

TM  
Those were the days ...

Motor Racing at

# Brands Hatch

in the eighties





## Dedication

To John and Angela Webb, for making Brands such a special place, and to JP and Will for their continued enthusiasm and encouragement.

## Acknowledgements

Thanks to Bobbie Pearman for providing storage for all my old magazines and programmes, and to Kevin Wood at LAT for access to bound volumes of *Autosport* and *Motoring News*. All photographs are the author's own.

## Bibliography

Sundry copies of *Autosport* and *Motoring News* from 1980-89; *Autocourse* 1980-81, 1982-83, 1984-85, 1986-87, edited by Maurice Hamilton, published by Hazleton Publishing; *Nigel's Day*, edited by Mike Doodson, published by Brands Hatch Publications, 1986.



# Foreword

By the start of the eighties, under the stewardship of its entrepreneurial managing director John Webb, the Brands Hatch circuit in Kent was firmly established as one of the world's classic racing venues. It had grown from humble beginnings as a motorcycle grass track into a facility of international renown, hosting top class motor sport. The decade that was to follow reinforced this position, with the eighties probably seeing Brands at its peak – particularly when it came to staging Formula One Grand Prix events. The circuit managed to host five consecutive Grands Prix from 1982-86 inclusive, including organising the 1983 Grand Prix of Europe in just ten weeks.

The official statistics for the 1986 British GP, the last to be held at the circuit, give some indication of the massive undertaking involved in arranging an event on this scale. Some 55,000 admission tickets were sold in advance, while the total three-day attendance figure was 186,000. Corporate guests totalled 22,500, many of whom arrived via one of the 2225 helicopter movements over the weekend. A full list of statistics from this memorable weekend, which makes interesting and amusing reading, can be found in the appendix at the back of this book, and shows just how skilled and polished the members of the Brands team were at race organisation. No wonder they won a number of awards for their hard work.

I make no excuse, therefore, that much of this book focuses on the Formula One activity at the circuit. It was what I and many thousands of other race goers went along to see. This is not intended to be a comprehensive account of all the races, major or otherwise, at the Kent

venue during the decade, but more my own personal 'scrapbook' if you like. Some years I visited more than others, often lack of time or money precluding attending as many meetings as I would have liked.

The camera I used for the photographs was a 35mm Pentax ME Super, fitted initially with a cheap 300mm telephoto lens and later with a Tamron 80-200mm zoom and 2x converter, as I recall.

If some of the photos look similar, it's because, at any one meeting, they were probably all taken from the same place. Once you find somewhere good, you tend to stay there, and over the years the possibilities for taking good close-ups of the cars on track were diminishing. Gradually the spectator was being pushed back further from the track with more and more catch-fencing erected to spoil the view for the enthusiastic photographer. A few good spots remained, however, such as the infield at Druids, the slowest corner on the circuit, and this became a favourite spot.

The eighties was also a turbulent time for Brands – it passed into new ownership in 1986, and then, a few days later, lost the right to hold the British Grand Prix. Fourteen months after that new owner John Foulston was dead, killed in a testing accident at Silverstone, to be replaced by his daughter Nicola. By the end of the decade, after a series of clashes of both personality and management style, John Webb, who had managed the circuit for nearly 40 years, had left, bringing to an end an era in the history of Brands Hatch.

This book isn't about the politics though – it's about the racing.

Chas Parker

## Introduction

Brands Hatch in the 1980s really was a spectator's dream circuit. The banking at Paddock Hill Bend, which has been cut back and reduced dramatically in recent years to increase the run-off area, could accommodate thousands of people on its own, and this was a favoured spot for many. From here you could see the cars plunge down the steep incline of Paddock and then climb up the other side of the hill to the sharp right-hand hairpin at Druids. They would then drop down again to Graham Hill Bend, which in those days was a fast left-hand sweep and not the tight bend it is today, and along Cooper Straight. Depending exactly where you were positioned on the banking, you might also be able to see the cars coming back around Clearways and Clark Curve.

The atmosphere on Paddock at Grand Prix time had to be experienced. You were sometimes trapped in a sea of like-minded people, and a trip to the loos or to get an ice cream could take a long time indeed. You had to time your excursions right in order not to miss any of the on-track activity, but then that was half the fun.

One of my personal favourite spots had always been Druids, since here the cars slowed so you could see them better, and there was often an opportunity for a driver to outbrake another as they entered the corner. There was also the opportunity for plenty of incidents. The inside of the corner, where a photographers' gallery was located, also provided splendid viewing and, rather obviously, good photographic opportunities. Its only



drawback was that your view was restricted to that narrow section of the track.

The thing about Brands that set it apart – and still does, of course – is the fact that you can see so much of the short Indy circuit from any one place. Move on round from the outside of Druids and down towards Graham Hill Bend and you are presented with a completely new vista. From the banking here you can see the cars approach Paddock under braking, drop dramatically down the hill

before they are momentarily lost from view behind the trees as they round Druids and then plunge down past you. Graham Hill Bend was a great place for close-up photos if you didn't have a long telephoto lens on your camera, but they sped past in the blink of an eye and you had to be quick, pre-setting the point on the track where you wanted to focus, panning at exactly the right speed and squeezing the shutter release button at just the right moment. It took some practice but the results, when you did get it right, were very satisfying.

South Bank was the place to be if you wanted to watch from the comfort of your car, except at very large meetings when vehicles were prohibited. The cars came racing out along Cooper Straight in front of you, up through Surtees and then either out of sight, if they were on the Grand Prix loop, or round McLaren, Clearways

and Clark and onto the main straight. Again, you could see them as they rushed down Paddock Bend at the start of another lap. South Bank used to be packed with cars at most meetings, and it became a Brands tradition for drivers to sound their horns as the winner completed his lap of honour. It could be a problem getting out if it had been wet, as you tended to just slither through the mud to the bottom of the hill ...

The inside of Surtees is one of those lesser-known great spectating places at Brands. Just as at Graham Hill Bend, you can look down into the cockpits as the cars pass through the left-hander, and then it's out into the country. Walk along the straight that leads to Pilgrim's Drop and you are soon at the vehicle bridge that straddles the track just behind Druids Bend. Cross the bridge and turn left, down a steep wooded track and back up the other side (difficult when it's been raining and the mud is slippery). By this time, if you're out of condition like me, you're panting a little but the effort is worth it. Now you're on the inside of Hawthorn Bend and the cars scream past below you through the fast uphill right-hander – another great place for photos. A short stroll along the Derek Minter Straight and you're at Westfield, another right-hander and more photo opportunities, before the track plunges downhill once again into the wonderfully named Dingle Dell. Here is one of those places where you just put the camera away and watch, marvelling at the sight of cars alternately swooping down and then climbing through the woodland. Not that many spectators make the trek out here on race days, so it's quite quiet and peaceful (if a racing track can ever be regarded as quiet and peaceful, but you know what I mean). Here you are away from the hubbub of the Indy circuit arena and it's just you and the cars.

Dingle Dell Corner (these days renamed Sheene

Curve) used to be a sharp right-hander, but in the mid-eighties it was replaced by a right-left-right chicane, the kerbs of which used to sometimes launch cars off the ground as they crested the rise. Another short walk takes you down to the next corner, Stirlings, where the path leaves the track and you have to walk through the woods a short way before you can regain the circuit just after the exit of the corner. Stirlings is a cambered left-hander, and I used to enjoy standing just before it and watching the cars power through going away from me. Then it's down to Clearways and over another vehicle bridge to the outside of the circuit once again.

Clearways provides a wonderful panoramic view and, just like Paddock Hill Bend, in the eighties the banking there could accommodate a large number of people. Today it has been cut back extensively in order to increase the run-off area trackside, but the view is just the same. In the distance you can just make out the cars as they negotiate Paddock but they really come into view properly as they exit Graham Hill Bend and race towards you around Surtees. If they are using the Indy circuit, they continue towards you, braking for McLaren and then powering past you around Clearways and onto Clark Curve and the Brabham Straight. The cars are turning right for a long time here, teetering on the edge of adhesion, and it's a great place to observe good car control.

I've never bothered to watch much from along the Brabham Straight as cars just rushing past don't excite me as much as seeing them being cornered at high speed, but, that said, there's nothing quite like being alongside the grid at the start of a race.

