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Women at the wheel

Women on the road



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July 2017

Great British women in the car industry – event sponsored by Autocar

A few of the Women at the Wheel team had the opportunity to attend the Great British Women in the car industry event – sponsored by Autocar, on 21st June. It was a positive, dynamic day focusing on the great role models already in the industry but also how much more needs to be done. Topics discussed ranged from the benefits of a diverse workforce to opportunities and retention of women. With retention still an issue, the panel discussed how key challenges for women in the automotive industry could be overcome. Many recognised the risk to organisations that don't get it right – opportunities will be lost to competitors those who take action now as many are already considering it:

"We should be thinking more innovatively in how we recruit women"

"This isn't a female conversation...it's a business conversation"

"How do we inject flexibility into shift pattern roles in manufacturing?"

Disruption in the automotive industry

One of the highlights was hearing from Fiona Clancy, who talked about the Riversimple concept – 'network electric' eco car – a great example of an innovative disruption that could break 'habits' in the car industry. This may have implications for not only how cars are designed and built but how they are used – as a service rather than a product. Fiona explained that this environmental proposition is achieved by making systemic changes – "change doesn't happen overnight" – and by aiming to eliminate the problem from the beginning, "sustainability is binary – either you have a sustainable product, or you don't".

See <http://www.riversimple.com/technology-behind-rasa-hydrogen-car/> for more details.

Goodwood Festival of Speed 2017 'Peaks of Performance- Motorsport's Game-Changers'

Some WatW members had the chance to visit Goodwood during the first weekend of July – made all the better by the bright sunshine that joined the classic British weekend. There was no shortage of excitement on and off the track – and selecting highlights of the weekend was not an easy challenge;

Getting up early!

The getting up part might not necessarily be our highlight, but the benefits of being an early bird at Goodwood absolutely outweigh having your alarm go off at 5:30 in the weekend. Next to the obvious advantage of missing the notorious traffic-jams, getting to the festival area early means you get to wander the paddock and be part of the first people to see some of the world's most unique cars without the rustle of people and their camera's overflowing the place.



Goodwood Festival of Speed 2017...

Our highlight was definitely the Le Mans prototypes, Lorina McLaughlin's 1992 Benneton-Ford B192, the AMG GT Concept and W05 Hybrid from Mercedes, McLaren's incredible 570S Spider

First-glance cars

There is nothing more exciting than being part of a 'select' group getting the opportunity to glance at the cars of tomorrow, and this year's selection ranged from the Lexus LC500 coupe, to Renault's reborn sports car brand 'the Alpine A110' and the arguably 'most expensive car ever built' Rolls Royce's Sweptail. However, our WatW highlight of the 'first-glance' category definitely is the London Taxi Companies all-new range-extended electric taxi. Next to it being the first all-electric car to tackle the hill, it was also driven by the youngest female driver to ever take part in the hill-climb; 17-year-old Katie Milner!

The stands

Each year it feels like the OEMs have taken on a challenge to build bigger, better and more beautifully stands. Where Ford put their slogan '*Let go of what you think, take the leap*' into reality by offering visitors to jump into a massive inflatable stunt-cushion, BMW took a more mellow approach by building an amazing roof-top terrace on top of their stand - accessible to BMW drivers by showing their car-key. For the more adventurous, JLR's 'Land Rover Experience' offers the opportunity to take a spin with a professional driver to experience the curve hugging talents of the Jaguar F-Type.

The Honda stand was furthermore very impressive, featuring a number of engaging and unusual challenges and hands-on experiences providing an insight into their technological capability and an overview of some of their quirky features; one of the challenges even involved trying to pack as many household items as you can in the new Civic's 478-litre boot. Mercedes' stand was as exciting; providing the chance to experience a 360 driving experience involving taking a spin around the Laguna Seca race track in virtual reality. A final mention should be for the innovative Vauxhall Family Experience and Crèche, aiming to involve the whole family through a radio-controlled car racing, an ADAM Pedal Car Raceway and crazy football.

FoS Future Lab

This year's event also marked the introduction of the FoS Future Lab, a pavilion displaying a special exhibition into the future of mobility. A space walk, an airliner promising to carry 55 passengers at 2.2 times the speed of sound, and even a VR 4D roller coaster were all previewed here. Along with 'the Roborace', a 200mph driverless race-car set to take part in the Formula E championship, our main *wow-moment* went out to the Dutch designed and built Pal-V Liberty - the first commercially available flying car which could - if successful - fundamentally change the industry. With pre-orders now being open ahead of production starting in 2018, this might even be sooner than we think.

The races

At the end of the day, the main reason for heading out to Goodwood is the vast amount of hill-climb and forest rally races. With categories ranging from pre-war to Formula 1 cars, there is something to enjoy for everyone. WatW highlight this year was definitely being up close and personal when the Ferrari 458 GT2 didn't quite make the corner... might still have some hay in our hair actually...



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