic. But in the great lines attributed to that great Roman Julius Caesar in 47 AD he could easily say "*Veni,*

Vidi, Vici" even if it wouldn't be in his nature to do so.

He did come and we were delighted to see him enjoying his visit meeting many of the drivers and crews as well as the folks gathered at the races *He did see* some great driving during the vintage races on the track at Mission Raceway Park and *he did conquer* . . . with his delightful unassuming ways and pleasant demeanour

which were very refreshing to all those who had the good fortune to speak with him. He posed time and again for the obligatory '*Photo Ops*' and signed anything that was put before him in an obliging manner. Yes . . . Walter Wolf was a wonderful addition to the BCHMR this year and we thank him and will not forget him.

He also came by the broadcasting booth where I had the opportunity of



Wolf and BCHMR Chair Tom

interviewing this staunchly Canadian citizen, business magnate and Ex Formula One team owner. Sadly the interview went live but was not recorded verbatim so I am left with what I can recall and the general feeling of what I got from this encounter.

Walter Wolf is a great Canadian and I say that not only because he put three large Canadian Flags on his F1 race cars but because in his own words (As best I recall) he said, "Canada was not the country of my birth but it was the country which gave me the opportunity to work hard and succeed in a number of business ventures and for that I will be forever grateful." He was in fact born in Graz, Austria his mother was Slovene and his father Austrian. After the *Anschluss* (the German move in to

Austria in 1938) the family moved to what was then the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and he grew up in Maribor, Slovenia. He moved to Canada in 1958.

As far as his Formula One involvement is concerned; in

1975 Walter Wolf had started to appear at many of the F1 races during the season. A year later, he bought 60% of Frank Williams Racing Cars while agreeing to keep Frank Williams as manager of the team. Simultaneously Wolf bought the assets of the Hesketh team that had recently withdrawn from F1. The team was based in the Williams facility at Reading but he used most of the cars and equipment once owned by Hesketh Racing. The Hesketh 308C became known as the Wolf-Williams FW05 and soon afterwards Harvey Postlethwaite arrived as chief engineer. Jacky Ickx and Frenchman Michel Leclère were hired to drive. The team, however, was not very competitive and failed to qualify at a number of races during the year. Leclère left after the French Grand Prix and was replaced by Arturo Merzario

At the end of 1976, Wolf decided that the team



Keke Rosberg with his Wolf WR8 and team members at the non-championship Dino Ferrari Grand Prix in 1979.

needed restructuring. He removed Frank Williams from the manager's job and replaced him with Peter Warr from Team Lotus.

Postlethwaite's WR1 was a conventional Cosworth unit but with Jody Scheckter hired from Tyrrell, the new-look team presented a strong package. No-one, however, expected that the team would win its first race in Argentina. It was in many respects a lucky win with Scheckter starting tenth with six of the cars ahead of him retiring. However all luck aside during the 1977 season, Scheckter went on to win the Monaco Grand Prix and the Canadian Grand Prix and also took six other podium finishes which enabled him to finish second to Niki Lauda in the World Championship and gave Wolf a remarkable fourth place in the Constructors' Championship!

Around this time the team also developed the WD1 sports car for Can-Am racing. The car was developed with Italian firm Dallara and this doesn't even touch on his association with Lamborghini brand which has been long and extensive.

Thanks for joining us Walter; we hope you return next year to enjoy some great vintage Racing.

Mike Tate



Jody Scheckter's 1978 Wolf WR6 being Driven at a Historic Grand Prix Event at Lime Rock Park



The original Wolf WR1 that won three Grands Prix is on loan to the Canadian Motorsport Hall of Fame





Twin Window



Mohawk



Open Face Bell and Goggles

Tom's Photo Page Crash Helmets



Something Chinese



Original Bell Full Face



Simpson "Darth Vader"

CROMWELL CRASH HELMETS

We have in stock a limited amount of crash helmets in a variety of sizes.

These are the ever popular Cromwell helmets, shipped direct from England.

Specify American hat size when ordering. We will ship the correct English size.

\$27.50



I think they were made of Papier Mache

I OCO Hill Climb

Ioco is community in Port Moody that derives its name from Imperial Oil Company the name of the company that once operated a substantial oil refinery that was the original reason for the neighbourhood. Also in the same community is a large BC Hydro power plant known as the Burrard Thermal Plant

The road leading up to the Burrard Thermal was ideally arranged for a sports car hill climb. Beginning in 1961 the Royal City Sports Car Club (RCSCC) ran an annual event at this site. Some years later after the RCSCC folded, another club Burnaby Coquitlam Motorsport Club (BCMC) picked up the event for a few more years from 1982 to 2000.

There were two variations on the road used, one starting at the south end, the other at the north.

I won the event in 1972 driving my March 719 Formula Ford.



1972 Trophy





Image © 2012 DigitalGlobe



Geezer Central at Rolex

As many of the readers know, I have a history of building and running road racing cars over many years. After retiring the last of the pro cars in 2002, I dipped into historic racing. I had kept at least one example of each of the types of cars that I / (we) built and all of the commercially manufactured cars that I ran. You might think historic racing would be pretty easy. Not so! Old racing cars don't age any more gracefully than we people. Despite being kept in my nice warm and dry basement museum for all of those years, some parts still deteriorate and are often hard to replace.

Late last year the Rolex Motorsports Reunion AKA Monterey Historics at the Laguna Seca circuit near Monterey, California announced that for the first time ever, they were including a class for Formula Atlantic, inviting Atlantic cars

from 1974 to 1980. One of my cars, the 1975 Johnston JM3 would be eligible and so we began making plans for the trip to California.