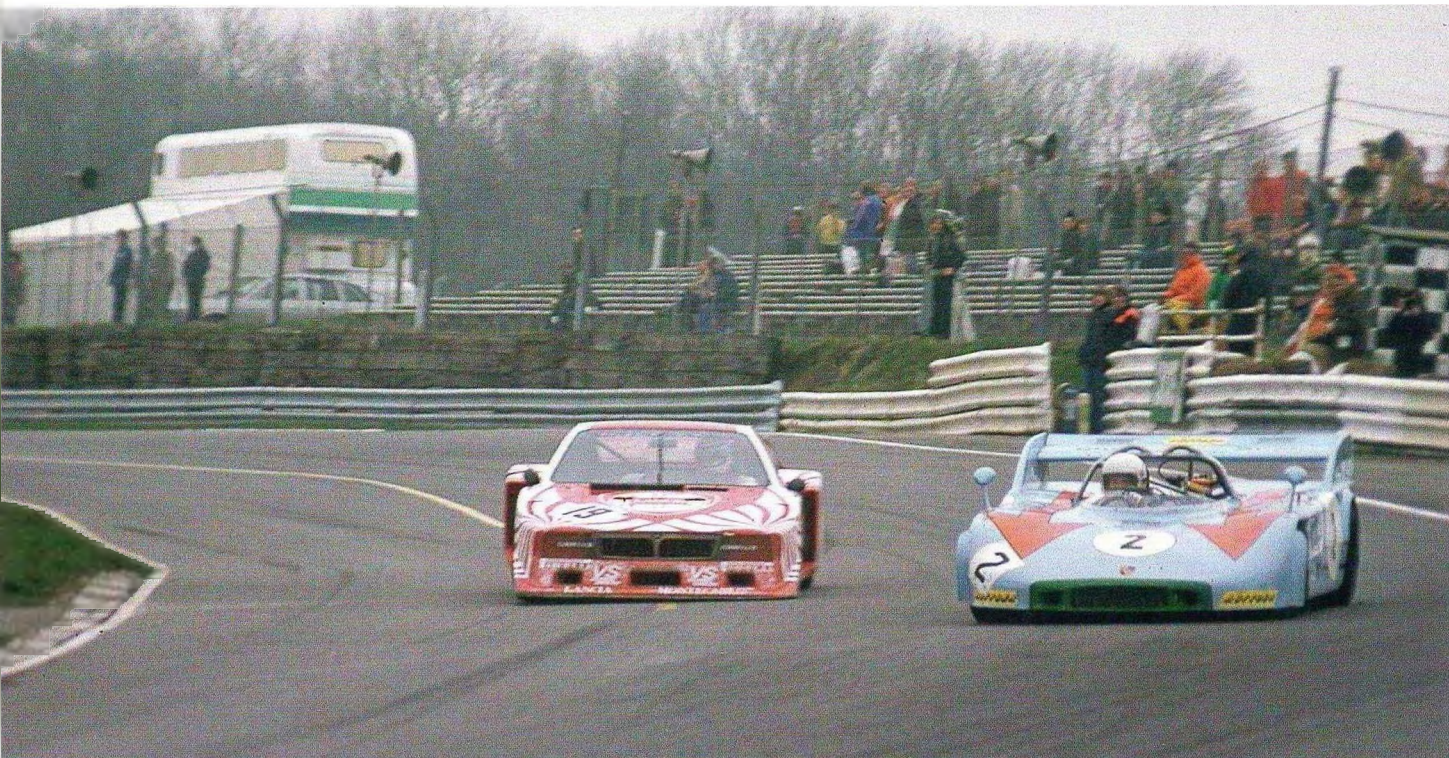
So there you are, a lap of Brands Hatch from the spectator's point of view; a route I've walked many times over the years.

## 1980

There was a bleak start to the new decade at Brands at the World Championship for Makes six-hour sports car race, and not just because of the chilly conditions in March. At nearly half-distance, Chevron driver Martin Raymond was killed when he was struck by

another car while working on his own at the side of the track at Dingle Dell. The race was stopped and restarted an hour later, but only run as far as was needed for it to count for full points in the championship.

I had been standing at Dingle Dell not long before and had walked back, against the direction of racing, up the hill to Westfield. It was while I was standing there that I became aware of a commotion further down the



In his Lancia Beta Monte Carlo Riccardo Patrese battles for the lead of the 1980 Brands Hatch 6-hours at Paddock with the old, but still competitive, Porsche 908/3 of Siegfried Brunn.

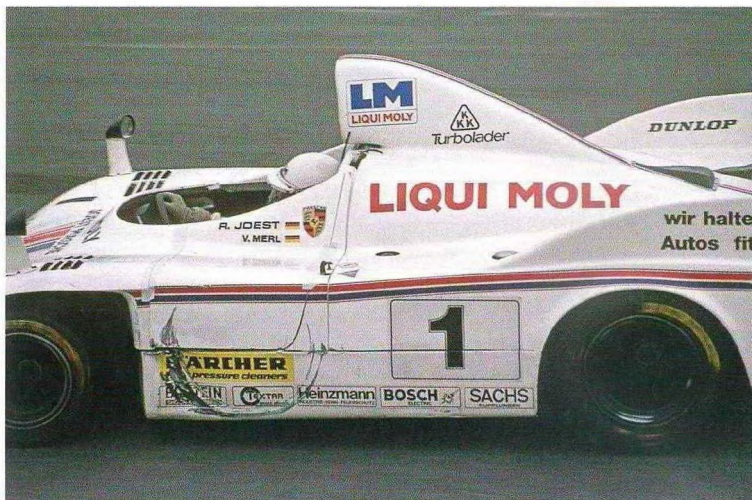
From the inside of Graham Hill Bend you could see the drivers working away inside the cockpit, and – if you were quick – manage to capture them on film as well. This is eventual winner Riccardo Patrese in the Lancia Beta Monte Carlo, which he co-drove with Walter Rohrl during the 1980 Brands Hatch 6-hours.

track. I hurried back down and saw wreckage. When I asked someone what had happened, they said that a car had struck Raymond, throwing his body up into the trees. It was the first time I had been at a circuit when someone was killed and it brought home the fact that there could be a dark side to the sport that I loved so much.

Riccardo Patrese and Walter Rohrl won the shortened event in their Lancia Beta Monte Carlo, with team-mates Eddie Cheever and Michele Alboreto in second, after the leading Porsche 908/3 of Reinhold Jost and Volkert Merl retired just after the restart.

I missed history being made when Desiré Wilson became the first woman to win a Formula One event, taking victory in the Aurora AFX round at the circuit on Easter Monday driving a Wolf WR3. I had travelled to Thruxton in Hampshire to see the traditional Formula Two meeting there.

In May, there was a special event at the circuit, when racing legend Stirling Moss was honoured at a tribute meeting. An impressive array of his contemporaries attended the meeting, including five times World Champion Juan Manuel Fangio, along with Jackie Stewart, John Surtees, Denny Hulme, Roy Salvadori and Innes Ireland. A mouth-watering array of cars gave the spectators plenty to ogle at. I managed to get on to the grid for the presentations and was fortunate enough to be able to photograph close-up the likes of Fangio and Moss. A particular highlight for me was



