

Lowflying

February 2016

for Caterham and Lotus Seven enthusiasts



THIS MONTH: THE FREESTYLE EDITION

THE FREESTYLE STORY

In 2004, some years before Caterham's launch of the Duratec-engined R300-R500 range, a small but renowned Kent-based company called Freestyle Motorsport Solutions put a radical Series 3 Caterham Duratec into limited production. Stephen Deuchar picks up the story and talks to the men behind it, Gary May and Len Unwin.

Search the BlatChat archive and you'll find no fewer than 4,273 entries under 'Freestyle' – the equivalent of roughly two mentions a day across the 9-year life of a now-fabled Caterham performance parts and engineering company, which was based in Kent and founded in 2002 by Gary May and Len Unwin. Racers, sprinters, collectors and Caterham cognoscenti of all kinds will tell you three things about Freestyle: first, that Gary's inventions and innovations in the areas of car set-up and suspension performance were exceptional and unrivalled; second, that he and Len were two of the most helpful and friendly forces in the Caterham community (and Gary the only one anywhere with dreadlocks); and third that their ground-breaking, road-going Freestyle Minister Duratec cars, designed in 2004 and built until 2008, must rate amongst the most desirable and best-handling Sevens ever made. The demise of the company in 2011 was a sad moment in Caterham history, but, five years on, it seems an apt moment to look back on their achievements. So Lowflying caught up with the two founders to hear their respective sides to a remarkable story.

After a spell at Loughborough University studying mechanical engineering, a young Gary May joined Caterham Cars in 1987 – his first job. "Loughborough was OK but I was dying to work on actual cars and I'd written begging letters to just about every car company I could think of. Caterham were still working out of old tin huts in their Surrey base but once I was there, initially just packing parts for the kits, it seemed fantastic. In fact I couldn't believe it – 20 years old and doing this! After 3 or 4 years I moved on to the production side and around 1996 I was put onto the JPE (Jonathan Palmer Evolution) cars – really I think because no-one else wanted to build them. They were very fiddly - for example the fuel tank was moulded around the diff and installation was really tricky. But I built up a big run of them over two years, most of them individually-specced and heading for Japan. At the same time, some friends and I had a sort of Saturday club - racing, sprinting and then designing and making up some small performance parts; that led to me setting up Juno Sportscars whilst I was still at Caterham. The old firm weren't too happy about that, and when the JPE run started to come to an end in late 1998, so did my job..."

Len Unwin, Caterham's Service Manager at the time, remembers this being discussed at a



The faces behind the famous name - Gary May (left) and Len Unwin (right)

management meeting. "I'd got to know Gary well by then, and had seen what he'd done – first with a few slightly off-the-wall tweaks on my son Jamie's Academy car that helped dial out the understeer for instance, and later on in helping us in the 750 Motor Club race series where we'd try out his latest inventions - like little gurney flaps here and there - and find ourselves running right at the front. So I said to Jez (Coates) 'look - we've got this guy, a real gem. Some of the parts he's made are amazing. In fact he's a genius, but he's got his own way. How can we best use him? Why don't we put him in a room, give him a chassis, let him develop and make the performance accessories – adjustable anti-roll bars, clamps, spring kits, whatever – and here in the service department we can offer them to customers as upgrades.' But Jez wasn't keen and Gary moved on. I really shed tears when he left."

Juno meanwhile started to gather momentum, making and selling modifications and parts that were consistently effective and inexpensive ("often very small and simple engineering interventions", notes Gary) and proving especially popular amongst the Club's sprinters. Juno regularly advertised through Lowflying, and with a wry and sometimes tongue-in-cheek tone to their copy. "STOP PRESS. Caterham Seven is No Longer a Sportscar" was one advert headline in January 1999 (shortly after Gary's departure from Caterham), drawing attention to a handling kit that Juno had designed to counteract the impact of the "drastic softening" that was being imposed on the production cars in an effort to improve their ride; "Intelligent Engine Mounts – designed after an exhaustive study of the Caterham's elastokinematics"; "Cynics of the

World Unite: but System-4 fuel catalysts do seem to work..." By his own admission though, running the sales and business side was not Gary's first love or greatest strength – in fact he was spending most of his time by now helping race teams running cars - and when he heard that Len Unwin had himself left Caterham in 2001, the idea of their working together began to develop. "I thought Len could sell anything to anyone ... and he had good links around the industry. So we thought, let's set up a new company, with the idea firstly of developing, manufacturing and selling the performance parts; then move to the point where we can make and sell our own ideal Caterham and finally, follow a long-term plan that eventually we'll design and build a completely new sports car". Early in 2002, Freestyle Motorsport Solutions was born. Quaife took on the machining of the blades for one of Gary's most popular inventions - the clever adjustable anti-roll bar, which for many serious owners became an essential alternative to the more laborious process of changing and fitting the range of individual Caterham bars. Len used his connections in the German Caterham race series to persuade the organisers that (unlike in the UK) the Freestyle bar would be allowed within the rules there, securing a valuable overseas market too. Caterham's chassis builders Arch Motors came on board to make up parts to Gary's designs, and Avo dampers became a collaborator and major supplier as well - to the point that, as Len recalls, "one day we discovered that we were the biggest UK customers for their coilovers after Demon Tweaks..."



