

## **Octagon circuits**

1. This appendix describes the individual Octagon circuits. Their licences are outlined in Table 4.2. Octagon is the owner of four circuits, and through this merger has acquired a management lease on Silverstone for 15 years.

### **Brands Hatch**

2. This circuit is located in Kent just outside the M25 ring, and is a prestigious venue partly because it used to hold the British Formula One Grand Prix. It stages around 34 events a year with its largest events being World Superbikes, two rounds of British Superbikes and two rounds of the BTCC. Prior to the merger it accounted for around 60 per cent of Octagon's event revenue. The circuit operates a race school and various other experience activities and corporate facilities. Expansion and development of the circuit are constrained by the small size of the site and the fact that it is located in protected greenbelt land.

3. One TDO told us that this was an extremely popular circuit because of its location, facilities and excellent layout. The circuit is used either in the shorter Indy layout or the full Grand Prix circuit. However, due to planning restrictions, the Grand Prix loop can be used only for a maximum of 24 days a year for race vehicles, and a further 20 days for vehicles with silencing approved for use on public roads. As mentioned in paragraph 3.11, BHL, the circuit's previous owners, had applied for planning permission to upgrade the circuit to host the Formula One Grand Prix but the application was dropped after Octagon reached the agreement with BRDC to stage the race at Silverstone.

### **Cadwell Park**

4. This 3.5-km circuit in Lincolnshire has limited facilities, partly due to its distance from main centres of population. We were told that the circuit was highly regarded by motorcyclists because of its layout, and it draws large crowds to its round of British Superbikes, its largest event. It stages around 33 events a year.

### **Oulton Park**

5. This 2.7-km circuit is in Cheshire. It has attracted more investment than Snetterton or Cadwell Park from BHL and subsequently Octagon. In particular, corporate facilities have been developed here to cater for the North-West market where there are no other circuits (apart from the minor Three Sisters circuit). The ATDO told us that this was highly regarded as a technical circuit, and noise limits were reasonably relaxed. It stages around 25 events a year, including rounds of British Superbikes, the BTCC and PowerTour. Planning restrictions mean that it can only operate 30 events a year, with only four on Sundays.

### **Snetterton**

6. This 4.3-km circuit near Norwich is based on an old airfield. It is a fast circuit and we were told was better suited to cars than to motorbikes. It stages around 38 events per year, including the major British championships.

### **Silverstone**

7. Silverstone hosted 37 race meetings in 2000 including the British Grand Prix. Other high-profile events include two BTCC meetings, one round of British Superbikes and the FIA GT meeting. We heard

that Silverstone was not particularly popular with motorcyclists due to its configuration and speed (although the planned reconfiguration of the circuit will slow average speeds and should make it more motorbike-friendly). Octagon told us that, as Silverstone was an FIA-approved testing circuit for Formula One (see paragraph 4.64), it ran a large number of test days dedicated to Formula One teams. Many of these are in the summer months to coincide with the peak Grand Prix season, and the circuit is closed to all other uses for three weeks around the time of the British Grand Prix. Octagon told us that the availability of the circuit to other users, both for races and for participatory events, was constrained as a result. However, Octagon added that it considered the assets at Silverstone to have been under-utilized and hoped to improve operational efficiencies by making much better capacity utilization of the various circuits.

8. The full Silverstone Grand Prix circuit is the longest UK licensed circuit at 5.1 km. It can be divided into a number of smaller circuits, and it is possible to operate two of these simultaneously. The full Grand Prix circuit is rarely used for club racing and participatory events. Another, separately licensed circuit, Stowe, is laid out inside the main Silverstone circuit. This 1.3-km circuit is licensed for racing in its own right, but is primarily used for experience days and the Silverstone racing school. It is not usually used for track days.