

Magneto

ISSUE

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WINTER
2021



LIVES! BRM V16
CONTINUATION

FIRST-EVER
COUNTACH LP400

MERCEDES-BENZ 300SLR
722'S LAST OUTING

THE TOP 50
MARQUE REVIVALS

IT'S BACK! FERRARI
365P TRE POSTI

\$23.99 | WINTER 2021



The Archaeological Automobile

Collector and intellectual Miles C Collier has written a book on how the past of a car can touch us in the present. This extract sees him relating "the historical versus the archaeological automobile"

BELOW Memory-evoking, 1960 Targa Florio-winning Porsche Spyder in its full glory.



SOME YEARS AGO, FOR THE purpose of a Porsche advertisement, we were asked to return my 1960 Targa Florio race-winning Spyder to its winning venue in Sicily. While it was there being filmed: "...We had people walk up to it, touch it and realize it is the Porsche that won the Targa Florio, and then they would break down, kiss it and start crying. It is because they remembered it, meeting it in the 1960s." [Nadia Fugazzi Volpi, *How We Filmed Derek Bell and Two Porsche 718s in Sicily*, Petrolicious].

As is typical of the particular to the general, the artefact becomes a multi-temporal place where the past inhabits the present through the personal memories of the individuals who had encountered the car at the long-gone race. They remember seeing it, being touched by it somehow. The car became their personal memory made incarnate almost 70 years after the event. The Porsche is inhabiting two times simultaneously: the past of memory and the present of lived experience. It becomes the point of many small, remembered personal vignettes, some perhaps so trivial that they had never been articulated until the car reappeared in the present. The power of memory is reactivated as culturally and socially illustrative description: "I did this," or "I remember that," rather than as historical explanation.

Let us imagine an elderly Sicilian woman in the present day who

remembers a picnic day out with her family in 1961, and how, seated atop a stone-faced embankment, they watched the racers flash by in the sun; and how she got into a squabble with her sister.

In this particular-to-general narrative structure of archaeology lie those evocations of memory. First-person stories about small acts and recollections may be aggregated from innumerable human recollections of the moment to build a picture of the past from the constituent matter of the automobile of the moment. Given enough aggregation of such personal vignettes, the shadow of large themes or events may begin to appear: history.

Narrative must be inferred through conjecture and inference. These personal stories may be as varied as the automobiles they describe, the circumstances, and the individuals telling the story. They emerge as memory, or its more powerful relative, nostalgia. They contribute to personal identity and ultimately, when aggregated over a lifetime, into what it is to be a specific individual. This is the nature of archaeological memory: something precipitated by rediscovered matter. And archaeological memory is what our resourceful Revs Institute team uncovered through applying archaeological imaginations to the examination of century-old images of the 1919 Ballot Indy effort.

This \$149.95 book can be ordered from www.thearchaeologicalautomobile.com.

'Car became their personal memory made incarnate 70 years after the event'

