



# The Musings of a Gentleman Restorer

By Tony Hall

part 48

The Goodwood Revival meeting is a great event, and since I live nearby it seems silly not to go along and enjoy it. If you've never been, it's all on their website, including the action on track because, in reality, it is basically a race meeting held in the style of the 1950s and 1960s and folk are encouraged to enter into the spirit by dressing the part and they do – in their thousands! I just wear my ordinary day-to-day stuff because it's all from back then anyway and it, like me, has just the right patina. The Scot says that I have too much patina already, especially around my waist, but a Panama hat works to get me into the mood and, unless you're a cheese, what does age matter anyway?

The Revival meeting is held at Goodwood on the grass aerodrome that was once the Royal Air Force World War Two fighter base of Westhampnett. The racetrack is basically just the old perimeter road with a few tweaks. Hence, in the middle of it all, and while the racing is paused, the planes can fly in and out and there is often a plane or two to see in action. Such is the time in which we live, the numbers of helicopters operating here over the weekend briefly turn the



- Top: Tony and his XK in the Goodwood car park, which is an excellent 'show' in its own right and well worth walking round
- Above: military vehicles abound at the former RAF Westhampnett



- Left: an American take on the military vehicle
- Below left: the amazing Flying Millyard – Allen Millyard’s home-built 5-litre V-twin motorcycle
- Bottom left: Yankee iron from dragsters to hot-roads



The Revival isn't just a car, bike and plane show. It's mainly a people show! OK, the queue to park your car is astonishing but if you've a pre-1966 vehicle there's a special car park just for you. The pre-'66 car park is simply packed with all types of cars, mostly gleaming in the sun – there's nowhere else like it. There are rows and rows of fabulous cars, from the very mundane to the ultra-rare, and they all have their fans. Folks spend hours just going around the car park looking for their favourites and, since there's no parking plan, it becomes a joyous voyage of discovery just to see what's there, waiting to be seen and admired.

Next to visit is 'Over the Road' – an area of fun before you get into the circuit. There's a funfair and an open-air cinema alongside Bonhams' famous auction of old cars and stuff. There are lots of car sales, including Land Rover Classic (which is not trading out of respect for HM Queen Elizabeth, who is lying in state over this weekend). There are black armbands and respectful ER car stickers everywhere. If you want to buy a Bentley, a Rolls, a Mini, a Land Rover, Cobras – fake or real – Jaguars E or XK, or even that new-fangled almost-Defender, the Grenadier and, of course, everything in between, then it'll be here. It goes without saying that there's myriad places to eat, drink and be merry too! Who needs racing cars anyway?

A footbridge takes you over and into the circuit proper and the noise of the cars racing is a brilliant background to the hubbub of the masses of people and shops, stands, exhibitions, demonstrations, music and general clatter. There's also a heady mix of cooking smells, exhaust fumes, mists of oil and petrol, whiffs of beer and ice cream. There are bands everywhere and vehicles parked all around, from heavy army lorries to Austin Sevens. Actually, there are hundreds of Sevens because it's their centenary year – 1922!

For fun there's a crashed flying saucer, handily



place into the busiest heliport in the country, so there are dozens here. More interestingly there is also a great gathering of old aircraft including, this time, a Catalina flying boat. Strangely, I seem to recall Jacques Cousteau using one for his sub-aqua adventures on the TV in my distant youth – can that be true?

So, readers, if you've a mind to, you can see all the racing and important stuff online but here's a collection of the other bits that caught my eye.

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- Left: another view of the US heavy metal in the paddock
- Below left: XK 150 FHC on the Twyford Moors stand in the 'Over the Road' area
- Bottom left: Austin Sevens were much in evidence during their centenary year



embedded in the ground at the main entrance, complete with runaway alien – wonderful. This weekend is supposed to be the '60s and I don't remember a whole lot from back then, so why not? Having said that, I do recall the scooters, tiger tails, mini-skirts, PJ Proby's split pants, Kaftans and flower-power – what fun!

There's loads of folk in military uniforms and girls in mini-skirts, lady jivers in bobby socks and vivid multi-layered skirts, along with their geezers in long drape jackets. There are fake police and firemen with vehicles of long ago. There are Mods (who aren't all that Mod these days) with their scooters (I had a Vespa GS!) and tearaway Rockers on motorbikes whose

beards are all grey but their tattoos still shine.

