



ash automobilia

ash - through the *esses*

Through The Esses - It's Time To Aid The Preservationists

09/18/04 - © Andrew S. Hartwell

The history of sportscar racing on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean is nearly as vast in scope as is the great body of water which separates the two like-minded regions. Running races on public roads or purpose-built circuits has been



a tradition both in North America and abroad for as far back as one can recall. (Admittedly, much further back in Europe!) While the venues and the cars may be varied, the love of the sport is the same. And preserving the history of sportscar racing is a shared passion for two great institutions, one east, and the other west, of the “great pond”.

In North America, the International Motor Racing Research Center (IMRRC) in Watkins Glen, New York, has established itself as the primary repository for all things related to the history of auto racing. In Europe, the task of cataloging, collecting and displaying racing artifacts, manuscripts, programs and so on is being professionally addressed by the Motor Racing Archive (MRA). In both organizations there are skilled librarians and conservators who have made it their purpose to preserve and protect the history of racing.

Both facilities rely on the generosity of others to keep their operations both active and well supplied. Donations of racing materials of virtually every description – and monetary donations of every denomination – are always welcome, as each such act of generosity sustains the preservation efforts that much longer.

From the Motor Racing Archives website (www.motorracing-archive.com):

“(The) Motor Racing Archive is a facility dedicated to the preservation of the UK's rich heritage in worldwide motor racing. The Archive covers all aspects of motor racing on circuits past and present. We continually seek more material to help in building the history of the UK's achievement, both in racing and manufacturing terms.”

Martin Hadwen is on staff at the MRA and he recently advised us that, “We continually seek material for the Archive and in particular we would like to fill in the gaps in our collection of British Motorsport Yearbooks and Fixture Lists.”

The International Motor Racing Research Center offers a clear and concise definition of purpose on their web site (www.racingarchives.org):

ash “Through The Esses” - Copyright Andrew S. Hartwell

“The Research Center maintains archives for the personal papers of drivers, journalists and authors; rare books, serial publications, and reference books pertaining to drivers, cars, races and the history of motor racing; the historical records and newsletters of clubs and motor racing teams and corporations; and historical photographs, movie films, videos, oral histories, and memorabilia. Operating according to professional archival standards of preservation and bibliographic cataloguing, the Research Center is open to all for primary research, offers extensive reference and other public services, and makes the wealth of gathered information available worldwide through computer technology.”

The job of cataloging all the materials coming to the centers is a daunting one, but both facilities are up to the task. Ironically, the curators of time are themselves in need of more of it! Hadwen: “The listing of material held on our web site is now indicative only as we have so much cataloguing to complete.”

With the end of another season of sportscar racing drawing nearer to a close, it is time to let racing fans everywhere know that they can aid the effort to preserve the history of racing for reference in all the seasons to come. Materials of all sorts are welcome and duplicates received by either center will be sold or raffled off to raise funding for the respective facilities.

If you are a collector of racing memorabilia, you should be able to find an item or two of interest available for sale from the IMRRC. You can view their offerings of prints, posters and paperweights right on their web site. You can even purchase a tie with IMRRC President Cameron Argetsinger’s red MGTC that he raced in the 1948 Watkins Glen Grand Prix!

Have you got an old program tucked away in a box downstairs? Perhaps you have amassed a vast collection of books or photographs and have run out of room to store them all? Or perhaps the thickness of your wallet is so great that you suffer from leg pains when you sit down when the wallet is in your back pocket? (Wouldn’t that be a nice problem to have!) Well, then you might very well be a candidate for lending a hand.

Here is the contact information for both centers. It is suggested that you get in touch with the curators or staff before you send in any materials or monetary donations. They can best assist you with how and when to send in your contributions, and advise you on how your materials will be used to benefit the center.

The International Motor Racing Research Center at Watkins Glen
610 S. Decatur Street
Watkins Glen, NY 14891-1613

Phone: (607) 535-9044

Fax: (607) 535-9039

E-mail to: research@racingarchives.org

Contact: Mark Steigerwald or Glenda Gephart

Hours of Operation:

9 am - 5 pm Monday through Saturday; and Sundays on some race weekends.

Motor Racing Archive and Research
Saham Road,
Watton, Thetford
Norfolk IP25 6EA
England

Telephone +44 1953 882066

Fax +44 1953 882699

Contact: Martin Hadwen
Email RacingArchive@btinternet.com
Info@Racingpast.com
Info@motorracing-archive.com

If you are contemplating whether to help with a donation or not, perhaps this snippet from the IMRRC web site will help you decide:

“If we were to sum up all the excellent reasons for supporting the International Motor Racing Research Center, "added value" would be the theme. Your gift adds value by:

Enhancing the overall reputation of the Center, ensuring that the Center remains highly respected and valued in the world of motor racing.

Helping to continually upgrade the quality of our collections, equipment and educational programs.

Ensuring racing's heritage will be available to future scholars and interested persons.

It's time to aid the preservationists and sustain the glorious and storied history of racing in your lifetime, for all the generations to come. Do get in touch with the center located on your side of the pond and make an historic contribution of your own!