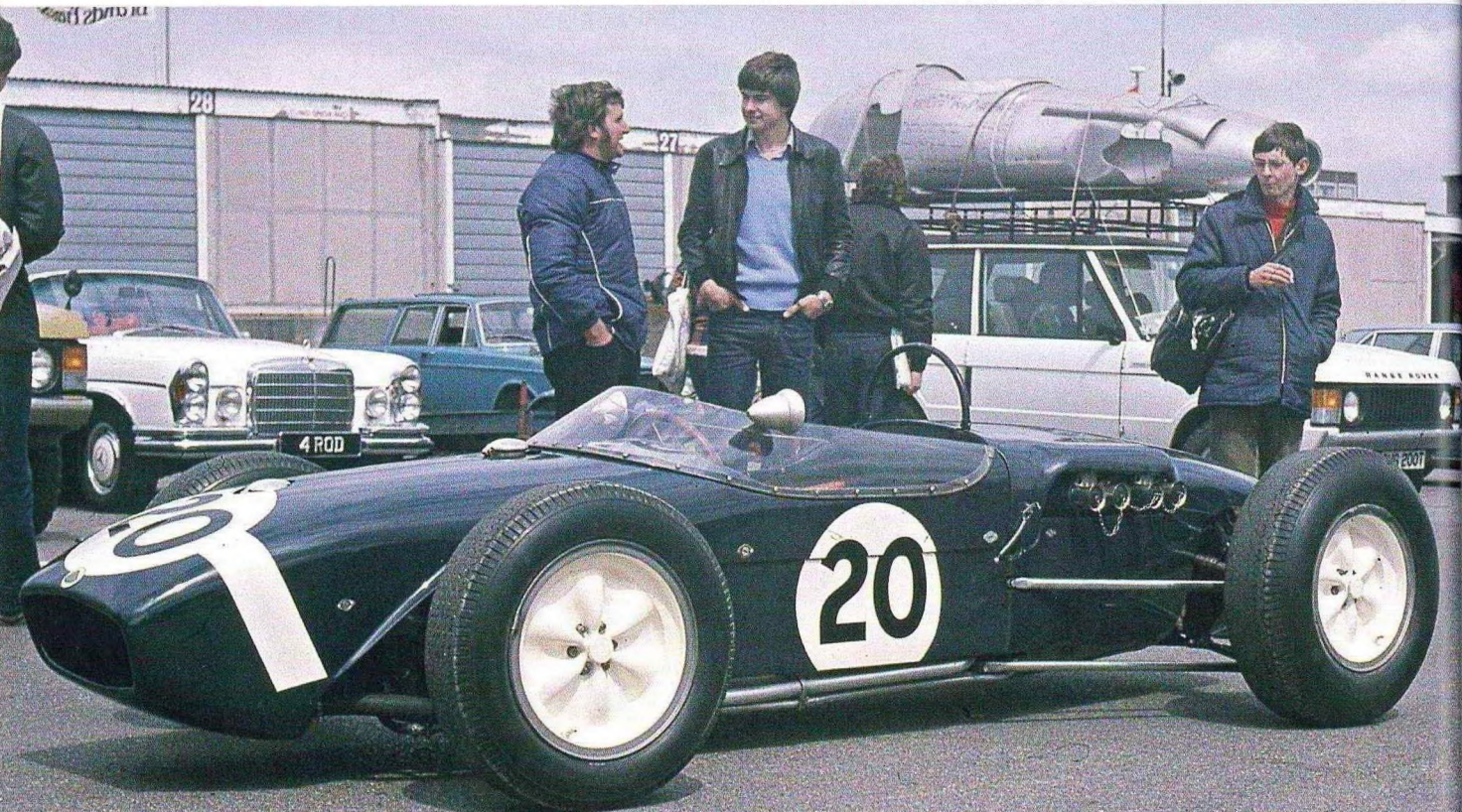
Reinhold Jost shared this Porsche 908/3 with fellow German Volkert Merl in the Brands Hatch 6-hours. The pair qualified on pole position and were leading by over a lap when the race was stopped after 111 laps. At the restart, the gear linkage failed and the car was retired in the pits. The black tyre mark on the side is evidence of a brush with another car.



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The glorious sight of a 1958 Vanwall behind the pits on Stirling Moss Day in May 1980.

The event brought together a number of the famous cars that Moss had driven during his illustrious career, including this 1961 Monaco Grand Prix-winning Lotus 18 belonging to Rob Walker, which was crashed during the demonstration laps by Innes Ireland, unfortunately. But what is that chassis strapped to the top of the Range Rover in the background?





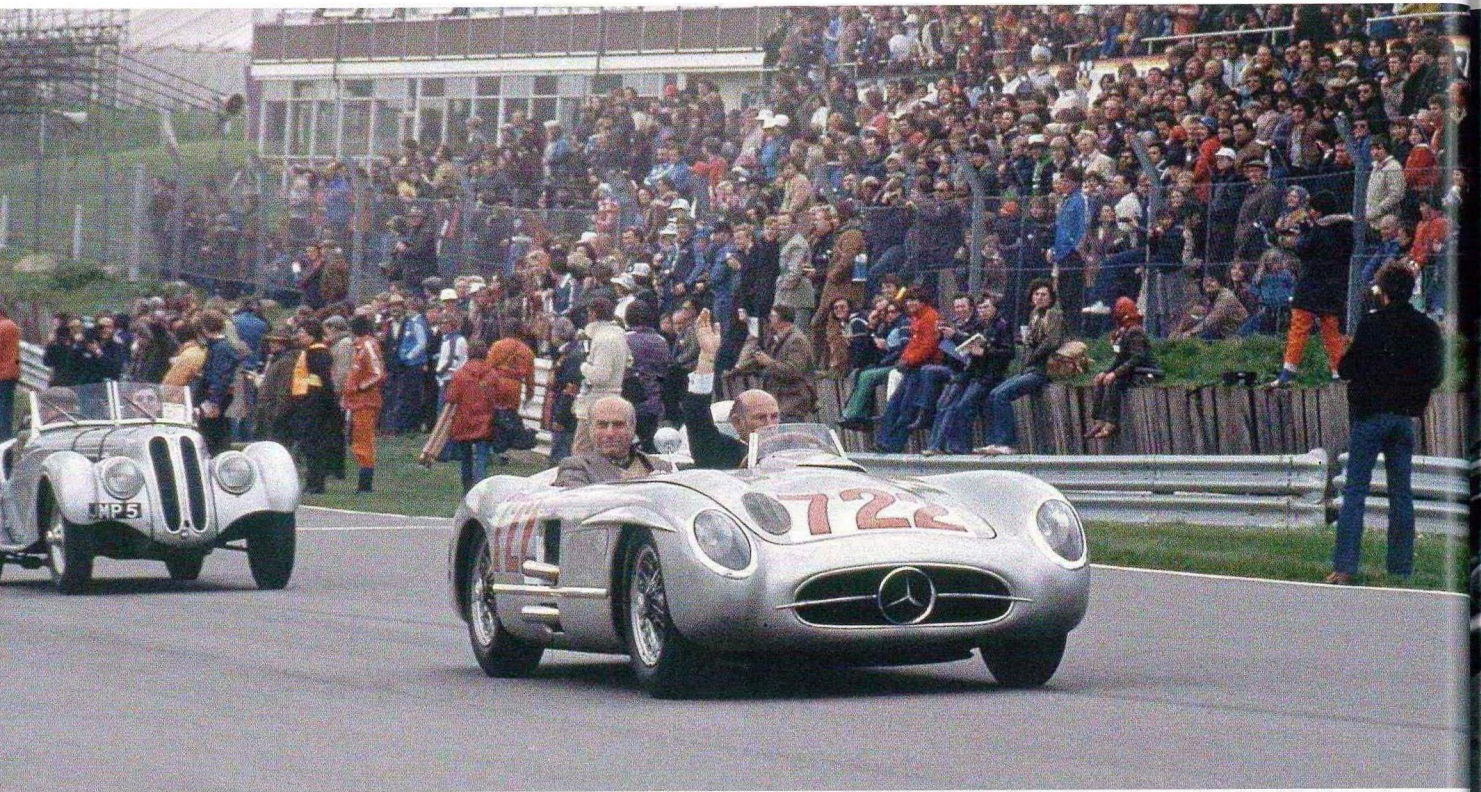
A number of Moss' contemporaries were also in attendance at the meeting. Former Lotus Grand Prix driver Innes Ireland looks on as Moss is interviewed by commentator Raymond Baxter.

seeing the pair together in a Mercedes-Benz 300 SLR, with which Moss had won the Mille Miglia in 1955 with his co-driver, journalist Denis Jenkinson.

The Formula One test days in June, organised by Goodyear, provided the opportunity for spectators to get up close to the cars and drivers without the milling crowds of Grand Prix day. Access to the pits was allowed

in the lunch interval and cars were either in their garages or out on the pit apron for inspection. A far cry from the situation today.