Freestyle's development of a bolt-on in-board pushrod front suspension system for the Caterham proved to be another important milestone



Freestyle's development of a bolt-on in-board pushrod front suspension system for the Caterham proved to be another important milestone. First announced in late 2002, by late 2003 it was properly in production, with a complete conversion (the 'Supatrack') available on any existing car for £1,495. "We originally decided to do it because we thought it would be a good calling card for Freestyle", recalls Gary. "Other people had mooted it for years. Even when I was at Caterham it was one of those 'wouldn't it be good if we could do that' things. So this was us saying: look at us - we've actually done it". But this was far from just showing off, for there was also a very strong technical advantage over the conventional outboard set-up. As Gary explains, "the pushrod system moves the

damper faster. And the faster you move it, the easier it is to control the wheel. If you angle the dampers, their relative movement to the wheel becomes less and less. With a pushrod you can multiply that movement up, so in our system if the wheel moved an inch, the damper moved an inch. So we could go very wide track and still keep a very nice damper movement". But the theory would have to stand or fall on actual performance and results - which the system did indeed quickly deliver, and a steady queue formed at Freestyle's modest workshops at Oakview Stud Farm, near Horton Kirby, from sprinters, racers, and indeed more or less any Caterham owner of the day afflicted with "upgradeitis".

With the first part of Freestyle's business plan thus accomplished, the focus then moved

Freestyle Motorsport Solutions

Freestyle Inboard Suspension Systems
Available for all cars for conversion from 1967 to 1997.
Price from £1495.00 inc VAT

New Products
Custom Wilsons Support Brakes
Only £75.00 inc VAT
New Oilier & Frame
Only £49.50 inc VAT

Freestyle Role of Honour
Peter 'Bobby' Robinson
1st Overall & 1st Class A
Mark Durrant, 1st Class B
Steve Jackson, 1st Class B
Gavin Brown, 1st Class B

Freestyle Motorsport
01322 966 002
www.freestylemotorsport.com

to the second - specing and building the 'perfect' Caterham. The idea from the outset was to create a car that would, as the first sales brochure explained, combine "our renowned suspension and aerodynamics packages and, along with other leading automotive engineering suppliers, produce a 'state of the art' Caterham Seven. Designed to be relaxed and comfortable on the road, yet devastatingly quick on the track". There was certainly a gap in the market for a car that could genuinely provide a first class road experience with exceptional track performance: arguably, the factory K-series R500s and even R400s were on the fierce side for regular road use whereas the milder R300 was a little too tame for some on track. Minister, the Kent-based engine tuners with a long history in Formula Ford and other race series and who built the R400 and R500 engines for Caterham, believed that the smoother, more torquey Duratec would soon be the route to follow. They designed and ran a full 2.3 Duratec installation in 2003, which Caterham were actively considering in relation to their CSR project. When Caterham finally and unexpectedly announced that they had in fact chosen Cosworth to build the Duratecs for the CSR, Minister were understandably disappointed. This did however present Freestyle with an ideal opportunity to form a partnership with Minister instead. "We knew them very well" says Gary. "We knew they were good, and we thought this would be the ideal package for the new car". Len also got along with Minister's famously dour boss, Graham Fuller: "Graham always said I was the only person who could make him smile", he recalls, "but most importantly he had a reputation for doing absolutely everything spot on. We just liked the way Minister did things: it was a great tie-in". With the engine route agreed, attention now turned to the chassis. "We knew we

Duratec by Freestyle
For road and track. Supplied, built and painted to your spec.

Wide track for increased grip and control. 2.3 Duratec engine with racing spec 2000cc 16v 227hp with Cosworth Injection. 5 speed gearbox, complete set of 9" Cosworth wheels. Drive shaft, suspension, control arms, hub and disc, set steering rack on the road.

