



DC GOES BACK TO MOTORSPORT'S ROOTS

Motor racing isn't just about F1. As ex-GP star David Coulthard found out in the build up to National Motorsport Week. By BEN ANDERSON

When you're wrapped up in the glamorous and insular world of F1 it can be easy to forget the foundations on which the pinnacle of motorsport ultimately stands.

Chances are, if you asked most people in the paddock – be they drivers, team bosses or fans – what a 'Gould' was (a Hillclimb single-seater), or to recognise a Sherpa Indy (it's a sporting trials car), they'd most likely give you a funny look before heading off to the hospitality tent for some champagne, caviar and quails' eggs.

National Motorsport Week, which kicks off on Saturday (June 25) with a public bike ride around the Silverstone GP circuit, is all about creating a wider awareness of grass roots motor racing, and what better way to do this than by getting one of Britain's most successful F1 drivers to talk about it on the BBC?

Thirteen times GP winner and current BBC F1 co-commentator David Coulthard recently attended a sequence of national motorsport events, which will be featured by the broadcaster during its coverage of this weekend's European Grand Prix in Valencia.

National Motorsport Week is a joint initiative set up by the Motorsport Industry Association and Motor Sports Association to encourage newcomers into the sport – a scheme that Coulthard fervently supports.

"Britain is the centre of the universe of motorsport," says the ex-Williams,



Trackday fun at Brands



Moran and DC at Shelsley

McLaren and Red Bull driver. "There is so much history and heritage here, and success with British engineers, designers and racing drivers, and we need to keep feeding that.

"Inevitably, the focus tends to be on F1 so it was great to see just how much more motorsport has to offer, and just how accessible, affordable and fun it can be."

Coulthard first visited a sold-out Club MSV Trackday, staged on the Brands Hatch GP circuit, and was impressed with what he found.

"Anyone who wants to give it a go can

NATIONAL MOTORSPORT WEEK HIGHLIGHTS

Silverstone GP bike ride for Help for Heroes
Free live screening of European GP at Mercedes-Benz World at Brooklands
Open days at Red Bull, McLaren, Renault, Mercedes, Force India, Williams, Team Lotus and Virgin F1 factories, plus Ford WRC squad M-Sport's factory and works Mini WRC team Prodrive's headquarters
Dunlop Tyre Fort tour
High-speed passenger laps at Croft
Free entry to Knockhill race meeting for those carrying the 'Go Motorsport' logo

take their own car and find out if they have talent for driving or not," he explains. "I would never have thought you could do this. I literally could have driven down to Brands in my Mercedes, paid as little as £25, put my crash helmet on and driven that car around one of the world's most iconic race tracks. What a great way to start in motorsport."

Coulthard then moved on to Shelsley Walsh, the oldest motorsport venue in the world that is still in continuous use, where he met double British Hillclimb champion Scott Moran, inspected his Nicholson-McLaren V8-engined Gould GR61X, and joined him for a blast up the hill in a Lotus Elise.

He followed this by jumping aboard British champion Ian Wright's purpose-built Sherpa Indy for an insight into the world of sporting trials, before taking an autotesting master-class from multiple MSA champion Alastair Moffatt in his Mini Special.

"All these disciplines create accessible and affordable opportunities for people to get into motorsport," says Coulthard. "There are people competing for as little as £25 an event, and for a full weekend, you could do it for £150.

"Even the more specialist machinery isn't going to burn a huge hole in your pocket. Because there are classes for everyday road cars in hillclimbs, autotests and trials, there really is something out there for everyone." ❧