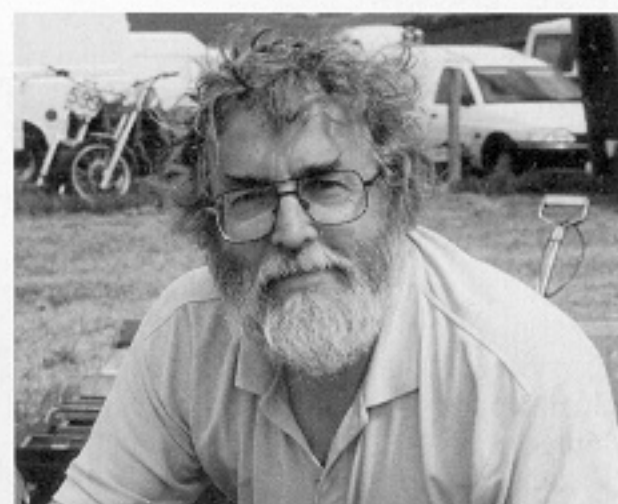


A former Supersports record-holder at the South Devon hill, COLIN POOK still holds the ASWMC 1700cc sports libre record at this most picturesque of venues. His notoriously 'shocking pink' Mallock Mk25, with 1700 Ford/Beattie pushrod unit, runs either a 5.1 or 5.3 axle ratio at Wiscombe. 'The 5.3', says Colin, 'is probably ideal with our particular gearbox. Whatever your particular set-up, choose the ratio that will allow you to change down at the Gate and stay in that gear throughout the Esses'. Here's his approach to tackling this 1000 yard hill which has been part of the British Championship calendar for the last 37 years.



## DRIVE IT - WISCOMBE PARK HILLCLIMB

**A**s the startline at Wiscombe, just before the stonewalled bridge, is at the end of a left-hand curve on which tyre burnouts take place, it's essential to position the car square to the intended line of travel as a sideways approach to the bridge can be disconcerting!

In really wet or in dry weather the start surface is good, but in greasy, drizzly conditions a lightish throttle and some torque will help you get away cleanly. In the Mallock, I start in second gear using 5500 to 6000rpm on a dry surface. This will launch the car quickly between the bridge parapets on the approach to Wis Corner, a deceptive left-hander tightening on the exit which is best approached as close as you dare to the right-hand bridge parapet. Darting momentarily right and smoothly left, you should exit the corner on the left or at worst in the centre of the road, keeping well away from the steep right-hand bank which awaits unwary nose-cones!

Hard in second and third through the curving right-hander (watch for water which lays on right in the wet) it's then top gear in the hollow before Bunny's Leap, which is taken flat on a good day. On the left, approaching the Leap, is an ironclad boarded barrier on which (on a good day) I've seen pink paint - the Mallock's sidepods are no longer fitted!

On the right is a grass bank, and even in a Mallock it is essential to try to straighten out the left kink over the Leap as the car goes very light. You can sometimes feel the front wheels touching down again and if this happens too far to the right you will bounce off the bank, across the road and down the left-hand slope until you find something hard to stop you!

Successfully negotiating Bunny's, you have a short straight on which to slow down and position yourself for the Gate.

The surface is good and it's easy to think that this right-hander can be taken at great speed - maybe it can, but it won't give you your best time! The approach is deceptive. You need to be well to the left, braking hard and turning in so that your momentum is carried through to the bottom of the Esses. If you rush into the Gate you will either disappear into the rhododendrons or understeer into what Supersports drivers refer to as Daniels' Stump (sorry Tim). In the Mallock I take third gear for the Gate but probably only get it right one time in six....

If the entry speed to the bottom of the Esses is right then a good overall time is more likely. I stay in third throughout, ending up with a full power approach to Sawbench Hairpin. The Esses should flow beautifully and in a Mallock they are steered with the seat of your overalls. Although the initial approach speed after the Gate is critical it is also important to steer smoothly, especially on the last hump before the plunge down left, right and left into Sawbench.

The car must be distinctly left of centre here as the tree roots ahead will testify - it's very easy to charge the bank and end up in the bushes! The work of intrepid photographers has confirmed that at this point the Mallock is a two-wheeler, lifting both inside wheels clear of the kerbing. Now it's time to bury the throttle pedal until the marshals' hut at Sawbench comes into view, but beware of running wide on the left-hander on the approach.

On a dry day an extreme left-hand line into Sawbench pays off, with a last minute cut across the slope getting the car settled for the sprint up Castle Straight. In the wet that approach doesn't give you anywhere to go (except the bank) if there is little front-end grip - aiming at the inside of the corner is a safe option but the hump will unstick the rear, so beware.

Sawbench on a good day is second gear in the Mallock ready to take third and top up Castle Straight. Even with a moderately powered car on a dull day, upward changes on the Straight can induce wheelspin and its associated rear wheel steering. In the warm and dry there is no problem with a Mallock, just floor it!

