

Way back when, in 1978, there was an ex-Formula Fordster who, having had little luck in that category against the likes of Weaver and Mansell, decided to have a crack at Prodsports. He already had a Lotus Europa Special which had been a racer in Belgium, so he decided that in the light of one Chris Meek's success with a similar car, it would be an ideal candidate for the production-sports-car class. He took his car to the people who prepared Chris's Championship winner and threw a vast amount of money at it. Its engine readout from the dyno after having been blueprinted was 148bhp, one heck of a leap up from the standard 126bhp Big-Valve engine factory figure, itself a tad optimistic, if truth be known.

For the debut race at Silverstone Club with its long straight things looked promising. Prodsports racing was changing however and there was now a serious threat to the fleet and nimble Europa. The threat was brute force and this was emphasised as first a Plus 8 Morgan came ripping past the Lotus on the straight and then a brace of TVRs with Stewart Halstead and Colin Blower behind their wheels. Stewart soon gave up racing to concentrate on being Sales Director for the Blackpool marque; Colin carried on and the following year swapped his 'M' Series coupé for Stewart's Convertible and reeled off 22 outright wins — every event he tackled with the car. The Europa driver packed it all in and went back to what he did only slightly more successfully than his racing: being a motoring hack. The last we heard of him, he was Publisher on some little-known rag called *Sports Car Monthly*, although information is somewhat sketchy about this....

It was no less than nine years after this abortive crack at Prodsports, the author got to sample a taste of the 'opposition', courtesy of David Gerald TVR Sportscars Ltd's ex-Colin Blower Convertible — oh, and their ex-works 420 SEAC racer, as well!

The David Gerald concern should be familiar to sports-car enthusiasts for they were the company who earlier this year took over the supply and manufacturing rights of all 'M' Series cars. Partners David Field and Gerald Jinks were wholesale butchers until six years ago, and they were both TVR enthusiasts and long-standing TVR Owners' Club members. By chance they got to buying and selling examples of the Blackpool beauts and finally decided to take the bold step of buying out the pre-1980 spares stock from TVR so that TVR could then concentrate on Tasmin and later-model spares. Since the take-over, business has boomed and their reputation has flourished. So, when TVR decided to sell their 420 SEAC racer project it was offered first to the genial gents from Redditch. 'I can't say how much we paid', said David, 'but it is fraction of what it cost the factory'.

They already owned the ex-Blower car which was campaigned throughout last year by long-standing friend, Andy Clarke. Andy is a 33-year-old Civil Engineer and gets his drives with 'DG' in return for looking after the car and handling the PR side. When the SEAC came along, it was natural that the man who had been successfully campaigning Class 210 karts for several years previously should drive that, too. Although a very quick driver, Andy is blessed with that rare commodity called mechanical sympathy, which suits 'DG' well. Andy doesn't break the cars so they keep their racing costs down (an important fact

PRIDE AND PASSION

If the 420 SEAC is the present pride of racing TVRs, then the 3000S is the passionate reminder of Prodsports racing a few years back. **Laurie Caddell** has a go in both

