



Back in 2021 I had a rather disappointing time at Silverstone at the Pirelli Experience event when, despite the immense power of my 715bhp DBS, I was completely lost on the track as I really didn't have much of a clue on how to get the most out of my car. I was therefore very interested to read a recent AMOC announcement launching a high-performance driving training event with a very limited number of drivers on the track at any one time, led by a team of professional driving instructors under 'The Road to Mastery' (TRTM) banner.

I duly signed up and in mid-August made the long journey from Sevenoaks up to Retford in Nottinghamshire for a Monday evening introductory dinner with my fellow participants/coaches. There was a total of seven drivers on the course; two from the Cardiff area and one each from Birmingham, Bedford, Devon, Doncaster and Kent. We had an interesting mix of cars from a Rapide to an N430 Vantage and a brand new F1 Vantage Roadster to a DB9 Volante. One of the drivers came along in his McLaren 720S but we didn't hold that against him! Secure and very prominent

parking was arranged for us, which was much appreciated.

The leaders of the event, Neil Furber and Rob Colbourn, greeted us with drinks, introduced us to their coaching and photography team and then hosted a very relaxed and informal dinner in a private dining room at Ye Old Bell Hotel on Barnby Moor - a great way to get to know one another and to build the right camaraderie for the next day.

After a good night's sleep we were all ready, bright and early, for the drive over to Blyton Park in Lincolnshire, the home track

Coaching, camaraderie, confidence building...the formula that helped Barry Lewis get the most out of his car

The Road to Mastery

By Barry Lewis, images by Malcolm Griffiths

Getting to grips with the right racing line using the drone



This took a lot of organising!



Neil Furber explaining the techniques behind performance driving

of Leeds based Ginetta sports cars. We had the whole circuit to ourselves and everything was set up and prepared for our arrival with all the necessary marshals and safety teams in place. After a very informative briefing session from Neil where he took us through the different layouts of the track and the basic logic of a racing line, etc., we started the day on the track.

Despite some dark clouds on the horizon, the day was bright and dry and not too hot. We were allocated into three small groups, each with a professional coach who stayed with us throughout the morning sessions, where they patiently and diligently coached us around each bend highlighting where improvements would help. These tips included basic items such as seat position - mine was wrong apparently! - but also where to brake, how much pressure to apply, where to turn in, etc. Both the short and long track at Blyton Park are pretty simple to remember, unlike at Silverstone, which helps you to prepare for what's coming next - a really important

lesson which made all the difference to my driving ability. The coaches were always encouraging us to trust our cars but didn't push us to do anything we weren't comfortable with, again very important for someone like me with very limited track experience.

The time on the track was really exhilarating, so the breaks in between our sessions were very welcome and gave us each a chance to catch our breath and to share our experiences with one another as well as with the rest of the TRTM team. Before we knew it, we were back on the track and our driving skills were visibly improving every time.

A top-quality lunch buffet was delivered and presented by external caterers and then a further briefing session was held by Neil and his team to discuss the afternoon approach, this time on the longer track layout.

We swapped coaches for the afternoon session which added some extra spice as each of the three coaches brought their own speciality - Rob is a specialised high performance driving

instructor, Neil has a more technical focus from his time with the F1 Red Bull team while Ryan is a current BMW Endurance racer! Taking tips from all three coaches certainly helped me to improve my driving skills and made me feel so much more comfortable when pushing the car more. Having said that, there were no tyre squeals or skid marks anywhere, so no cars were anywhere near their edge and the day didn't result in the need for new tyres or brakes for any of us.

By late afternoon, we were all feeling pretty drained and a few of us declined further laps preferring to sit back and relax with our new group of friends. Neil was very happy to accommodate our requests. The whole event was painstakingly captured by the TRTM photographer, Malcy, who positioned himself in some pretty risky positions in order to get some top-quality action shots, which will serve as a great reminder of the day.

The afternoon/evening plan was for an informal debrief with a hog roast at the track - another great idea as we could all



The V12 Rapide S was just as nimble around the track as the lighter cars



You have to learn to trust the car.....!



The photographer was very brave!



V8 N430 enjoying the static photoshoot

“ A surprise guest arrived in the shape of Paul Richards from Richards of England who brought along a stunning, recently restored, 1971 DBS for us to admire ”

share our experiences together. While that was being prepared, a surprise guest arrived in the shape of Paul Richards from Richards of England who brought along a stunning recently restored 1971 DBS for us to admire

- Malcy arranged some very moody pictures of the two DBSs together. Following the food, the team from Ginetta then brought out one of their latest models and gave us all a very interesting and informative update on

the history and future plans for their cars. Fascinating for those of us who knew very little about this local manufacturer.

We finally left the track at about 7.30pm and headed back to the hotel where we enjoyed a few drinks together before retiring early for a well-deserved good night's sleep. All seven of us agreed that it had been a great day, we'd enjoyed each other's company and that we'd be keen to repeat the experience sometime in the future.

I believe that similar events are planned for later in 2022 and into 2023. I'd recommend the TRTM event to anybody who wants to improve their performance driving skills. 🏁



This 1971 DBS from Richards of England was a surprise guest on the day