Example spec. for a fully built car:
 • 2000cc 16v Duratec
 • Cosworth 5 speed gearbox
 • Suspension (Front Independent)
 • Steering Rack (3" steering disc)
 • 9" Alloy wheels
 • Anti-roll bar & adjustable coil
 • 227hp 2.3 Duratec engine
 • Complete set of 9" Cosworth wheels
 • 227hp 2.3 Duratec engine
 • 5 speed gearbox
 • 227hp 2.3 Duratec engine
 • 5 speed gearbox

On the Road or Track for £29,975 Options up to £7000 available

Call for a full spec or a price on a motor! Freestyle Motorsport
01322 966 902 07801 749 984
www.freestylemotorsport.com

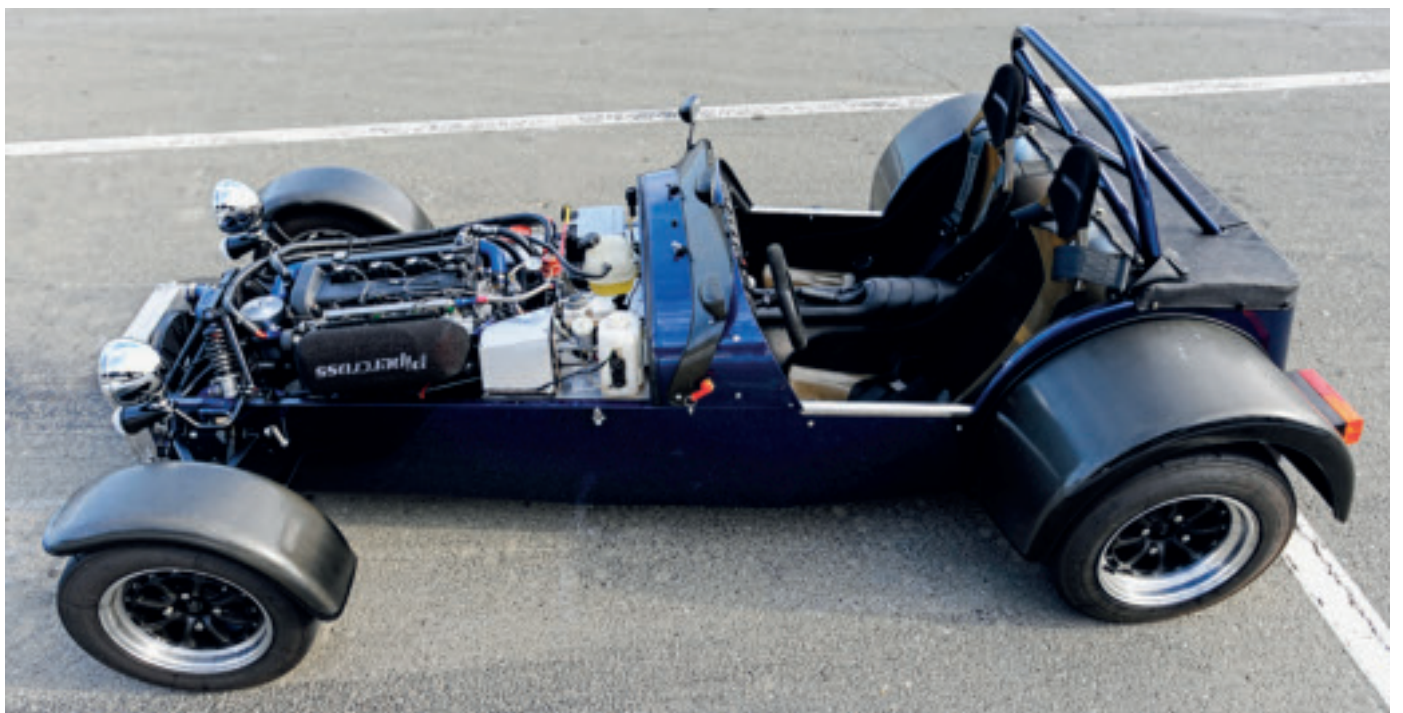
'96 SPEC AND LIVE AXLE HANDLING KITS £95
MACHINED ALUMINIUM ANTI-ROLL BAR MOUNTS £20
SOLID ANTI-ROLL BARS FROM £25
TUBULAR ANTI ROLL BARS FROM £45

NEW PRODUCT
INFINITELY ADJUSTABLE FRONT ANTI-ROLL BAR WITH ALUMINIUM MOUNTS £120

Juno Sportscars
Tel: 01689 831207 Eves & Wkds

wanted a wide track car" remembers Gary, "and the SV (appearing in some numbers by 2003) initially looked quite interesting. Anecdotal people were saying it handled really well, even though it was much heavier, made a bigger hole in the air, and was therefore slower than the S3. So I thought surely the ideal solution would be a S3 chassis with our 'Supawide' pushrod front, but with the rear track of an SV - it just seemed obvious. The only thing we had to do at the rear to accommodate the SV axle was to make a new radius arm. In some ways, it was so simple that it was a cleverer solution than the front. We had to design and make so many bits for the front, but for the back it was just one part. I remember thinking, that's such an elegant solution..."

