

Duo take to the tracks



Reporter Alan Golden in an AC Cobra and, below, at higher speed on a BSA racing combination.

SURREY Advertiser reporters Alan Golden and Beatrice Phillpotts took to track and skies at the Wings & Wheels launch on Tuesday.

BEATRICE WRITES:

I was one of the lucky few to be offered a host of high-octane once-in-a-lifetime experiences in the space of a mere morning.

The annual Dunsfold Park press launch for Wings & Wheels must be the hottest ticket in town because invitees don't just get a preview of some of the most exciting aerial and track action coming up – they can actually join in.

My action-packed morning first launched me skywards courtesy of helicopter pilot Larry Major, who was providing bird's eye views of the *Top Gear* track and the surrounding countryside.

It was my first helicopter ride and I hadn't appreciated that the fabulous 'wraparound' view even extended under my feet thanks to all that glass.

The ride also included a grandstand view of daredevil

display pilot Brendan O'Brien flying low over the runway in hot pursuit of a runaway truck as a taster of his forthcoming Wings & Wheels stunt to land his plane on the top of the moving truck.

Switching from high-speed flight to high-performance cars, I was then raced around the track by Glen Mason in his Ford GT40Mk 1 Tornado.

His replica of the legendary sports car that thrashed the opposition four times in a row at the Le Mans 24 hours race in the 1960s went like greased lightning round the notorious Hammerhead bend and for one glorious moment I was up there with The Stig.

ALAN, WHO STAYED MUCH CLOSER TO THE GROUND, WRITES:

I risked life, limb and sanity to undertake a highly (un)scientific comparison of racing motorbike and sidecar combinations. I had only ever witnessed the sport from the comfort of an armchair, but my view that the person flinging themselves all over the place in

the sidecar had to be mad was only confirmed.

To be honest, my first outing was relatively sedate, sitting rather than kneeling in the Norton sidecar, with owner Roger Bird at the controls.

He was having to be fairly circumspect for fear of lifting the sidecar's wheel too high in the corners.

Completely different was a more modern BSA racing combination, piloted by ex-racer Tony Edwards of Chobham.

Even with the comfort of a cushion to kneel on, and navigating the track at a relatively slow pace, I had to hang on with both hands and felt every bump in the track, which was rather too close to my face for comfort.

That was the first lap – Tony decided to really let rip for the second circuit, or so it seemed, with the G-forces doing their best to dislodge me. I tried to lean out going into the left-hand corners, but I'm not sure that I really made that much difference. It was, though, an exhilarating experience.

