



1-litre F3 at the HSCC Historic Superprix

In front of an invited group of famous former racers, the 1-litre Historic Formula 3 movement took its biggest step forward to date when 27 cars lined up to race at Brands Hatch during the HSCC's Historic Superprix meeting on Saturday 4 July.

The re-birth of historic racing for the 1-litre 'screamers' of the late 1960s and early 1970s has been gathering momentum through the Peter Hanson Trophy mini-series as well as races in Europe, and has been further boosted by confirmation of a race at the Monaco Historic GP in 2010.

Chris Craft, John Miles, Bev Bond, Tony Trimmer, Barrie Smith, Dave Morgan and Harry Stiller were all at Brands and Stiller presented a trophy to the leading F3 racer in the Classic Racing Car event, Frenchman Francois Derossi. 27 cars went out for qualifying on Saturday morning, although qualifying dramas reduced the total to 23 starters for the race.

As well as the race, a fine array of cars were on display in the paddock and a total of 24 cars took part in a lunchtime grid line-up and parade lap around the Brands Hatch Grand Prix circuit.

On show and running in the display was the unique Spyder, built in Sweden in 1965, which new owner Mark Woodhouse hopes to race at Oulton Park. "It is very much a one-off and we found it for sale on the internet. It was complete, but it has never been raced outside Scandinavia. "It hasn't run since the late 1960s," said Woodhouse. The car was designed and built by Sven Harry Akesson, who later designed the Koenigsegg super car, and has been in his private collection since he stopped racing it in the 1960s.

Attracting a lot of interest was the rare long wheel-base Tecno from 1967, which can count Clay Regazzoni, Bolev Pittard and Carlo Facetti as former drivers. Other star exhibits included the ex-Francois Cevert Tecno and the rare Jomo Mk3 built by Keith Vickery in 1965/66. Current owner Colin Cummings is hoping to trace the car's history and return it to racing.

From the special guests, Chris Craft and John Miles were happy to share their memories of the 1-litre F3 days. Craft was a works driver for the Italian BVA team and then raced a Tecno in Britain. "You learned so much from F3 about how to drive on the limit," said Craft. "They were fabulous little cars and it is great to see them out racing again."

Miles raced for the works Lotus team in 1967 and 1968 on his way to a place in the Lotus Grand Prix team, but had not been to Brands Hatch for 20 years. "The 1-litre F3 cars taught me all I know about racing other people at very close quarters," said Miles. "My first F3 race at Silverstone was a terrifying experience. I came tenth and I was eight-tenths of a second behind the winner. Seeing them here brings back a lot of memories; particularly the noise and the atmosphere of these cars."





The Brands Hatch race

As one of the people to have put a great deal of work into getting the 1-litre F3 movement into its current state of good health, it was entirely appropriate that Francois Derossi took victory at Brands in his Chevron B17. Not only did Francois go clear of all his 1-litre F3 rivals, but he also finished third overall in the race behind the F2 Brabhams of Geoff Farmer and Ian Gray.

There was drama on the opening lap as Baba Yuzaburo (Chevron B9) ended his race in the gravel at Paddock and Juerg Tobler (Chevron B17) ran wide through the gravel at Druids. Despite losing a lot of time, he then started an impressive fight back to eventually take second place behind the flying Derossi.

However, Tobler's come back was hard work as first Chris Holland (Brabham BT21) and then Nigel Bancroft (Chevron B17) tried to keep him at bay. Tobler finally battled through to second from Bancroft and Holland as Paul McMorrان (Crossle 17F) and Michel Renavand (Tecno) completed the top six among the Peter Hanson Trophy runners.



In brief

Racing veteran Peter St Barbe raced on the Brands Hatch GP circuit for only the second time in 42 years of racing when he ran his 1-litre F3 Tecno for the first time at the HSCC meeting. Despite blowing a core plug in testing, St Barbe finished ninth among the 1-litre cars in the car that runs in the livery used by Ronnie Peterson in 1968.

Geoffrey Laycock attempted to for the first time after a long rebuild on the 1968 ex-Tony Lanfranchi Merlyn MK14. The Health and Safety advisor has worked with F1 and Le Mans teams, but qualifying dramas at Brands thwarted his bid to race the 1-litre F3 car, which Lanfranchi took to sixth place at Monaco in 1968.

A rare Lotus 41 has come back to racing after more than a decade as Gareth Williams contests the Peter Hanson Trophy races. When new in 1966 it was sold to Swiss racer Jean Blanc and was restored during the 1990s by Peter Studer. It is not thought to have raced since 1998 and Williams has owned it for a couple of years. He has now put it into the colours used by the '66 works Lotus team.

Former F3 ace Bev Bond, now 71 years old, hopes to end a 35-year break from racing by returning to 1-litre F3 racing next season. Bond was one of Britain's leading drivers in the 1-litre F3 era of the late 1960s. After quitting racing at the end of 1974, Bond's interest was re-kindled when he was invited to Race Retro in March to be re-united with the works Lotus 59 he raced in 1970. "I've got a race licence again now," said Bond. "I've really got the bug again now and I'd love the chance to race one of the cars.

With interest in the Monaco F3 race in 2010 already running high, Monaco resident and Historic F1 and F5000 racer Peter Dunn has bought a 1-litre De Sanctis F3 car, with a view to having it rebuilt for next year's race. Dunn has never raced in F3 before.