The JM3 was built in 1975 in North Vancouver and raced until 1982 with drivers Bryan Evans and Ross Bentley (the last race of the car's original life was the 1982 supporting race for the Long Beach Grand Prix for F1). In 2005 we brought the car back for a few years of historic racing (Portland, Mission, Seattle, Watkins Glen, Mosport and Laguna



The Corkscrew

Seca) and then retired it again. When I heard of the Rolex event, we brought it back to life again, first for the BCHMR and then the RMR two weeks later. This sort of schedule does not promote quality racing and we paid the price with problems at the BCHMR, but in the end, we got going pretty well at Laguna.

The Rolex event is huge, not only the historic races (550 cars entered) but there is another race on the previous weekend as well as the legendary Pebble Beach Concours and countless auctions and other events. The toughest task is getting somewhere to stay. All of the nice hotels in nearby Monterey and Carmel bump their already pricy room rates to the \$400 to \$600 per night stratospheric numbers. We ended up in the Roach Motel in Salinas (about a half hour away, inland), even that was expensive on Saturday



Busy

night. The size of the entry caused lots of problems in the paddock with every corner packed with various exotic racing devices, of course, when we arrived, someone else was camped in our assigned paddock spot; we found a better one in the end.

The sheer number of racing cars means very little actual track time; one twenty minute practice/qualifying each on Thursday and Friday, two races on Saturday; one twenty minutes the other ten laps (about thirteen minutes) and nothing on Sunday which works out to be over \$10.00 per minute in entry fee.

The event, this year focussed on all things Shelby (except the man himself who sadly passed away only a few months earlier) so everywhere you looked there were AC Cobras, all flavours of Mustangs and even a few GT40s. Interestingly a Mirage GT 40 was sold at one of the auctions for a staggering amount. The transaction was reported in the press as the largest sum ever paid for an American car (funny, I thought those cars were made in the UK).

Our main interest was the Formula Atlantic race. About

thirty cars actually turned up to race, many driven by the same drivers as in period (Dan Marvin of Westwood50 fame, James King and Jon Norman). Having just come from the BCHMR at Mission, we were the only car with a muffler. I had forgotten how good an un-muffled Atlantic motor sounds. Most of the cars and drivers were deadly serious, no geezers these guys (except me) and just as fast as in the day, by far the fastest cars of the event, over ten seconds per lap faster than some well prepared and driven Can-Am cars. We didn't threaten to win, finishing mid pack (OK, maybe closer to the back), but we did fix our BCHMR problems.

Wade Carter of Woodinville WA won the race

in a 1976 March 76B, the same kind of car the Gilles Villeneuve drove in his triumphant 1976 season that pushed him into Formula One (not the actual car, but it was there too finishing second driven by Dan Marvin)

As a benefit of no race on Sunday, we were back in Vancouver Sunday night and Marty with the truck was home in Kelowna by Monday night. You know it isn't much farther than Edmonton.

An interesting snippet: the track announcer somehow misread the program to announce that Tom Johnston of Kelowna Canada was the driver of the car. Kelowna came out sounding more like Tijuana.



Ian's Sonoma Race Weekend by Madeline Wood



Group 6 led by Eddie Lawson - Ian Wood was gridded seventh. Running fifth here.

The 9th Annual CSRG Charity Challenge was held October 5 - 7, 2012, at Sonoma Raceway, formerly known as Sears Point and Infineon Raceway. Ian Wood and his trusty crew of Tom Munro and Doug Lorraine headed down for the action.

This year they called ahead and secured a garage (for a small donation to the cause) instead of sharing a bay with three other competitors. Their garage neighbor was Eddie Lawson, ex-factory Yamaha Motorcycle Champ; nice guy, but fast, fast, fast!

Friday practice went well except for a chuffing right head gasket. They were able to fix the problem by 10:00 Friday night. Peter Giddings had invited them to dinner, but they declined in favor of finishing the car for the morning timed practice.

The morning practice was a very good session. Wood ended up gridded seventh in a field of 26 cars with a 1.45 lap time.

In the Saturday afternoon race, Wood started seventh and worked his way up to third, turning a mid-1.40 lap time. He had little chance to catch Eddie Lawson and Mike Thurlow, ex-Baja off road racer, who drove a beautifully prepped Lola with a massive "Hart" motor.

During the Sunday morning warm-up, Wood was back to seventh place, but got to start third on the grid

for the afternoon race. The flag dropped too late for Wood and he got between the leaders going into turn one. Eddie Lawson missed a shift, but both he and Mike Thurlow out-powered Wood up the hill to turn two. Three laps in, Wood was a strong third place and could not see anybody in his mirrors.

Then came the dreaded black flag! Wood kept his cool and his speed up into the hot pits only to be told he had jumped the start. He could continue the race, but had to keep his speed down through the pre-grid area

and back on the track. He still drove like he "stole it" and finished fourth overall.

All in all, it was a great weekend.



Ian Wood at the crest of turn two - sights on Randy Smith's Chevron.

About the Vintage Racing Club of BC

The purpose of the Club is to restore, race and exchange information concerning vintage sports and racing automobiles. The Club was established in 1976 by a group of Vancouver based friends as a means of sharing with others their enthusiasm for racing and appreciation of the incredible vintage racing machines of

bygone days. The Vintage Racing Club supports the philosophy of racing competition that encourages participation, sportsmanship and display of the vehicle in its natural state on the track. There are no prizes or trophies, merely the great enjoyment of a well prepared vintage racing machine at speed.



Photo Contest

Important visitor at Westwood, 1967 and what kind of car is it?



Last issue's photo was Canadian champion to be winning in the rain at Westwood in 1967. Nobody even hazarded a guess.

VRCBC Club Officials and contact details for the rest of 2011

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