Didier Pironi ended the three days fastest of all, with 16 cars setting a time under the existing lap record. Pironi took his Ligier-Ford JS11/15 round in a time of 1m 11.90s, an average speed of 130.861mph, the first

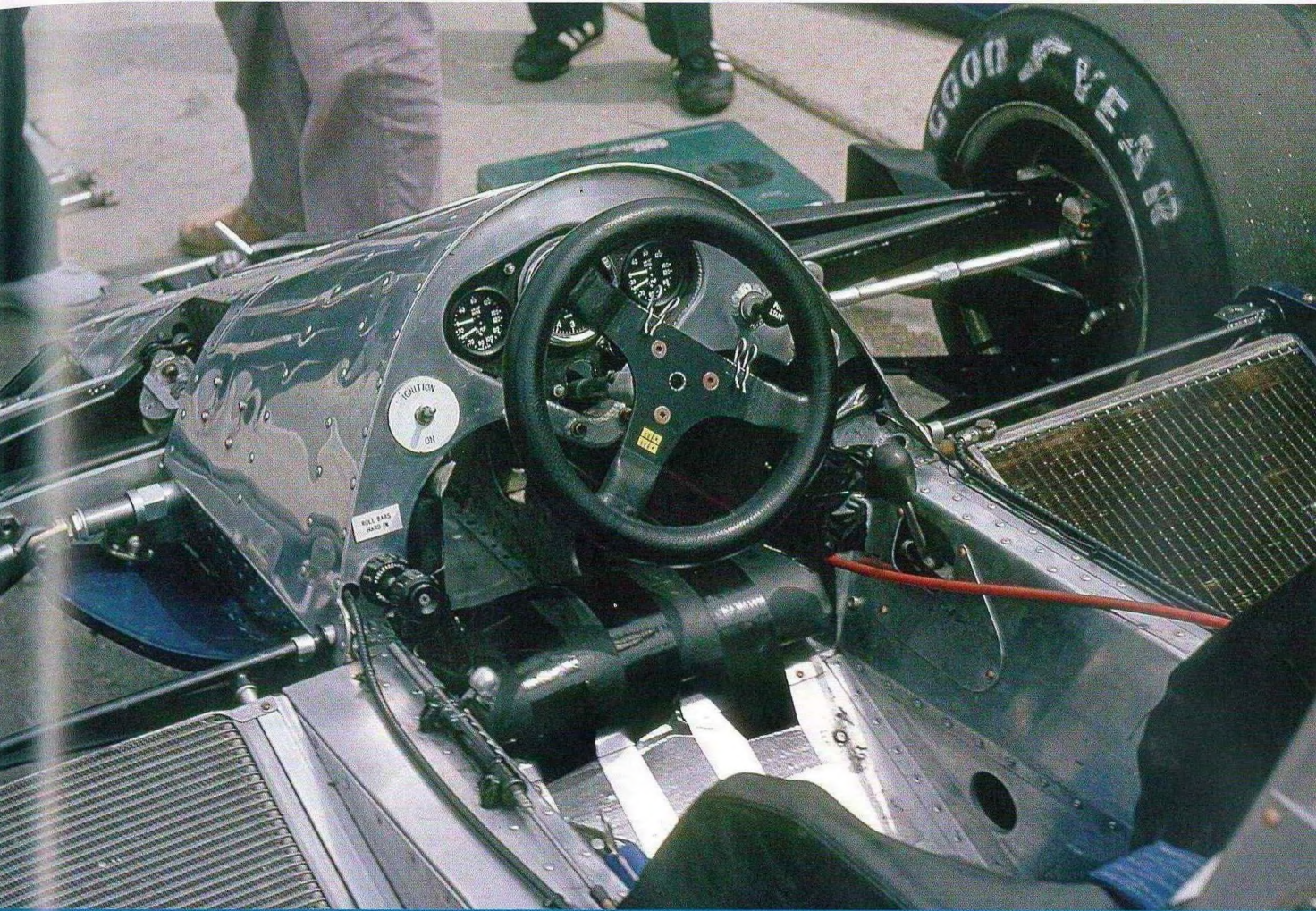


The spectator enclosures are packed as Moss and five times World Champion Juan Manuel Fangio lead a parade of cars in the 1955 Mille Miglia-winning Mercedes-Benz 300 SLR. Moss finished 32 minutes ahead of his team-mate, Fangio, in that event.

ever sub-1m 12s lap of the circuit and some six seconds faster than the year-old existing record. Alan Jones in the Williams-Ford FW07 was second in 1m 24.24s. Renault and Ferrari had tested separately at the circuit the week before but Pironi's time was over two seconds quicker than they had managed. It certainly whetted the appetite for the forthcoming Grand Prix in July.

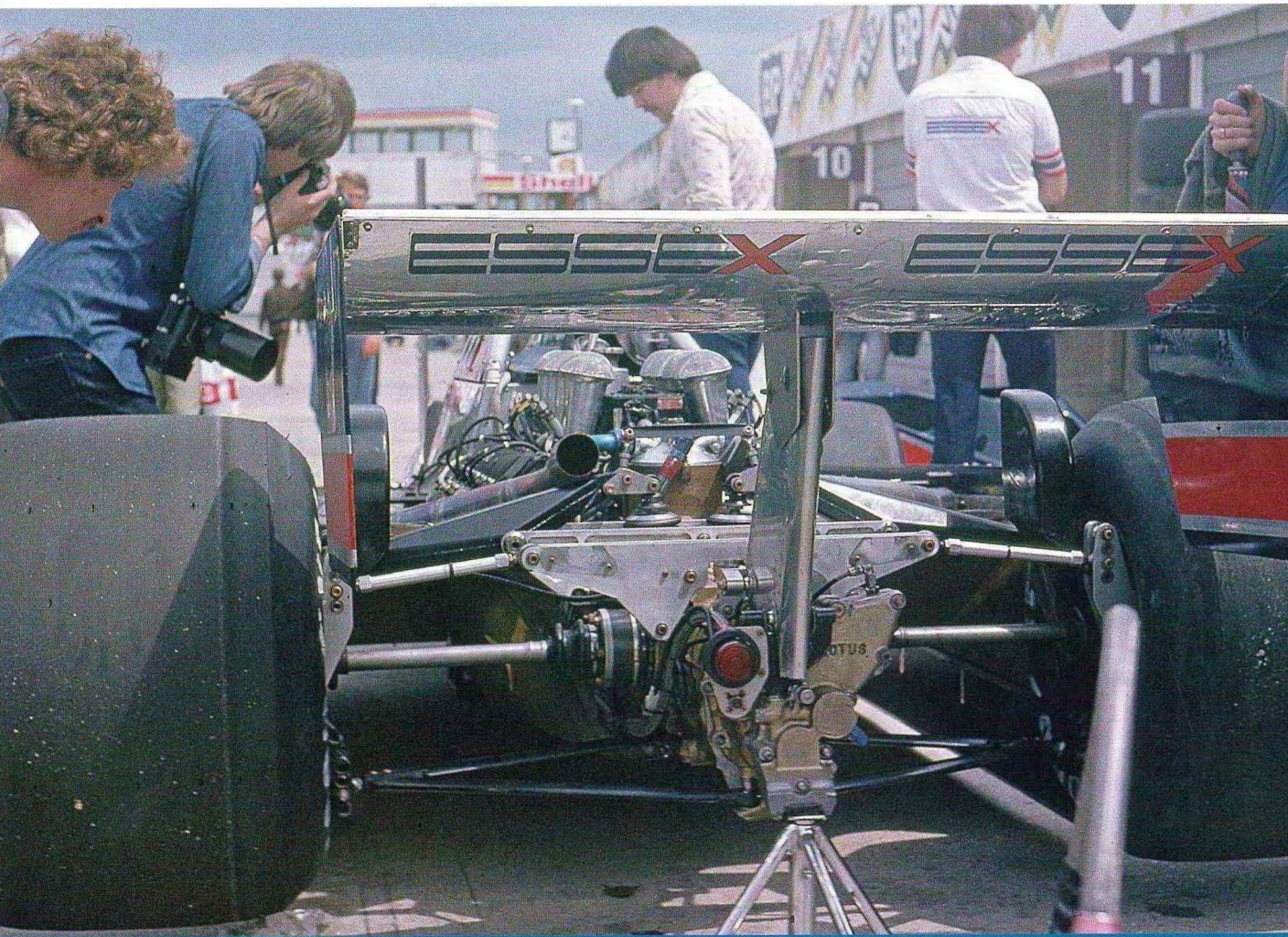
The highlight of any Brands year, of course, was the bi-annual visit of the Grand Prix, which alternated between the Kent circuit and Silverstone in Northamptonshire. This being an even numbered year, it was Brands' turn. My friends and I watched from one of the grandstands at Paddock Bend, which provided a spectacular view of almost the whole of the

*Motor Racing at Brands Hatch in the eighties*



The Formula One Constructors' Association test day in June gave spectators the opportunity to see Grand Prix cars close up in the pit-lane during the lunch break. This is the cockpit of an Essex Lotus-Ford 81. Note how far forward the drivers sat compared with today's machines.

