

# Sports Extra

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Touring Car Trophy will kick off at Thruxton

## AUTOSPORT SAYS...

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### THE TOURING CAR TROPHY,

which made its debut at last summer's Silverstone Classic, was a real highlight of the event.

Not only did a large grid recall what many regard as the heyday of British Touring Cars, the wheel-to-wheel battling was also some of the finest you'll see.

Although Rick Pearson's Nissan Primera was too much for Frank Wrathall's older Vauxhall Cavalier in the dry, there was intense battling for the minor places in both races, with Group A Ford RS500s and BMW M3s fighting Neil Smith's Super 2000 Alfa Romeo 156 all the way.

After such a resounding success, it was little surprise that the main man behind the initiative, Jonny Westbrook (who spends many of his weekends engineering Wrathall's Toyota Avensis in the modern BTCC), wanted to grow his idea into a series.

Dates at four of the UK's biggest historic events should provide a real sensual treat for fans in 2013, even if some of the cars may not be considered 'pure' historic.

Speaking of 2013, Radical Sportscars will launch its latest series - the novice-focused SR1 Cup - this year, adopting the Academy creed that has served Caterham so well for the past two decades. AUTOSPORT sportscar aficionado and VW Golf club racer Gary Watkins investigates this latest offering on page 106.

But before we hurtle head first into a new season (starting with this week's AUTOSPORT International Show in Birmingham), we have our final dispatch from 2012, as Ian Sowman recalls Boxing Day's race meeting at Mallory Park. Enjoy!

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## Super Touring gets green light

### HSCC to host iconic touring cars at four big historic events in 2013

» SUPER TOURING CARS will get their own series of races at top historic meetings this year, run by the Historic Sports Car Club.

The Touring Car Trophy, for Group 2, Group A and Super Touring machines, ran at the Silverstone Classic last year. Organisers deemed it a success and the initiative will appear at four events in 2013.

The first outing will be at the Thruxton Easter Revival (March 30-31), followed by the Historic Superprix at Brands Hatch (July 13-14), Silverstone Classic (July 26-28) and Oulton Park Gold Cup (August 25-26).

Cars will run to period

specification and be limited to six tyres per event. There will be eight classes, plus an invitation category to allow period cars that do not comply with the rules, but are historically significant, to be considered.

HSCC chief executive officer Grahame White said: "We took them under our wing at the Classic and we realised the cars had lots of potential and are exciting.

"They're different and a lot of people have great memories of the BTCC, so we decided to put them on at bigger meetings to show them off."

Although the early Thruxton date and proximity of the Brands and Silverstone events may affect entries, White believes grids will be strong.

"A few cars have changed hands and there are one or two new drivers coming so I'd like to think we can get over 20 cars," he added.

White also believes the historic racing scene should be willing to include more recent machinery as time goes on. "I think we've got to be open-minded," he said. "The cars we've been racing for years won't go on forever and we've got to consider slightly newer cars. This is an experiment, which could succeed."

BTCC engineer Jonny Westbrook, one of the prime movers behind the series, confirmed the HSCC was his first choice. "The HSCC is the premier racing club in the UK and they were the first people to step in and help us, so they were the natural choice," he said. "It's completely different to what they'd done before but Grahame and Alan [Jones, competition secretary] have done so much to make it work."

Westbrook believes the four circuits will allow the cars to be seen at their best: "We wanted to get on big tracks and these cars deserve to be on big meetings. All four are great circuits and meetings, and the reaction to the Gold Cup has been phenomenal."



Silverstone Classic races were a hit in 2012

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