

# James May from BBC's Top Gear Launches New Website to Help Save Historic Race Track

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James May, Richard Noble and Tiff Needell sitting in an old Bentley admiring James' new square

LONDON, UK ([RPRN](#)) 04/01/10 — James May from BBC's Top Gear has just helped launch a new fundraising web site to support the historic Brooklands motor-racing circuit in Weybridge, Surrey. James was the first person to use the new web site to purchase one of only 2,000 virtual square-yards of the track.

The Brooklands Museum Trust who are behind the web site aim

to raise £250,000 by selling 'custody' of unique square-yard pieces from the world's first purpose-built motor racing circuit. Individual squares from the most famous 'Member's Banking' section of the circuit can be bought from as little as just £95 rising to £150 at the top of the circuit's bank.

The transactional web site built by Mercedes-Benz appointed agency Digital Annexe features a 3D virtual layout of the track combined with a unique shopping cart. Through the interface, visitors can interact with the track to find their perfect square while uncovering over a century of history of the track and its drivers. Once purchased online, visitors can then personalise the name of their square as well as upload a personal message and image. This virtual piece of British racing history makes a great gift.

As more people buy squares, a unique online community of owners will develop, each bringing life back into the track.

Julian Mitchell, Managing Director of Digital Annexe said “It was great to be involved in such a unique and historic project that uses the latest web technology to help protect the past.”

Last August, James May was the first person in 70 years to race on the Brooklands track during his record breaking

attempt to build the longest slot car-racing track using Scalextric.

The legendary Richard Noble - the previous holder of the World Land Speed Record - already has his own square.

<http://www.bankingonbrooklands.co.uk>.

**For further information, please contact:**

Digital Annexe:

Julian Mitchell

Managing Director

Tel: +44 (0)7980 802149

[julian@digitalannexe.co.uk](mailto:julian@digitalannexe.co.uk)

<http://www.digitalannexe.co.uk>

Brooklands Museum Trust

Valerie Mills

Tel: +44 (0)1932 857381 ext 255



Screen grab of 3D interface for Brooklands Museum Trust

valeriemills@brooklandsmuseum.co

or

Karen McKenna

Tel: +44 (0)1932 857381 ext 241

karenmckenna@brooklandsmuseum.com

### *Notes for Editors*

Brooklands Museum features a vast collection of historic aviation and motoring exhibits – including giant racing cars and the first British production Concorde – and attracts more than 110,000 visitors annually. Brooklands hosts many aviation and motorsports events, as well as being a popular conference and banqueting venue and a major educational destination.

It is managed by Brooklands Museum Trust, an independent charitable trust formed in 1987 to establish a museum on the site of the world's first purpose-built motor-racing circuit (opened in 1907 and closed in 1939 at the outbreak of WWII) and also of Europe's most productive aircraft factory over more than 80 years between 1908 and 1989.

### Background on the Brooklands track

Brooklands was conceived as the first place on the British mainland where manufacturers could develop and test fast, powerful motorcars legally and safely, but Hugh Locke King's pioneering vision was quickly expanded to make Brooklands the world's first purpose-built motor racing circuit.

Built in a mere nine months, by an army of some 2,000 labourers using hand tools and helped by steam shovels and a specially-laid railway, the circuit was, when it was officially opened on 17 June 1907, the largest concrete structure in the world. The oval main outer circuit - 2¾ miles long and 100 feet wide, and embracing a further ½ mile Finishing Straight – incorporated two giant banked curves, the largest of which was 29 feet high, and allowed

cars to corner at unprecedented speeds.

Motor racing at Brooklands acquired its own distinct flavour in the 1920s and '30s, especially with the development of giant aero-engined racing cars exemplified by Count Zborowski's Chitty Bang Bang and the car which would prove to be the fastest-ever on the track, John Cobb's 24-litre Napier-Railton, which lapped the outer circuit at an average of 143.44mph in 1935. The track also hosted the fastest-ever pre-war 500 mile race, and countless innovative events like the Junior Car Club's Double Twelve – a 24 hour race run as two 12 hour heats on consecutive days.

In 1946, Vickers purchased the track outright, and proceeded to build a world-class range of aircraft including the pioneering Viscount turboprop airliner, the Valiant V-Bomber and the VC10. The last great aircraft project on the site was Concorde, with over one third of every Concorde airframe built at Brooklands.

By 1989 the aircraft factory – by then owned by British Aerospace – had closed. In just over 80 years, 18,600 aircraft of some 260 different types had been completed and made their first flights at Brooklands – more than at any other manufacturing site in Europe. Two years later Brooklands Museum was opened, based on 30 acres of the original site and embracing most of the surviving motoring and aviation buildings and the steepest part of the Members' Banking of the 1907 circuit.

## About Digital Annexe

Founded in 2006, Digital Annexe specialise in automotive content development and web site maintenance. Digital Annexe mainly work with Mercedes-Benz UK and produce most content across their cars, vans and trucks web sites

<http://www.mercedes-benz.co.uk>

<http://www.digitalannexe.co.uk>

**Media Contact Name:** Monique Lester

**Media E-mail:** [info@londondigitalpr.com](mailto:info@londondigitalpr.com)

**Media Phone:** +44 7958 411653

**Media Web Address:** <http://www.londondigitalpr.com>

**Company Contact Name:** Julian Mitchell

**Company E-mail:** [julian@digitalannexe.co.uk](mailto:julian@digitalannexe.co.uk)

**Company Phone:** +44 7980 802149

**Company Web Address:** <http://www.digitalannexe.co.uk>

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