1980

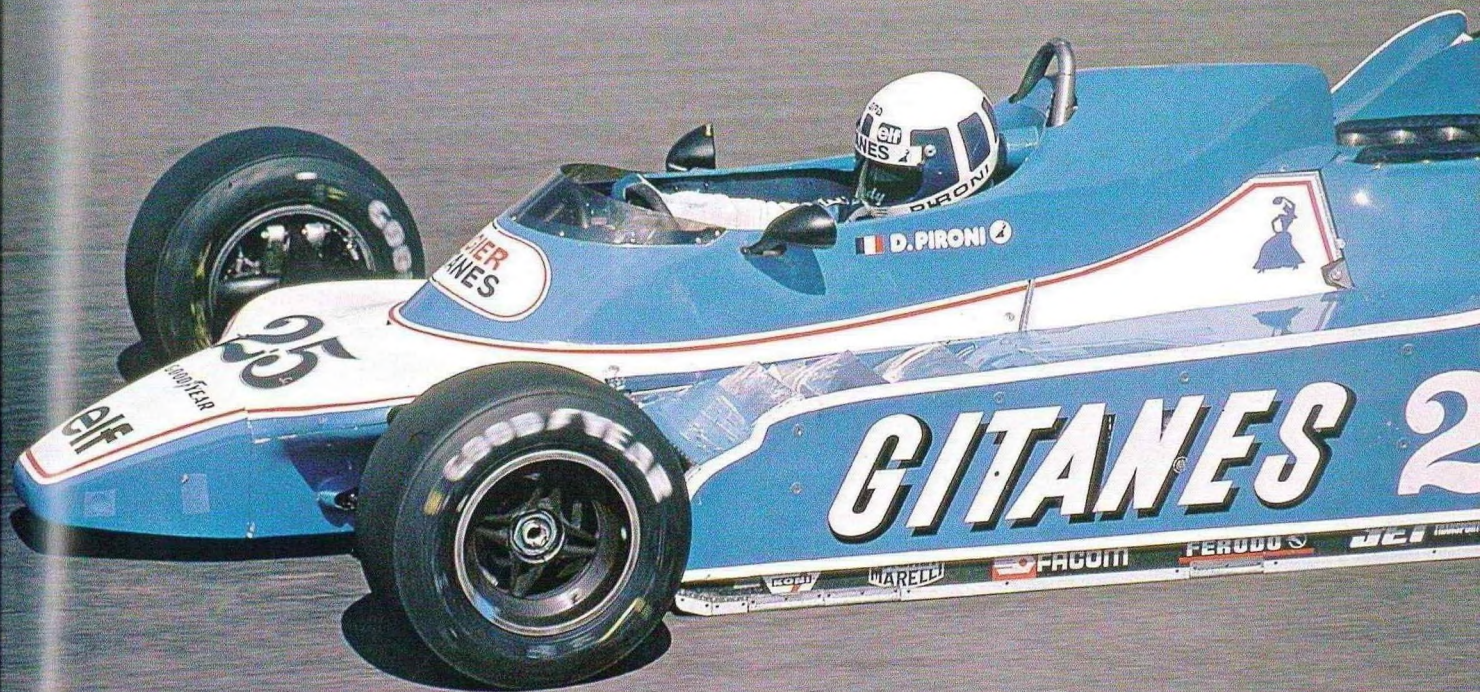


Rear view of the Essex Lotus-Ford 81 in the Brands Hatch pit-lane.

McLaren driver John Watson, seen here at Graham Hill Bend, struggled during 1980 with the team's Ford-powered M29C model.



On the other hand, Didier Pironi was enjoying the competitiveness of his Gitanes Ligier-Ford JS11/15, and set a time some six seconds faster than the existing lap record.



Practice for the 1980 British Grand Prix, and former World Champion Emerson Fittipaldi is indicating a problem as he slows in his Skol Fittipaldi-Ford F8. The Brazilian had moved to his brother Wilson's team in 1976, but had never enjoyed the success he achieved when he was with Lotus and McLaren. At Brands he qualified 22nd and finished 12th.

Indy circuit, as well as being a splendid vantage point for the traditional display by the Red Arrows. There was a distinctly anti-French feeling at the circuit, as the two blue and white Ligiers of Didier Pironi and Jacques Laffite had annexed the front row of the grid. The partisan crowd was backing the English Williams team, with its Australian driver Alan Jones, and was to go home satisfied. Both Ligiers retired with wheel problems, leaving Jones to take a very popular victory ahead of the Brabham of Nelson Piquet and Carlos Reutemann in the second Williams, inspiring the wonderful headline in the following week's *Motoring News*, "Jones leaps frogs."

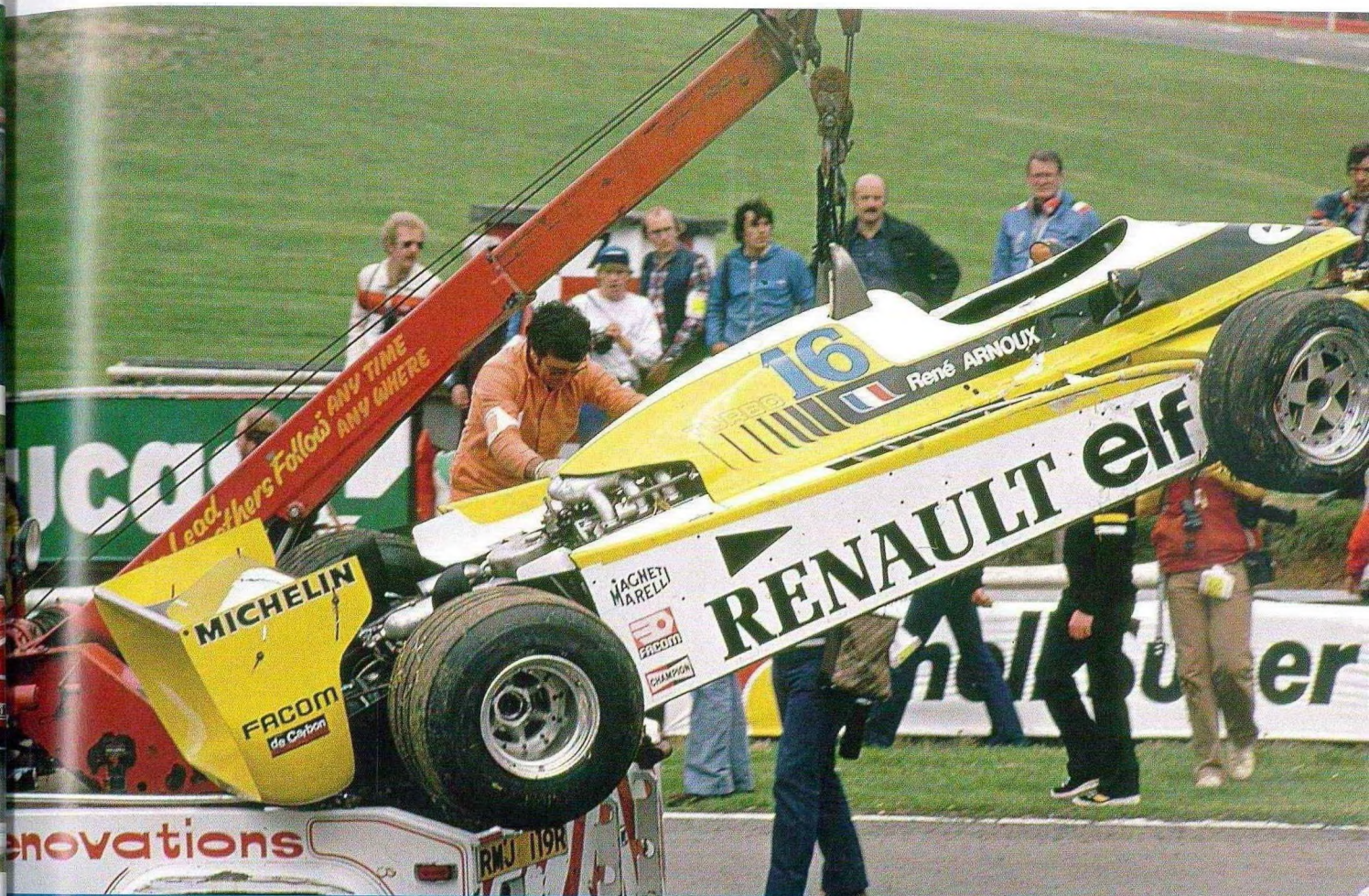
The previous day we had watched qualifying – during which Rene Arnoux's Renault had crashed at Graham Hill Bend and had to be lifted off the track by a crane – and the BMW Procar race. This featured a number of the Grand Prix drivers, racing against series regulars in identical BMW M1s. It was another success for the Williams drivers, with victory going to Reutemann, ahead of Jones.