The approach to the top hairpin at Martini is always exciting, either because it's dry and you can leave your braking extremely late, or because it's damp, you can't see any dry line and you've got to guess which way the car's going to go when you press the middle pedal. In the dry I keep well to the right, probably braking just before the wooden barrier and turning in late to drive around the flatter part of the corner. Thus I'm able to get back on the power earlier with both driving wheels well in contact with the road. A change from top to second under braking and turning in usually works with enough, but not too much, power on again to punch you over the finish line. A lot of power too early can induce understeer - or conversely vicious oversteer and zig-zag, time consuming progress to the finish. The problem with Martini is that the best line assumes grip is available. If it isn't, then nothing will save you from the banking - except perhaps the split-second decision to dive up the escape road. Yes, I've been there too!

For hillclimbers, Wiscombe Park has the disadvantage of being the front drive to a family home, where other enterprises like farming and fishing are perhaps equally important. It therefore cannot have all the facilities offered at established motorsport speed venues. However, perhaps this old world charm epitomises classic British Hillclimbing. Love Wiscombe or hate it, producing a class winning or record breaking time there is not easy. Once you achieve it, you'll know just how special the place is.

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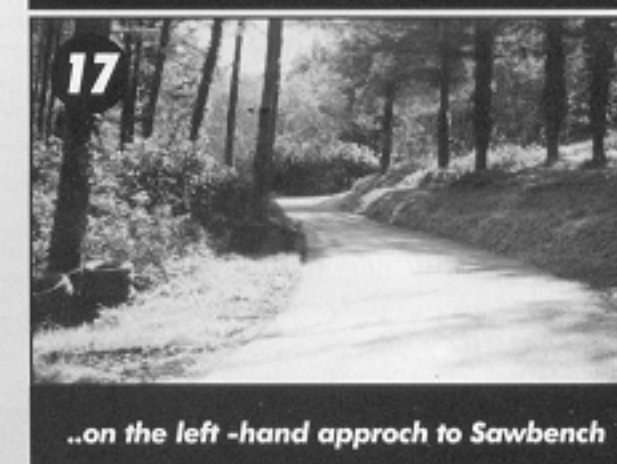
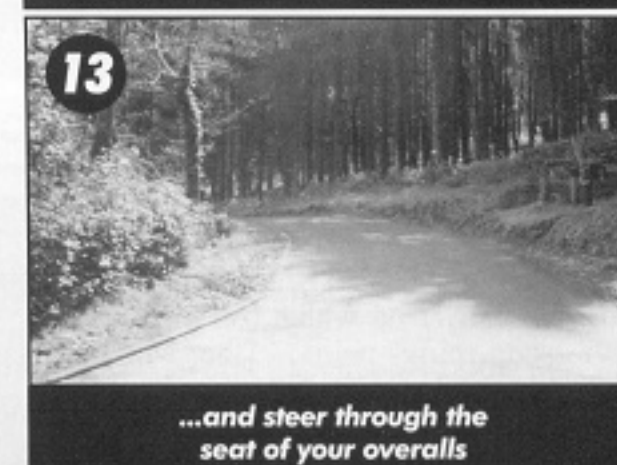
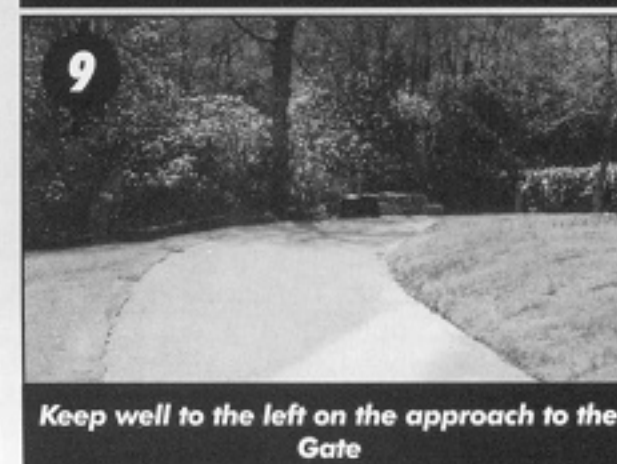
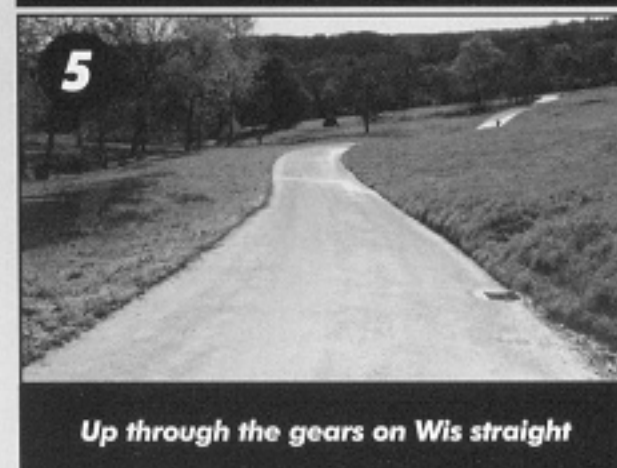
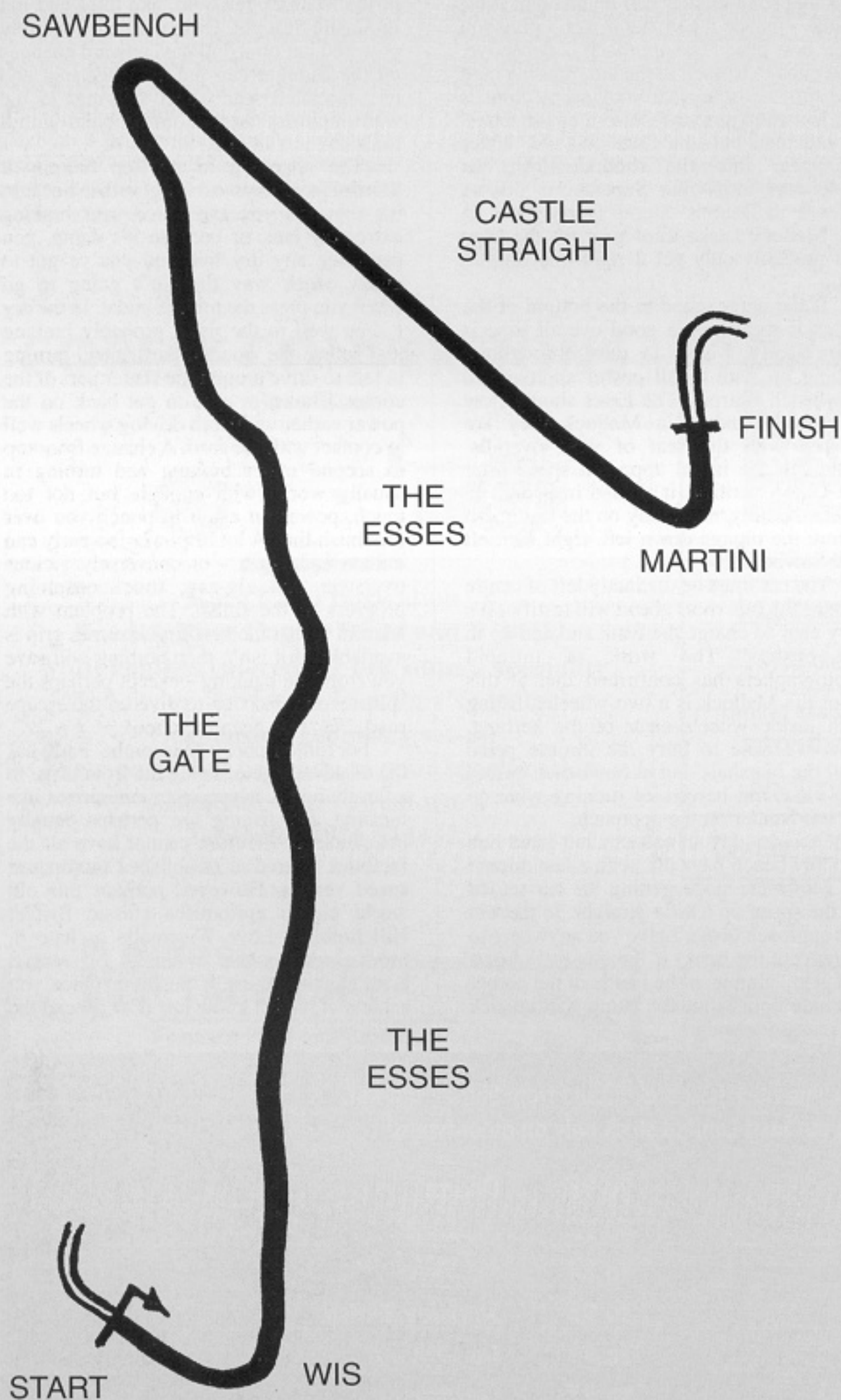
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# DRIVE IT - WISCOMBE PARK HILLCLIMB







2

*The startline - make sure car is straight!*



6

*Watch for water on the right when it's wet*



10

*Carry your momentum into the bottom of the Esses*



14

*It's important to be smooth over the last hump before the plunging approach to Sawbench - keep left of centre on the exit...*



18

*Sawbench. Take an extreme lefthand approach on a dry day...*



22

*Martini. Keep well to the right...*



3

*Into Wis - dart right and smoothly left*



7

*The approach to Bunny's - the barrier is on the left*



11

*Stay in third...*



15

*Bury the throttle pedal from here on...*



19

*...before cutting across...*



23

*... and turn in late to drive around the 'flatter' part of the corner*



4

*Exit in the centre of the road-avoid the right hand bank!*



8

*Straighten out the left kink*



12

*...keep it flowing...*



16

*...but beware of running wide...*



20

*...at the last minute to get the car settled for Castle Straight*



24

*Back on the power - but not too much, to avoid time consuming oversteer on the way to the finish*