



Parkgate House
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Darvill racing at Goodwood Festival of Speed.

Words by Chris Foster, Pictures by the Team and Paul Blezard

This is a Blog I've really been looking forward to writing, and if for some reason known only to you, you are a returning reader, you'll know that's saying something!

As Darvill racing are intending to compete in the MotoE European Electric Motorcycle Racing Championships this year, the promoter (Rupal Patel @ MotoE) invited us to join them at the Festival of Speed at Goodwood. We happened to have the EmpulseR demo bike in our possession so happily accepted the invitation and with much logistical jiggery-poke-ery and team members throwing themselves onto the swords of 'The Steam Packet and the gods of van lending (its was a logistical nightmare as we had to juggle moving the team around the country to also attend the Top Gear Test Day)' we set off to Goodwood and set up camp in a far off corner with the contractors. 'Glamping' (as Goodwood seems to becoming famous for) this was not.. The weather was lovely though and the company superb, we had our two-man tents, a fold up table and some coffee, what more could we need? :)

Goodwood FOS has grown into an epic event, it's massive. We were there for the four days, an exhibitor's day followed by 3 public days with the Saturday and Sunday being competitive days for the cars. Bikes aren't allowed timed runs on account that we can't be trusted not to embed ourselves into The Flint Wall...The signing on for the event is about as fancy as it gets. The whole estate becomes a town of temporary buildings, but they're enormous things, cathedral like modern structures of aluminium and fabric. The signing on was in one of these with a red carpet chaperoned by Maclarens (real ones!) winding up to a double staircase helical-ly transporting you to a doorway flanked by suitably demure security guards, exact likenesses of the slightly more conspicuous crew at the gateway to the carpet seemingly miles down the paddock, with a sturdy white picket fence holding back a sea of paparazzi. A gleaming and weighty silver medal was the prize needed to enter this fortress, emblazoned with the watch manufacturer's logo who happened to be sponsoring the enclosure. These were handed to us at signing-on along with a book of tickets for meals in this Drivers Club which was far from the usual race circuit offerings we've become accustomed to. Later on over the weekend we would rub shoulders with some of the greatest names still living in motorsport history. On virtually my first visit to the lunch counter for some smoked salmon (fancy eh?) Emerson Fitipaldi held the door for me... And while we're on the subject of name-dropping I should probably get as much over with now, it could likely get nauseating... ;)



When going to the changing rooms (yes they had those too, think, 'gentleman's club with lockers') for one of my first runs I opened the door and met with some resistance, I'd opened the door, quite forcefully, into the underwear-sporting rear of Sir Sterling Moss, "Sorry, am I in the way?"

"Err no, not at all err Sir", I stuttered....

What else do you say to an octogenarian legend and darling of the people after nearly finishing him off? ...

I also witnessed Freddie Spencer and Wayne Gardener ribbing Leon Haslam about having pram races with him and his Dad Ron when Leon was a baby in the paddock at the Donnington GP ... I didn't think famous race-stars could get bashful enough to go 'that' red! :)

And it doesn't end there, oh no, not by a long shot...

The pictures below this paragraph were captured by my team mate Liz Warden whilst queuing up for a run up the Goodwood Hill. And yes, that is THE Giacomo Agostini and that is THE MVAgusta! And I think you can just make out the other number one plate of the Rothmans Honda ridden by Freddie Spencer who was just in front of Wayne Gardener on the other one...And I think Jim Redman was there too somewhere.....:)



Me noticing my hero!





My hero noticing me! ;)



Sammy Miller, 'Gis a go kidda'.





Ross Noble having a natter





Alan Cathcart discussing the finer art.





Queuing for the Hill with Hillier





Chris Foster riding the Brammo Empulse electric bike up the Goodwood hill at the 2014 Festival of Speed. Photo: © Paul Blezard

My Go! :)

I got to ride the Brammo up the hill with all the still living heroes I've spent my whole life watching and trying to emulate, and I got to do it on this fantastic evolution of the motorbike, the little Brammo was phenomenally fast, the torque takes you by surprise as it pumps down through the Continental Sport Attack rubber that comes as standard on these. The Goodwood Hill is very slippery, it's not exactly fresh tarmac and there are lots and lots of very exotic cars doing burnouts and doughnuts and leaving a nice slippery layer of oil and fuel from some very exotic concoctions that these things need to run properly, The Conti's were more than up to the job!

The interest in the bike over the course of the event was extraordinary. When we weren't on the hill we were inundated with questions and inquiries about the bike and its impressive statistics.. People in the massive crowd (tens of thousands) were heard remarking (by Darvill stooges in the crowd) about the unusual sound it made and how fast it looked against the race bikes...

Not strictly anything to do with the bike or the racing but worth a mention was the Goodwood FOS Ball on the Saturday night, not everyone gets invited to this but most of the competitors do and it's held in one of those very very big super tents that are more cathedral than tent in the gardens of the



main house. It's a black-tie do, and the evening begins with a garden party style reception with free Veuve Clicquot on loop, followed by a Michelin starred three-course meal followed by a spectacular display of a live show. This consisted of the obligatory fireworks display (a bloody good one!) but originally also a visual display by Lords of Lightning, spectacular nutters from Canada who throw lightning bolts at each other from a Tesla Coil in a mock battle to loud rock music... And then as if it hadn't been surreal enough already the Beach Boy(s) came on stage and played for the rest of the evening while we danced and drank the exceptional wine...

It bloody tough sometimes riding motorbikes....

A special mention has to go to Alex the boss in this blog because he's been trying to get an invite to this event for years, but due to some unpleasant physical effects from a recent operation he wasn't able to go and had to put up with us recounting this incredible weekend in glorious Technicolor for his enjoyment. You'd have thought we'd be a bit more sensitive would you? ;)

I think I may have died and gone to heaven! Sorry Alex! :)

Massive massive thanks to Rupal Patel @ MotoE for inviting us along...don't forget to follow the MotoE championship it's going to get really close!

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Best Regards,

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