This was the year of the Harrier. One of the off-track activities organised by Brands was a demonstration by a Royal Navy Harrier Jump Jet. The magnificently impressive aircraft made a low pass, hovering over the back of the Formula One paddock, its downdraft hurling anything beneath it that wasn't firmly secured into the air. People's hats, lunches, programmes and the awning from the Elf Oils hospitality unit were blown skywards.



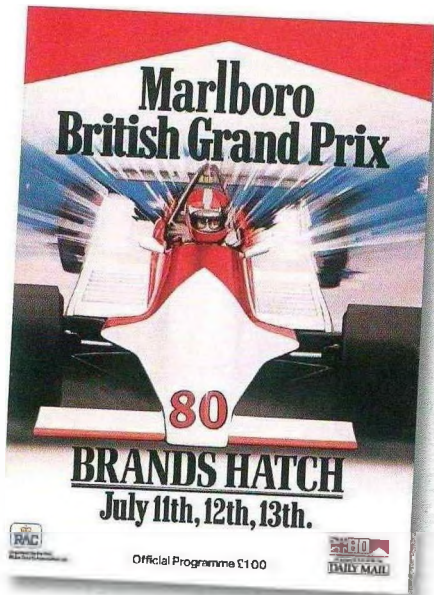
Another driver struggling that year was reigning World Champion Jody Scheckter. It was a miserable year for the South African, who failed to win a single Grand Prix. He finished tenth at Brands, having qualified on the back row of the grid.

Motor Racing at Brands Hatch in the eighties



The Saturday practice session had to be halted when René Arnoux lost control of his Renault RE20 as he exited Druids, and crashed heavily into the barriers, coming to rest at the bottom of the hill. Arnoux was initially trapped in the car but, apart from a cut hand, was uninjured.





The plane then returned to its landing spot on the infield of Clearways. Later on, during the race, Eddie Cheever in his Osella suffered rear suspension failure as he approached the left-hander at Surtees. Instantly the car skated off the track,

straight towards the nose-wheel of the Harrier. He managed to pull up about 20 yards in front of it, but it was nearly the most expensive accident in motor racing history.

My last visit of the year was to the Formula Ford Festival in November. I didn't usually attend the meeting unless one of my friends was racing, but this year I went along just to watch. The young Brazilian Roberto Moreno dominated the event in a Van Diemen RF80, from the similar car of Ireland's Tommy Byrne.

A feature of the 1980 season was the Procar races, in which the top five Goodyear-contracted Grand Prix drivers from the first day's practice competed against the series regulars in identical BMW M1s. Here, Dieter Quester leads McLaren driver John Watson at Druids.

After a quick check at the medical centre, the Frenchman was soon back on track in the spare car, but could only manage to qualify 16th.



# 1981

Stirling Moss had been honoured at the circuit with a special tribute day the previous year, and now it was the turn of John Surtees, the only man to win world championships on two wheels and four, to take centre stage. The John Surtees Day was held on the bank holiday weekend of 24-25 May, with 'King of Brands' bike races on the Sunday and British championship car races on the Monday, headlined by a round of the British Saloon Car Championship, the predecessor of today's hugely successful championship for touring cars, the BTCC.



At the John Surtees Tribute Day in 1981, a number of cars driven or entered by the 1964 Formula One World Champion were present at the circuit. This is the Matchbox-sponsored Surtees-Ford TS10 that Mike Hailwood drove to the Formula Two Championship in 1972.



John Surtees, the only man to win world championships on two wheels and on four, was on hand to sign autographs.

Unfortunately, a stunning parade of cars from Surtees' illustrious career as both a driver and constructor was spoiled by a downpour which lashed the circuit around lunchtime. Still, it was wonderful to see him driving round the soaking track, waving to the crowd in the Ferrari 158 with which he won the 1964 Drivers' World Championship.



It was a miserable day but there was still a fine turnout of Ferraris that Surtees had driven during his career. Here he is sitting behind the pits in his 1964 championship-winning 158 V8.



*Despite the appalling conditions, Surtees still demonstrated his 1964 championship-winning Ferrari 158 V8.*

The round of the Saloon Car Championship was split into two, with one race for classes A and B (over 1600cc) and another for C and D (under 1600cc). Local man Nick Whiting revelled in the treacherous conditions to take his Ford Capri to victory in the over 1600cc class, while the smaller capacity race was won by Barrie Williams in a Colt Lancer.

Rain always provides spectacular racing at a circuit, no matter what category of cars you are watching, but it also makes for distinctly uncomfortable spectating, as the water gradually drips down the back of your neck and, as the hours go by, you find yourself standing in a sea of mud. As happened on this occasion, it also usually results in delays in the proceedings as the debris of



Capital Radio DJ and former Brands commentator Mike Smith put this Talbot Sunbeam 1.6Ti on pole position for the Pro-Celebrity Shell Super Sunbeam race. He went on to take victory on the rain-soaked track.

accidents is cleared up or water swept from the track by the overworked marshals.

There had already been a long delay before the first of the saloon races could be run, as there was a river running across the bottom of Paddock Hill Bend which had to be swept away, and by the time it was cleared enough to allow racing to continue, the programme was running very late. Further delays meant that the meeting didn't finish until 7.45pm that evening.

Guy Edwards and Emilio de Villota in their Lola T600 won that year's 1000km sports car race in September, but unfortunately I wasn't there. I'd had my fix of long-distance sports car racing with visits to the

Silverstone 1000km in May and the 24 hours of Le Mans a month later, so finances didn't allow for a third visit.

I did return for the Marlboro Formula Ford Festival and World Cup in November, though. Ayrton Senna was due to take part, but returned to his native Brazil instead. His place in the works Van Diemen team was taken by Tommy Byrne, who had finished runner-up here the year before. Byrne grasped the opportunity with both hands, taking his RF81 to victory in his heat, quarter-final, semi-final and final, ahead of the Royale RP29 of Rick Morris. England won the World Cup part of the event, ahead of Holland and Mexico.



(Above) The field was so large for the British Saloon Car Championship in those days that it was often split into two races for classes A and B (over 1600cc) and C and D (up to 1600cc). In the A and B encounter, class B driver and pole-sitter Win Percy takes his Mazda RX7 around Druids. The rain began to fall with a vengeance just as the lights turned green and Percy, on intermediate tyres, led initially before conditions became so bad that he had to succumb to the Ford Capri of Nick Whiting, which was on full wets, half-way into the race. Percy hung on to finish second.

Close racing in class D of the British Saloon Car Championship race between the Austin Metro 1.3 HLGs of Richard Longman (77) and Neil McGrath (83) during the John Surtees Day meeting. McGrath, whose car was perfectly set up for the wet conditions, eventually finished third, with Longman down in seventh place.



## 1982

There's nothing quite like a good club meeting at Brands, and my 1982 season kicked off with the May bank holiday event organised by the BARC (British Automobile Racing Club) in glorious sunshine. The varied programme included Special Saloons, Formula

Ford, Sports 2000, MG Midgets and Formula Ford 2000, which was won by a young Ayrton Senna da Silva. A better combination for a good day's entertainment is hard to imagine.

The pre-British Grand Prix Formula One test days in June were interrupted by rain on both days, but it didn't stop Williams driver Keke Rosberg setting the fastest-ever lap around the Kent circuit in his

Formula One testing at Brands again in 1982, and the Ragnò-sponsored Arrows-Ford A4 of Mauro Baldi rounds Paddock Hill Bend. Baldi ended up 19th of the 24 runners over the two-day session.





(Above) Brabham had been using a combination of its Ford Cosworth-engined BT49D model and BMW-powered turbocharged BT50 during the season to date. At the Formula One test days at Brands in June, Nelson Piquet used the BT50 to set the fourth fastest time.



Didier Pironi approaches Druids hairpin in his turbocharged Ferrari 126C2 on his way to setting the sixth fastest time during the test days in June.

## Motor Racing at Brands Hatch in the eighties

normally-aspirated FW08. The Finn recorded a time of 1m 10.296s, an average speed of 133.847mph. I attended on the first of the two days, the Thursday, and there was an impressive turnout of teams, with only Alfa Romeo and Ensign not being present.

It was grandstand seats at Paddock again for the Marlboro British Grand Prix in July, and this meant that we had a superb view of Derek Warwick taking his overweight Toleman-Hart TG181 past the Ferrari 126C2 of Didier Pironi to take second place, having started from 16<sup>th</sup> on the grid. Alas, it wasn't to last, as a broken CV joint put him out a few laps later. Keke Rosberg had been on pole with a scintillating lap and we eagerly anticipated him streaking away at the front. However, his Williams-Ford FW08 didn't get away on the warm-up lap and he had to start from the back.