Freestyle had first rebuilt an old 1.6 K series S3 to try out this wide pushrod front and SV rear combination, and with the experiment now a proven success and Minister, Arch, Quaipe, Avo and others closely on board, it was finally time (in the spring of 2004) to build the first Freestyle Duratec and to firm up the concept for marketing. Minister continued to refine the engine installation, manufacturing bespoke parts as necessary, and finally proposed the 2.3 engines with three power options: 215, 250 and 270bhp. A Type 9 5-speed BGH gearbox was to be standard, as Gary and Len felt that the upfront 'road and track' philosophy of the car (really its USP) would be best served by its comfortably high top gear for touring, and were confident that





'Supawide' pushrod front suspension, louvered front wings and extra wide rear wings denote a Freestyle car. Meanwhile, the rear diffuser aims to clear up the airflow at the rear for improved high-speed stability.

with the engine's impressive torque, a 6-speed option would be unnecessary for most owners, even on track. Lightweight Avo dampers, easily adjustable from road to circuit use and back by clicks on a dial, were selected for their compactness, performance and simplicity of use. Finding rear wings wide enough to bridge the gap between the S3's rear body and the extra length of the SV axle was more of a dilemma meanwhile, and Gary's first solution here was to create a mesh spacer to sit between the standard rear wing and the wheel arch. "I liked it aerodynamically because it let the air through, but Len hated it - he said 'that's SO ugly'. So we changed it ...and went instead for a new, wide wing." But two other important aerodynamic features remained central to the car's concept and identity. The distinctive 'louvre' front wings derived from Gary's awareness that "Caterham front wings created a lot of lift, so I was always looking at ideas to stall the air off the top. With the high potential top speeds coming from up to 270bhp, this was even more important. Prototype racing sports cars often had louvered wings to relieve pressure underneath and to try to create downforce from the high pressure that the wheel generates". Moreover, a minor but welcome side effect of designing

the cars for road use would be that most would have a front number plate, which Gary felt contributed to better handling through "pushing air out to the side and sealing it off from the underneath". The rear diffuser was the car's other main aero device. "We decided to panel the A-frame because that big hole underneath there really isn't nice: the air just goes up, slams into the fuel tank and comes out horribly. Just by adding a simple panel, which later became the full diffuser, in testing we found much better high-speed stability and even gained 2-3mph at the end of the long Snetterton straight". The obvious aero advantages of inboard suspension at the front (with its removal of the dampers from the airflow and its elliptical wishbones too) were now complemented by very evidently efficient air handling at the rear.

The first car (no.1, in yellow) was demonstrated at various trackdays from late summer 2004, generating some excitement - including on BlatChat, where there were many comments about its visibly impressive road-holding and performance. Freestyle soon started sending out marketing material, and there may have been some nervousness at that point from Caterham HQ who were struggling to get their own Duratec flagship car - the SV-based

CSR - ready for public launch. Gary thinks Caterham weren't really looking too closely at what Freestyle were doing, pointing out that, unlike their bolt-on package, the CSR's pushrod system was conceived without compromise as a completely fresh design, and Len confirms that Caterham "insisted on ploughing their own furrow. In fact I'd said at one point to Andy (Noble) 'have our pushrod car for a week - it's so superior to anything you've got; it really is' - but they didn't want to try it". (Ansar Ali was later to speak with Gary about the possibility of using the Freestyle diffuser and one or two other parts, but there was some concern it might undermine the CSR's strong identity and in the event Caterham proceeded alone.) The CSR was finally launched in October, and the first customer cars emerged in the following year, though in fact some initial teething troubles only served to raise the reputation and prominence of the neat Freestyle Duratec alternative which the press clearly loved. December 2004's Track & Race Cars Magazine put it up against two race-prepared cars and a Honda-engined Ariel Atom, and came away little short of astonished by its speed and agility. January 2005's Evo ran its own test under the banner "Seven specialist produces its own CSR, and gets it on the road first". Tester Roger Green noted: "With 190 lb/ft available at 4,500 revs and full beans at 6,700, the power band is much wider than on any high-powered K-series car. The ride is very composed, soaking up bumps, while the wider track creates greater cornering stability. You can now hit a mid-corner bump without the car twitching in your hands. The steering is lighter too. Overall, it's a more grown-up, more 'liveable' car".

