

The TVR420 SEAC was at Oulton Park on the 9 August for the BARC NW Sports Saloon Challenge. Martin and I arrived to find the team trying to dial out a rear end suspension problem which had manifested itself during practice. Steve Cole described it as a 'bit twitchy' as he had to wait for the rear end to settle before he could take his line through the bends. The problem was thought to be either tyres, wing or too hard a suspension which had been set up for Donnington on the previous outing. The problem turned out to be tyres and a new set of rear slicks were obtained to replace the older tyres.

The 420 was not racing until later in the afternoon so we retired to the bar for a few beers. The TVR team turned up soon after and we chatted about the plans TVR have for the car's future.

Current negotiations centre on a more powerful engine and obtaining the necessary permits to enter some of Europe's more prestigious races. Some of the printable facts revealed about the car are as follows.

NCK of Coventry are building the current unit utilising Cosworth pistons which produce some 365 bhp. Top speed is about 150mph and petrol consumption during a race is around 6 miles per gallon. The suspension is fully rose-jointed as per the standard car.

After lunch the team fired up the TVR to warm it up for the race. The engine sounded terrific. Morale in the team was running high. The car was looking superb and attracting a lot of attention.



Steve Cole surges away from the start line at Oulton Park, not such a good finish.

Following the morning practice session Dave Ellis in his V8 Aston Martin was in a pole position with Steve Cole in fourth place. Dave Ellis had made further modifications to his car and was uncertain as to what the next result would be. However, during the race any doubts were soon dispelled. The Aston roared off with Steve Cole in hot pursuit. By the second lap Steve had fought his way up into second place, but the Aston powered away increasing its lead lap by lap. On the eighth lap the Aston roared through, but the TVR did not, (as Murray Walker would say 'this is a sensation'). It turned out that Steve had stopped the car after something gave at the back following his exit from the hairpin.

Once back in the paddock a large crowd watched the team quickly dismantle the rear offside suspension. They found a bolt had sheared on the hub carrier, luckily the rest of the suspension was undamaged. The bolts on both sides were quickly replaced and the rear suspension made good for the next day's racing at Donnington.



The 420 recovered at the end of the race at Oulton Park with rear suspension failure.

Steve said that up to the eighth lap the car had performed beautifully, he was particularly impressed with, as he put it, the 'bags of torque available as you go up through the gears'. He did not expect to beat the Aston in the dry but in the wet the Aston's power advantage is not match for the superior road holding of the 420. On Sunday, the TVR team had moved to Donnington. The TVR lined up at the start on slicks but to the team's dismay it started to rain.

In the end Steve Cole brought the 420 home third behind Dave Ellis in his Aston Martin and a lightweight Rover. The team felt the TVR would have won if they had raced on wets. The turnout of TVR's was poor, only two other cars were seen at Oulton on Saturday – a green vixen and a black 3000M. This is disappointing because the TVR team are very approachable and willing to talk about how the 420 is performing.

Altogether we had an exciting day out and enjoyed meeting the team and watching the 420 race. I hope other club members who have yet to see the 420 will take the opportunity of seeing it compete in the next race.

On the Bank Holiday Weekend, 25th August, Roger Connel and Paul Weldon were racing at Castle Combe, even if it was rather wet, it apparently was a good days racing.

With Roger Connel finding conditions too much for his Griff and Paul Weldon even though finishing well down, as did Roger, still won their classes.

Regards,
Martin Shaw