



Racing in the Classic Sports Car Club

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I've been waiting for this. And by waiting, I mean more sitting in the vague hope of eventually something happening that would allow me to have a proper go myself.

That something happened last May when I finally signed my mortgage agreement and bought a house. That ended around five years of strict deposit saving. OK, so much of that is now replaced with a monthly direct debit, but it also removed the mental barrier of 'I can't justify spending cash on anything else until this is done'.

With that obstacle consigned to history, now's the time to go a bit crazy.

This year I'll be doing my first, and likely only, full season of racing – in the Puma Cup with the Classic Sports Car Club.

It all started with a guest drive last year. I was offered a go in the Ford Racing UK Puma, run by series promoter Kevin Shortis, at Donington. The races cater for two drivers, so I dragged my friend (and seasoned Mini Challenge racer) Hamish Brandon along to coach me. Testing was a blast. The race less so, owing to an

accident at the first turn that took us out of the running. So much build-up for just one corner and a dose of pure bad luck.

Regardless, the weekend was still so much fun that we've taken the plunge, bought our own Puma and will run it with another good mate of mine, Rob Sims, under the auspices of his eponymous team.

I'm now experiencing the life of a club racer. Panicking about finding the budget to get through the full year? Check. Planning for every little contingency, such as punctures, extra fuel and rollcage padding? Check. Block-booking hotels early to try and get a few quid off here and there to maybe put towards an extra set of Dunlops? Check. Wondering why the hell I'm doing all this for the umpteenth time? Check.

Proper club motorsport – it's all glamour.

But the overriding feeling is one of pure excitement. Turning up to a circuit on the other side of the fence. Dropping the press pass and grabbing my race kit instead. It's been a long-held dream – to see turn two of a race and (hopefully) far beyond.

If you see us at a round this year, feel free to come and say hello. Just try and hold back from pointing and laughing.