

## UK NEC Classic Car Show



Last September, I received a cell phone call from a fellow Italia owner Paul Harvey from the UK. I met Paul earlier this year when I traveled to England with friends from the Delaware Valley Triumph Club. It seems Paul was on a mission to gather together as many Italia owners as possible to come to the NEC in November to be part of the TR Register's Italia 2000 exhibition. The "NEC" as we call it, is the annual Classic Motor Show that is held at the National Exhibition Center and is Britain's largest indoor vintage motor show of car clubs, vendors, autojumble, and much more! Paul went on to say "All you have to do is buy a bloody airline ticket and I will take care of the rest!" Ok. How can I refuse? Sounds like fun. I connected with another long-time friend and Italia buddy, Harlan Schufeldt who was also invited by Paul, who also bought a bloody ticket! He drove up from Richmond and we flew out together from Newark!. On the flight, I mentioned to Harlan upon advice from a friend "We have to go to Donington Park. It is so close, this is a must do!". Once we landed in Birmingham, and after no sleep, we "hired a car" as they say and we made the quick 40 minute trip up the M42 towards Leicestershire to Donington Park where we found the largest collection of F1 Cars in the world. This incredible collection, located in several connected buildings next to the track, was assembled in former WWII storage buildings by Tom Wheatcroft. This is the Donington Park Grand Prix Collection!



The McLaren room was wonderful, displaying at least 30 cars along with Ayrton Senna's go-kart and F1 McLarens. A large number of Ferraris and Williams cars are included in this 130 plus car collection. In another hall there was Alberto Ascari's multiple race winning 1952 Ferrari Tipo 500, and Jack Brabham's Cooper T-51 Climax, the first rear engine car to win a World Championship!



We heard cars running, so we stopped by the track, and found a test day in progress. Everything from LMP2 racecars, vintage Formula cars through present day European touring cars were running at speed to shake out the bugs before next years' race day! Another quick stop, right next to the track, was a visit to Caterham, where we met a young man who happy to show us us through a big boys play room! Check out [bookatrace.com](http://bookatrace.com) before you make you next UK vacation plans! Bleary-eyed, we got back on the M42 and headed south towards Warwickshire where Paul had made reservations for us at the country estate known as Ardencote. We arrived at dusk, and it was not too shabby, as it was a four star luxury resort located in the rolling English countryside about

a 30 minute drive south of Birmingham! After checking in we went to the pub and met some other Italia guests from Germany, Holland and Italy, drank a pint or two, made a couple deals on spares, then hit the sack for some overdue sleep!



The next morning, we all boarded the Bristol Bus at Ardencote to attend the NEC where Paul and other Italia owners have brought together six world class cars for the first ever Triumph Italia 2000 exhibition at the NEC or anywhere for that matter! Our host bought, yes, I said bought, the this last surviving 1937 Gardener 5 Bristol Bus to transport the gang in style in and out for this three day event! He also has plans to make it into a vintage auto transporter in the future. The bus was a bit cranky in the mornings and never would pass emission inspection here in the states! But, under the careful guidance and at the steady hand of our fearless leader, and a master at double clutching I might add, the olde bucket of bolts got us there and back everyday and once we even hit 30 MPH!





You could cut the anticipation and smoke with a knife. Paul brought us through the back gates and back door and there we were! The Italias were looking their best! He and Italia 2000 Circolo (club) brought cars in from France, Italy and the UK. They did a fantastic job of showing off the marque with three eight foot high displays of the cars history. The whole exhibit was very professionally executed and soon the crowds flooded the halls and I heard many say they had never seen these beautiful rare cars before. I had the pleasure of meeting Leo Ranner who I had corresponded with over the past 40 years of my Italia ownership. Jez Woods was there with his Italia #210 in full vintage race trim. The USA owners that attended pictured above are myself, Adrian Sinnott of Long Island, Harlan Schulfeldt of Richmond, and Bob Slayden of Nashville.



The exhibit was very popular and even Stirling Moss came by to say hello! Noted UK automotive author, Kevin Warrington was there autographing his latest book and Italia artist, Roger Penwill did the same with his Italia illustrations. It was just reported that their efforts raised about \$1000.00 which was donated to the Audrey Hepburn Children's fund. Paul also invited a couple of very attractive young ladies (friends of Paul's daughter) and they were there for the entire show as the "Vignale Girls". Paul had pulled out all the stops! Beautiful cars and girls!



The Italia exhibit was right across from the TR Register's exhibit of the newly restored 1953 Triumph TR2 driven by Ken Richardson on the record breaking flying mile at 124.889 MPH near Jabbeke Belgium in 1953. The Autojumble was one very large hall that consisted of hundreds of vendor selling automotive art, literature, books, vintage parts, and services. Throughout the weekend Harlan and I wandered the five large halls filled with everything from Alvis to Z-Cars and always ended up back at the Italia exhibit. I had the good fortune to meet some members of the AC Owners Club that helped us get in touch with a US owner of an AC 3000 ME that will be coming in

from New Orleans to the AC Retrospective in February at the Simeone Museum. It's a small car world!



Overall, it was just fantastic to meet everyone and make new friends! My hats off to you, Paul Harvey, and the army of volunteers, Graham Andrews, Paul Williams, Dave Ferguson, and Graham Proffitt for hosting this wonderful weekend. You were right.; everything exceeded my expectations! Your lovely wife deserves an award too! I know speaking for the U.S. based Italia owners, we very much appreciated your gracious hospitality and I for one am strongly considering attending the Italia 2000 60th anniversary celebration in Turin, Italy in 2019. Maybe I will bring my Italia! Your mission has been accomplished, as your passion and efforts brought twenty Italia 2000 owners together! Job well done!