Work began quickly on car no.2, essentially a sales demonstrator with a Quaife sequential 6-speed box and built with ultimate track performance in mind to impress potential customers. It featured in several full-page Freestyle adverts in Lowflying during 2005-6, and helped to secure a batch of orders, as well as going on to run with immediate success in the Club's Speed Championship in Brodie Branch's hands. But just as Freestyle were embarking on the process of building up the first significant group of Duratec cars in the summer of 2005 - achieving the second of the three objectives of their original business plan - Gary and Len decided to part company. "Gary was still running Juno", Len remembers, "and there was some blurring of the lines with Freestyle. I'd wanted to expand, find new premises, and start on the new car concept." Gary adds: "The problem was, we had very different ideas about what kind of car we should eventually make. Len favoured something like the original Lotus Elan (and at one point even mentioned trying to revive the Caterham 21 idea) and I wanted to do a simpler kit car with lower investment that I thought would be better for business. I think we both worried that we'd just become 'busy fools', working all hours and not making any



The author's son Seth, frightening the life out of him around Castle Combe Circuit.



The scene of the devastating fire at Freestyle's premises which spelled the end for the business.



The lightweight car of the future? Gary May clearly hasn't given up on radical thinking.

money, and we had different ideas about how to expand". But it was an amicable parting. Len joined Quaife, and Oakview neighbour Neil Lucas began to lend a hand at Freestyle. "He'd moved into the workshop next to mine in 1994, where he restored cars as a hobby", remembers Gary. "We became good friends and when Len moved on, Neil helped out considerably - dealing with customers, making parts and generally keeping me sane."

Gary was now able to concentrate on building the run of Duratec cars, with four more ordered by the close of 2005. These (nos. 3,4,5 and 6) all followed the standard Freestyle Duratec specification established with no.1, and only one of them (Peter Milner's car - no. 5), went with the higher (250bhp) Minister engine option. Two further orders were to follow (nos. 7 and 8) and business was burgeoning, but there were a few clouds on the horizon too. Gary's perfectionist approach to building inevitably meant quite prolonged delivery times and a certain amount of customer frustration; moreover he was finding that the highly competitive pricing of the finished cars was yielding very little company profit. Meanwhile, notwithstanding Neil's input, the multiple challenge of supporting several race teams and servicing a variety of customer cars at the Oakview premises was proving to be a full-time occupation in itself, even before turning

to the task of building up the new cars. Gary's legendary friendliness and generosity with his time meant he was in constant demand from all directions. In addition, the increasing rigours of the SVA test - much harder for small builders to overcome than for manufacturers like Caterham itself - were compounding the challenge of getting vehicles out of the workshop and registered for the road. Perhaps most decisively of all, Caterham Cars finally acknowledged the success of the S3-Duratec combination by launching their own R400D in 2007 and R500D in 2008. With all these factors in mind, Gary eventually took the reluctant decision to close his Duratec order book, finally finishing the last two cars at the end of 2008. The complete edition of 8 - the 'Freestyle Eight' - are listed and illustrated on p20-21. Six are in regular road use today; three are still proudly owned by their original commissioners, one of them in California. Only two, both track cars, are currently unlocated. While these eight were the official Freestyle Duratec cars, there are also a number of impressive and interesting 'specials' in existence which made significant use of Gary's skills and/or Freestyle components: for example, an S3 Duratec car built for Paul Soffe but without the pushrod front; Merrick Linnett's race car, built by Gary with all the Freestyle features but with a K-series R500 engine; Mike Quaife's beautiful BDA-engined

machine; the Levante V8 cars; and Peter de la Mare's recently and heroically completed realization of Richard Lee's ultimate V6 carbon dream. And here one should also mention a number of other Duratec pioneers who were experimenting successfully in these areas at the same time as Freestyle: Simon Bell and Dave Jackson amongst several privateers, Amedeo Castellani, Raceline, and of course - closer to the factory - Mick Attree.

Following their sponsorship of, and close involvement with the Club's Speed Championship in 2009 and 2010, the Freestyle story came to an abrupt close in March 2011. Gary explains: "I'd more or less decided to wind up the business in late 2010, early 2011. We weren't really trading; the racing season had finished, and we started selling parts off. I'd basically said "that's it", and I wanted to go and pick up my studies again, do an engineering degree, and hopefully eventually start teaching. About that time, I managed to tear a cartilage in my knee, and the day I was having the operation done in hospital, the Oakview farmer's grandson set light to a car a couple of units down from ours, and the fire spread through all the buildings. The fire engines came but they saw the gas bottles about and said they couldn't go in safely, so it just didn't get stopped. If only I'd been there at the time I might have been able to do something.... Unfortunately, Adrian Bruce's car (no.8) was in

there for a service and was almost destroyed. Neil, whose unit was next to the one where the fire started, lost two recently-restored cars. That day was just terrible. We'd been there on the farm since 1994. And I was on crutches... It was a very dark period".

