

SHELSLEY WALSH HILLCLIMB Tim Shellshear

The oldest motor racing facility in the world still using its original track celebrates its centenary on the 12th August.

Shelsley Walsh Hillclimb in Worcester England ran its first hillclimb on this date in 1905 when Ernest Instone in a Daimler won. Shelsley has continued to the present time, virtually unaltered, and regularly holds hillclimb events for state of the art racing cars. Many of the great racing names have competed there in Austin 7's to Auto Unions.

Over its history many of the VSCCA members have participated there or even just spectated.

In 2004 with the expiring of the existing 99 year lease a financial crisis emerged when the cost of purchasing the next 99 year lease appeared insurmountable. It was feared the track would be lost.

A vigorous fund raising program was undertaken by the Midlands Automobile Club (MAC) to raise one million pounds to cover the cost not only of the lease, but the restoration of numerous old buildings that come with the site including the old post office, the lodge and the old rectory. In March this year the MAC achieved a point where the lease could be confirmed and it is now safe. However the budget is still well short of the ultimate goal.



The major initiative of the fund raising program has been to sell off square yards of the track giving individuals a chance to own part of this historic track and lease.

The VSCCA has sent off the money to purchase four square yards of the track following a vote taken at the April members meeting and subsequent consideration by the committee. This represents a purchase of roughly \$1,200 in our currency. Certificate of ownership for our part of track will arrive in due course.

New member Don Harrington (1924 Hotchkiss AM) loaned me an old film for our archives which he said had been in his family for generations. Don was not sure what it was.

I scanned various frames showing that it was Shelsley Walsh at an early stage filmed by Pathe Gazette and sent these to the MAC. The MAC archivist advises that it was filmed on 31st September 1931 and no copy of this had been previously seen. This has now been digitised and sent to the MAC archives.

The two frames show Basil Davenport in Spider at the start and an unknown driver in a T35 Bugatti in a filthy wet day. The film lasts for only about 2 minutes and will be shown at a future meeting.



The club is once again part owners of a Hill Climb.

Tim Shellshear
July 2005