The Chilean driver Eliseo Salazar attempted to qualify this ATS-Ford D5 for the 26-car grid at the 1982 British Grand Prix, but could manage only 29<sup>th</sup> fastest and failed to make the cut.



1982

Supporting the Grand Prix were the Historic GT racers. Here, Martin Colvill in a Ford GT40 leads John Brindley's McLaren M1C and Gerry Marshall's Lola T222 at Paddock. Colvill suffered falling oil pressure in the race, eventually finishing eighth, while Brindley came in second and Marshall fourth.

Warm sunshine and a huge crowd at the 1982 British Grand Prix. Nelson Piquet's Brabham BMW BT50 leads the McLaren Ford MP4B of Niki Lauda, the Ferrari 126C2 of Didier Pironi, and the rest of the field on the opening lap. Piquet failed to finish, while Lauda went on to win the race with Pironi second.



# Marlboro British Grand Prix

## SUNDAY JULY 18th



# BRANDS HATCH

Official Programme £1.50



The Brabham team chose this race to introduce a new tactic to Formula One – re-fuelling mid-race. The idea was to start Nelson Piquet's BT50 on a light fuel load, thereby allowing it to build up a large lead over its rivals before coming in to the pits and, hopefully, rejoining still ahead. The first part went according to plan but Piquet retired before his scheduled pit stop.

The race was won by Niki Lauda in the McLaren-Ford MP4B, ahead of the Ferraris of Pironi and Patrick Tambay.

The circuit was packed with a 90,000 strong crowd, kept entertained by good off-track activities. Brands was famous for the air displays that it put on at Grands Prix, and this year was no exception. As well as the ever-popular Red Arrows, we were treated to a return visit by the Harrier and a low-level fly-past by Concorde. The meeting always provided good value for money on track as well, with additional races for British Saloon Cars, Formula Three and Historic sportscars.

It was a mark of the quality of the meeting that, later in the year, Brands Hatch was awarded the prize for the best organised Grand Prix of 1982 by the Formula One Constructors' Association (FOCA).

I wish I'd been at the World Endurance Championship race, the Shell Oils 1000, in October as it produced a fantastic wet weather drive from Jacky Ickx



*One of the features of a Grand Prix at Brands Hatch in the eighties was the spectacular air displays. Here, the Red Arrows 'Synchro Pair' pass each other over the natural bowl of the circuit.*

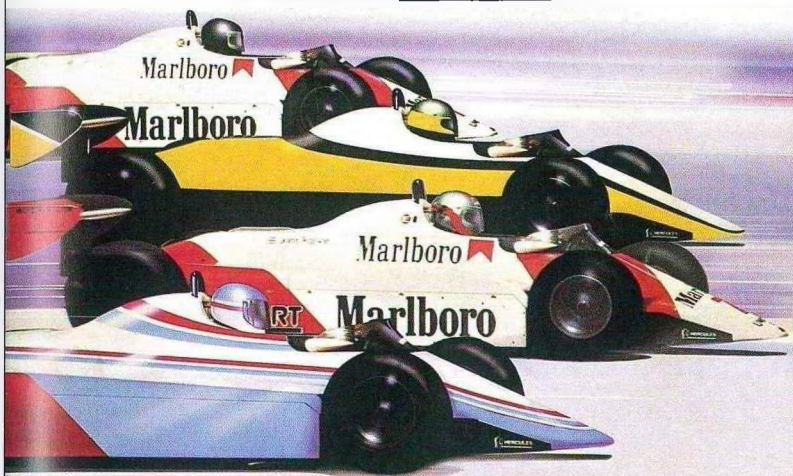
in the Rothmans Porsche 956, winning the two-part race on aggregate and thereby clinching the championship. Four drivers were still in with a shout for the title going in to this, the last round of the World Endurance Championship – Ickx, Riccardo Patrese, Michele Alboreto and Henri Pescarolo.

Ickx hunted down the Lancia of Patrese's co-driver

Teo Fabi during the final three quarters of an hour. Fabi had been just over a minute ahead at the beginning of the stint, but Ickx carved huge chunks out of the Lancia's lead, finishing just two seconds behind at the flag and thereby taking victory on aggregate by 4.7 seconds. It would have been worth standing in the rain to have witnessed a drive like that.

# Marlboro Race of Champions

in association with the **DAILY MAIL**



## Brands Hatch

### Sunday April 10th

Official Programme £1.50

Organised by  
British Racing & Sports Car Club



## 1983

There was a time when the annual Race of Champions at Brands attracted a large Formula One field, boosted by the fastest of the Formula 5000 runners of the day. Alas, by 1983 it was a shadow of its former self and this proved to be the final year that this once traditional event would be run. Despite a depleted field of just 13 F1 cars, the race produced an absorbing battle between the Williams-Ford FW08C of Keke Rosberg and the Tyrrell-Ford 011 of American driver Danny Sullivan, the Finn eventually winning by less than half a second.

But if the Race of Champions was a disappointment in terms of entries, Brands Hatch certainly made up for it later in the year. With the proposed New York Grand Prix cancelled, Brands managing director John Webb leapt into action. He quickly negotiated to hold a Grand Prix of Europe at the circuit in September. In just ten weeks, his team organised the entire event and put on a superb show. Grand Prix fans welcomed the first time that the country had staged two world championship events in the same season. There used to be many non-championship F1 events run, such as the Race of Champions, but never two Grands Prix in the same year in this country. John Webb and the Brands staff had pulled off a major coup.



The once traditional Race of Champions hadn't been held since 1979 but returned for the last time in 1983. It attracted a poor entry of just 13 cars but produced a close race at the front. Here, in the early stages of the race, the Ferrari 126C2B of Rene Arnoux leads Keke Rosberg's Williams-Ford FW08C, the Tyrrell-Ford 011 of Danny Sullivan, and Alan Jones' Arrows-Ford A6.

Lap after lap, the Williams-Ford FW08C of reigning World Champion Keke Rosberg just managed to hold off Danny Sullivan in his Tyrrell-Ford 011.

## Motor Racing at Brands Hatch in the eighties

One of the most spectacular aspects of the turbocharged engines used in Formula One at this time was the burst of flame they produced on the over-run as the drivers came off the throttle. Here, one of the Brabham-BMW BT52Bs rounds Druids at the 1983 Grand Prix of Europe in September.

Packed grandstands in the background as the ATS-BMW D6 of Manfred Winkelhock leads the Toleman-Hart TG183Bs of Derek Warwick and Bruno Giacomelli, heading out into the country during the morning warm-up for the 1983 Grand Prix of Europe.



It was a great race as well. A large crowd of 65,000 enjoyed the warm autumn sunshine and, perched on Paddock Bend once again, although this time on a picnic blanket rather than in a grandstand, we watched Nelson Piquet take his Brabham-BMW BT52B to victory after his team-mate Riccardo Patrese had spun off from the lead after clashing with the Lotus-Renault 94T of pole-sitter Elio de Angelis. We also enjoyed the benefit, for the first time in this country, of a huge Diamond Vision television screen opposite us on South Bank, enabling us to keep up with the action while the cars were out of sight on the long circuit. Piquet's victory meant that he was just two points behind Alain Prost, who finished second in a Renault RE40, in the drivers' world title chase. Nigel Mansell in the second Lotus-Renault 94T, completed the podium finishers.

The week before the Grand Prix, the circuit hosted the Grand Prix International 1000km sports car race, which produced a win for the privately-entered Porsche 956 of Derek Warwick and John Fitzpatrick. The British pair finished ahead of the works Rothmans-backed Porsche 956-83s of Jacky Ickx/Jochen Mass and Derek Bell/Stefan Bellof.



Elio de Angelis speeds towards Hawthorns in his JPS Lotus-Renault 94T during the morning warm-up session for the Grand Prix of Europe. The Italian had qualified on pole position for the race, but tangled with the Brabham-BMW BT52B of Riccardo Patrese early on, eventually retiring with engine failure.



Keke Rosberg in his Williams-Ford FW08C. The reigning World Champion managed to qualify 16th only and retired with engine problems.

## 1984

Formula One tyre testing in June preceded the Grand Prix again in 1984, and provided me with my first visit to the circuit that season. It was a time for gathering autographs and taking photos, as the drivers were easily accessible, particularly during the lunchtime break.

It was a Thursday, so *Autosport* had just been published. The previous weekend at the Monaco Grand Prix, Martin Brundle had put his Tyrrell-Ford 012 on its side against the barriers at Tabac after crashing in qualifying. *Autosport* carried a sequence of photos of the crash, which I got Brundle to sign. It was the first time he had seen the pictures, and he nearly walked off with my copy of the magazine as he examined them.