Then there are the real race fans who have just come to see the fantastic racing. The multi-million-pound grids of phenomenal, irreplaceable cars driven by the best in the world, who live to experience the red mist of racing with never a thought to the cost of kissing the circuit tyre walls! Never mind the other drivers, the tortured engines and melting period tyres. Add in the chance of enjoying a few beers in the countryside sunshine with convivial company and what more would a petrolhead really want?

To keep you amused is the circuit loudspeaker system that's as inaudible as you'd expect and the Goodwood radio, which is perfect. So, you get great racing commentary and occasional interviews, interspersed with the occasional roar of a Merlin engine in a Spitfire overhead and the huge TV screens showing the action on track, and the scene is set for a wonderful day of nonsense.

There are hundreds of Austin Sevens parked everywhere and more for a parade lap or two. There are saloons, Chummies, vans, and specials of all kinds and loads of racers. There's even an Austin Seven tractor.

If Graham Hill were here, I'm sure that he'd be proud to see the gathering of the many cars he got to drive including a good number of Formula 1 cars. Actually, I'm sure that I saw Damon knocking about in the paddock, which would make sense. He's always good fun and plays a mean guitar, I understand.

It's a strange thing to wander through the paddock and see a whole line of C-type Jaguars in racing trim. Bearing in mind that Sir William only knocked out just over 50 back in the 1950s and they sell for about £4m a pop just now, I wonder how many of these are replicas? Isn't Jaguar running about trying to outlaw all C-type replicas these days so that they can produce a few 'continuations' themselves? Logically, if you own a genuine one, risking it racing is just daft and so a tool-room replica is surely the way to go? It would really be sad not to see these cars racing anymore.

Around the corner there's a five-litre motorbike made by one Allen Millyard with the motor knocked up from a couple of cylinders cut from a Pratt and Whitney radial aero engine! Great piece of silliness but I suppose everyone needs a hobby?

Should you feel the need to build something a bit out of the ordinary there was a kit for a 1946 Auster aeroplane complete with engine, wings and a bucket of glue to stick it all together. Not expensive either. In the Bonhams auction there was a Ferret armoured car – £26k to you sir! It included a machine gun, so no problem in finding a parking space at the tennis club.

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You can win a race here even if you're too young to have a driving licence – all you need is an Austin J40 pedal car. Austin made thousands of these kid's toys in the days following World War Two and they found their way onto hundreds of fairground roundabouts entertaining millions of kids but here, at Goodwood, there's a race especially for them. Called the Settrington Cup, it's a race along the start/finish straight for about 70 of these cars, all with drivers who are under about seven years of age – mini mayhem!

Meanwhile, over in a shed, there was a man making those long, flowing, vintage car front wings on an English wheel – it was quite fascinating to watch him magically turn a flat piece of aluminium into a beautifully curved piece of sculpture, all the while chatting about football and the price of burgers in the van opposite. Burgers are about a tenner and a mug of tea almost £3, but very nice.

What's great about the Revival is that you can really get up close to things because, although the crowds are huge, the stuff to see is vast. The parade of Ferraris is coming back to the pits and runs just past me – what a sight to see! Even better are the Spitfires parked up and ready to go. There's also a P51 and an ME109 amongst the flying history here.

Looking into the cockpits of these machines it's hard to

imagine the bravery of the young men who flew them – no matter which side they were on.

Further on, there are the 750 racers, all based on Austin bits. You just have to admire the pure ingenuity of their constructors. Just look at the Wragg racer! Alternatively, why not buy Ian Maguire's barn-find racer and just get stuck in yourself?

For no particular reason we end up in BMW's beer tent, complete with its Bavarian band. The beer's cold and the band hot, in a strange but pleasant Oom-Pah-Pah way – nice! I didn't know that BMW made beer.

This was only one day of the three-day event, but the overriding memory of the whole Revival is of easy-going fun. Make no mistake, the racing is deadly serious and great to watch – just look at the Mini battle between Brundle and Lotterer in the St Mary's Trophy – but it's friendly, colourful and refreshingly free of modern advertising on the cars. There's even a race into the evening where cars with headlights blazing race into the gloom, very evocative of the famous long-distance races. It's a brilliant experience – bloody well done Goodwood!

Why not save up your Green Shield stamps, break out your brothel creepers and get yourself along there next year? You will enjoy it. 🍷



- Left: Spitfire and Bentley line up alongside each other
- Above left: a racing Mini – the ultimate giant-killer
- Above: chopped 'rat look' hot-rod