But with a college place secured, Gary was able to make a fresh start that autumn and embark on a 3-year degree in Engineering Product Design at London South Bank University, graduating in 2014 and quickly finding a fully-fledged teaching post at Uxbridge College, where today he runs courses for BTec students. Last year, one or two of them expressed an interest in gaining some work experience in motorsport, and after a long period away from Caterham circles, Gary asked old friend Rob Singleton if BOSS Racing could accommodate some volunteers, and he readily agreed. "I went along to a couple of races as well to help look after the students, but in fact it seems they didn't want to get out of bed or something, and never actually turned up, so I ended up helping Rob myself!" Back at Uxbridge today meanwhile, something stirs. Gary's desire to design and build his own cars "still gnaws away at me" and he is currently working with his students on a small electric or bike-engined single seater that will be laser cut from birch plywood and bonded

with epoxy resin. "So far there's just a full size cardboard model but we have got as far as a basic ergonomic mule and the students are starting to make the jigs and suspension in their machining lessons. It could be used in events such as Greenpower or Formula Student and maybe even conventional sprints and hillclimbs. What I'm quite excited about is that as the panels will have tabs and castellations, it could be assembled with virtually no jigs, so in theory the part files could be emailed anywhere in the world, downloaded to a laser cutter and a car - or at least tub - easily constructed..."

Freestyle was always all about innovation and lateral thinking, but it was never too clever for its own good. "I'm such a massive fan of Caterhams; improving a Seven is one of the hardest things in the world to do" Gary emphasises. "So with the Duratec car, we were totally committed to the idea of the package. People often try and build the ultimate - but the ultimate in one area often brings disappointment in another. The hard bit is trying to get everything to gel well - to make the driver feel really confident at speed - and I think that's what we achieved with those cars". But perhaps the last word should go to the owners. "I researched buying a Seven for over three years" remembers Sean McPartlan, who

ordered and owns car no.7, "and it became clear that the Freestyle suspension was the preferred set up, and I recall seeing phrases like 'transformed the car' and 'night and day', and I liked how the Freestyle web pages explained how this was achieved, with the inboard front reversing the falling rate of Caterham's widetrack suspension to a rising rate suspension and so on. But in the end, leaving the slide rule and opinions of total strangers out of the equation, I now just like the way the car rides so beautifully and is so composed over anything the California roads can throw at it."

In my view (and here I should reveal myself as the owner of no.4), this is the Caterham Seven in its finest configuration yet, a balanced and deeply satisfying package for road and track, just as its creators intended. It's even quicker and more sure-footed than a much-loved SLR I ran previously for six years, and with its tidy pushrod front, slim S3 lines and purposeful rear, it looks perfectly proportioned too. The Freestyle Duratec, and the related succession of Caterham performance parts developed across many years by Gary May, are the principal legacies of a fine and important automotive company with a distinctive place in Seven history, admired - and missed today - by enthusiasts everywhere. **LF**

Freestyle was always all about innovation and lateral thinking, but it was never too clever for its own good



THE CATERHAM 7 FREESTYLE EIGHT

No.1

Registered as: 1. GX54 RHV; 2. P2 YKE; 3. GX54 RHV

Built 2004; First registered 4/2/2005

Owners: Freestyle; Keith Pryke; Lloyd Biscoe; Greg Booth; Tony Whitley from 2010

Current location: Surrey, UK

Specification: 215bhp Minister/BGH

Notes: This car established the base specification for the Freestyle Duratecs – Supawide pushrod front; SV de Dion; +40mm MOG rear wings; louvered front wings; rear diffuser; Minister-prepared engine; BGH 5-speed gearbox. Featured in Track & Race Cars Magazine test Dec 2004 and Evo test Jan 2005.



No.2

Not registered for road use

Built 2005; running by August

Owners: Freestyle; Lee Barker from 2007

Current location: unknown

Specification: 250bhp Minister/Quaife 6spd sequential

Notes: Built as sales demonstrator and used in adverts, brochures and marketing video, 2005-2006. Driven by Brodie Branch in various sprints and hillclimbs 2005-2006. Dayglo colour when sold to Lee Barker.



No.3

Registered as: GN55 XTC

Built 2005; registered 10/2/2006; delivered 4/3/2006

Owner from new: Ian Dyble

Current location: London, UK

Specification: 215bhp Minister/BGH

Notes: Current Caterham Sigma racer and owner Ian Dyble writes: 'It's a phenomenal piece of kit, equally at home on road or track. Gary is a legend.' The website www.caterhamduratec.moonfruit.com documents the early life of the car.



No.4

Registered as: 1. GN06LHW; 2. C7 POV; 3. L7 FST

Built 2005; First registered 27/4/2006

Owners: Simon Povey; Trevor Carvey; Mike Culmer; Stephen Deuchar from 2015

Current location: Kent, UK

Specification: 215 then 250bhp Minister/BGH

Notes: Co-built with Gary May by Simon Povey. Owned by current R300 racer Trevor Carvey from 2007-2014. Minister engine rebuilt and upgraded to 250bhp in 2007.





No. 5

Registered as: GN56 DUA

Built 2005-6; registered 21/9/06

Owner from new: Peter Milner

Current location: Surrey, UK

Specification: 250bhp Minister/BGH

Notes: Peter Milner writes: 'I initially wanted a 6-speed box but Gary said that with the 5 speed "I'd have all the grunt I'd ever need" (in any gear!) Len said I must be crazy to order an aluminium car. He changed his mind when he saw it...'



No.6

Registered as: 1. GN56 DYV; 2. C7 PWH

Built 2006 ; First registered 1/11/06

Owners: Jacob Reilly; Paul Hazell from 2012

Current location: Lincolnshire, UK

Specification: 215bhp Minister/BGH

Notes: The first of the cars to have the even wider (+55mm over standard) rear wing (as supplied to nos. 7 and 8 and retrospectively fitted to nos. 3 and 4). Engine rebuild in 2014 by Cosworth and remapped to 250bhp.



No.7

Registered in USA on California plates

Built as rolling chassis 2006-2008; delivered 2008; completed by owner in 2009

Owner from new: Sean McPartlan

Current location: California, USA

Specification: 260 Cosworth/BGH

Notes: Shipped without engine or gearbox to facilitate US import process. Left hand drive. CSR-spec engine supplied by Cosworth Racing facility in Torrance, CA. Featured in 2014 Road & Track article, tested alongside Caterham SP300R and Lotus Exige V6.



No.8

Registered as: 1. B14 TTR; 2. Subsequently not registered for road

Built 2007-8; delivered Aug 08

Owners: Adrian Bruce; unknown

Current location: unknown

Spec: 270bhp Minister/BGH

Notes: Adrian Bruce writes: 'Taking delivery was a real red letter day. It was just a tremendous car to drive'. For several on-track videos search Blatter7 on YouTube. Insurance write-off after 2011 Freestyle fire; believed re-built and sold for track use, 2013.

<p>Peter Carmichael</p>	<p>Posted - 6 October 2002 23:00 📅✍️💡 Freestyle are Gary May (of Juno fame) and Len Unwin (ex-factory after sales service manager and original author of the “they all do that sir” phrase)</p>
<p>RiF</p>	<p>Posted - 26 February 2003 21:57 📅✍️💡 Just visited Freestyle today. Thanks for all the help from Len and Gary and all their time spent discussing suspension, anti roll bars and shock absorbers (plus the coffee). Anyway, ordered their fantastic pushrod front suspension. If it is half as good as it looks I will be very happy.</p>
<p>Julian Thompson</p>	<p>Posted - 20 June 2003 19.16 📅✍️💡 After my recent sump/ground/£250 interface, I have made the irrevocable decision to order the Freestyle pushrod suspension, since it is my firm belief it will be the dogs danglies. We know this as upgradeitis.</p>
<p>Len Unwin</p>	<p>Posted - 9 October 2003 9.55 📅✍️💡 Gary and I have now got our pushrod demonstrator up and running. The plan is that we can take it around the area meets so you can try it, and give us some feedback. The added bonus is that you can talk to Gary about any handling queries, and I can tell you some of the stories of my years dealing with the Seven - like the Middle Eastern Prince and the JPE....</p>
<p>Len Unwin</p>	<p>Posted - 30 December 2003 9.12 📅✍️💡 Can I say that the pushrod concept, design and set up is completely Gary's. As you may have noticed Gary has a very laid back approach to life and that's why I answer the postings etc. I have had some input to the project, but pushrod is his baby. I intend though to take a bit more credit for the next thing we have up our sleeve...</p>
<p>Julian Thompson</p>	<p>Posted - 30 December 2003 18.40 📅✍️💡 Credit card at the ready, Len.</p>
<p>RiF</p>	<p>Posted -27 January 2004 18.08 📅✍️💡 Took an old friend out on Sunday who was most impressed with the stability of the pushrod suspension down country roads at speed. Definitely works, Len and Gary.</p>
<p>Frankyknuckles</p>	<p>Posted - 21 June 2004 18.57 📅✍️💡 How on earth do you get hold of Gary from Freestyle? Is there a secret code or something?</p>
<p>Atinod</p>	<p>Posted - 7 July 2004 9.52 📅✍️💡 I don't like Len Unwin from Freestyle. I didn't want to upgrade anything; now I want to upgrade everything. I can't wait to try the Duratec 2.3 super-wide track demonstrator...</p>
<p>Nick Henstock</p>	<p>Posted - 7 July 2004 10.03 📅✍️💡 He should carry a health warning. But you can't help admire what he and Gary have done. We all thought our cars handled well, and then you Freestyle them - BAM, different league..</p>
<p>Andy OH</p>	<p>Posted - 29 November 2004 13.06 📅✍️💡 I was at Brands Hatch on Saturday and Freestyle had their car there - on rails coming out of Druids and Clearways</p>
<p>Brent Chiswick</p>	<p>Posted - 25 June 2005 18.04 📅✍️💡 Thanks to Gary May for working your magic on my car this morning. Amazing how the handling is transformed for just a few tweaks. The man is a God.</p>

Noger	<p>Posted - 29 June 2005 7.53 🇬🇧 🗨️ 🖋️ 🌐</p> <p>Could God get Len to call me about an adjustable ARB, then? Obviously in heaven "I will call you back" means something different..</p>
Lennie	<p>Posted - 11 July 2005 20.59 🇬🇧 🗨️ 🖋️ 🌐</p> <p>I know most of you think he is a god when it comes to suspension and handling but take it from me, having worked with him for seven years, he's much, much better than that.</p>
AMMO	<p>Posted - 28 September 2005 6.47 🇬🇧 🗨️ 🖋️ 🌐</p> <p>I was fortunate enough to have been driven around Brands by Brodie Branch in Freestyle's Duratec car. What can I say? Wow. The narrow-bodied, ultra-wide track car is amazing. The handling is superb. The car feels planted and totally poised. The 250bhp Duratec is unobtrusive and just gets on with the job of delivering the power.</p>
Brent Chiswick	<p>Posted - 7 October 2005 12.54 🇬🇧 🗨️ 🖋️ 🌐</p> <p>I would never underestimate Gary's setting up skills....the man is to 7 set-up what Santa Claus is to Christmas, and a really nice bloke as well.</p>
Wonkycustard	<p>Posted - 7 October 2005 🇬🇧 🗨️ 🖋️ 🌐</p> <p>I find a comparison between a fat bloke and Gary May offensive. OK - they both have uncontrolled beards.</p>
The Naked Engineer	<p>Posted - 23 August 2007 09.01 🇬🇧 🗨️ 🖋️ 🌐</p> <p>Does anyone know if you can still get those Freestyle (vented) cycle guards? You know, the ones with the louvres in the top. I think the concept is great and if it works for the Sports prototypes.</p>
Mickrick	<p>Posted - 22 January 2008 12.43 🇬🇧 🗨️ 🖋️ 🌐</p> <p>Freestyle. Anyone tried contacting them lately?</p>
Prangerman	<p>Posted - 13 February 2010 17.59 🇬🇧 🗨️ 🖋️ 🌐</p> <p>Freestyle Motorsport garage sale. It ended up being a costly day as I thought I had better pick up some Valentine's Day flowers for SWMBO following my own indulgence at Freestyle. Ho hum</p>
BBL	<p>Posted - 12 June 2014 19.54 🇬🇧 🗨️ 🖋️ 🌐</p> <p>I attended a day-long blat in the San Diego area this weekend. I left my home in San Jose on Friday, driving 480 miles to southern California. The blat on Saturday was 250 miles of fun backroads cruising through mostly mountain and some desert areas. Then on Sunday, I returned to San Jose, going through Yosemite national park on the way. This was a bit of a detour, as the day ended up being over 600 miles of driving. The high temperature listed for Yosemite valley floor was 38°C that day, with many places in the central valley in California at or above 40°C. I estimate I drove at least six hours in 35°C or greater ambient temperatures that day, with no adverse behavior from the car. So if any of you Britons ever wondered how a 7 might handle excessively warm weather blatting, the answer is - very well! A huge thanks to Mr Gary May, wherever he may be now, for putting together such a fantastic car.</p>
Ansar Ali	<p>Email to SD, 4 December 2015 16.45 🇬🇧 🗨️ 🖋️ 🌐</p> <p>I know most about Gary May from reading comments on BlatChat! There is no doubt he is a clever and innovative design and mechanical engineer. In addition, his personal approach clearly resonated well with his customers: whenever his name was mentioned in despatches it was always a glowing recommendation..</p>