The turbocharged Formula One cars of the mid-eighties boasted massive rear wings to cope with the excessive power of the engines, as demonstrated on the Ligier-Renault JS23 of Andrea de Cesaris at the traditional tyre testing which preceded the 1984 British Grand Prix.





*It was still possible to see the drivers at work in those days, as can be seen in this shot of Stefan Bellof taking his Tyrrell-Ford O12 around Druids during the Formula One test days.*



*The scarlet Ferraris always looked glorious at Brands, and Michele Alboreto's 126C4 example is no exception. The Italian set the third fastest time during the two-day test session.*

*Nigel Mansell clocked the fastest time during the test days – 1m 10.86s in his JPS Lotus-Renault 95T, ahead of team-mate Elio de Angelis and Ferrari's Michele Alboreto in his 126C4.*

*Come the Grand Prix itself, though, it was Nelson Piquet's Brabham-BMW BT53, ahead of the McLaren-Tag MP4/2 of Alain Prost, which dominated the front row of the grid. Sitting in the baking sunshine on Paddock Hill Bend the sun cream was much in demand, particularly as we had to wait for the race to be restarted after it was stopped with just 11 laps run. An accident at Graham Hill Bend on the opening lap eliminated four cars, leaving two of them in a potentially dangerous position, and then on lap 12 Jonathan Palmer suffered steering failure on his RAM-Hart 02 and crashed at Clearways. Out came the red flags and we waited in the heat for the debris to be cleared.*



*Nigel Mansell exits Druids Bend in his JPS Lotus-Renault 95T on his way to setting the fastest time of the two-day test, with 1m 10.86s.*

Motor Racing at Brands Hatch in the eighties

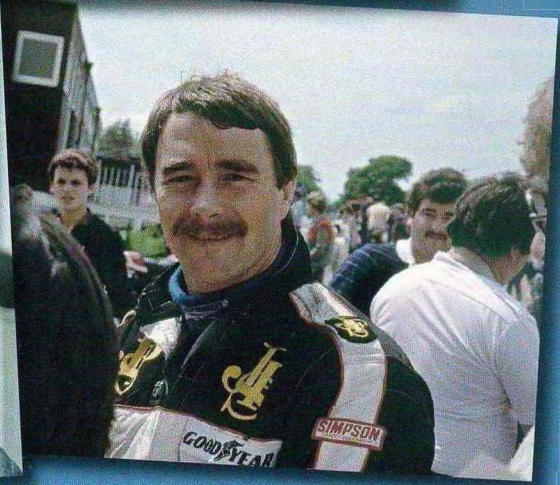


The Brands Hatch pits of the mid-eighties look sparse compared to modern Grand Prix facilities. Here, the Ferrari 126C4s of Michele Alboreto and Rene Arnoux receive attention from the mechanics. Ferrari was the only team to send two cars to the test session in June.

1984



(Above and opposite) The test days once again provided an opportunity for spectators to get close to the drivers in a way that simply wasn't possible during a normal Grand Prix weekend. In 1984 Ayrton Senna, Nelson Piquet, Martin Brundle and Nigel Mansell were all happy to sign autographs.





Eventual race-winner Niki Lauda takes his Marlboro McLaren-Tag MP4/2 round Druids during the Saturday practice session. In those days at the British event, tobacco advertising stayed on the cars during practice but was removed for the race, which was televised.

The inside of Druids Bend provided an excellent opportunity to photograph the cars as they were at their slowest and nearest on the circuit. The lack of intrusive catch-fencing also helped the amateur photographer's cause. This is Eddie Cheever's Benetton-sponsored Alfa Romeo 184T, which qualified in 18th position but then eliminated in a first-lap accident.

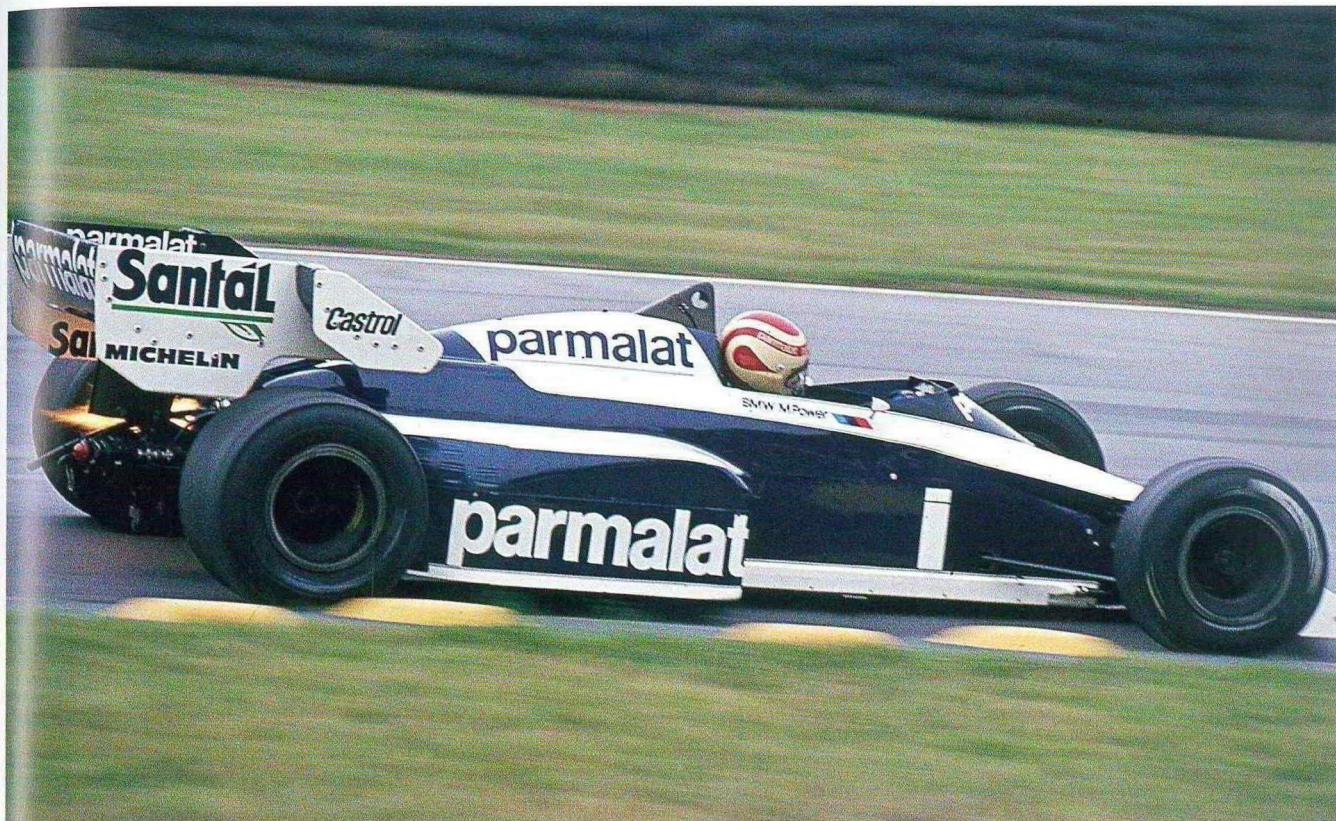


## Motor Racing at Brands Hatch in the eighties

When it restarted, the race was run for a further 60 laps with the results decided on aggregate. Niki Lauda emerged the victor in his McLaren-Tag MP4/2, ahead of Derek Warwick's Renault RE50 and the Toleman-Hart TG184 of Ayrton Senna.

One of my abiding memories of attending the Grands Prix at Brands is making a weekend of it with

a group of friends. We would drive up on the Saturday morning and watch practice (the circuit was just over an hour away from where we lived in East Sussex) and spend a leisurely day strolling around and soaking up the atmosphere. Then it was back to the car for a barbecue and a few beers before grabbing a few hours sleep. Next morning we rose at some ungodly hour to join the queue



A burst of flame from the back of Nelson Piquet's pole-sitting Brabham-BMW BT53 as it rounds Druids.

1984



A rare lock-up from Alain Prost in his Marlboro McLaren-Tag MP4/2 as he approaches Druids during practice for the 1984 British Grand Prix. Despite this error, the Frenchman qualified on the front row of the grid, but retired with gearbox problems midway through the race.

## Motor Racing at Brands Hatch in the eighties



Brands attracted a huge crowd, even for the Saturday practice day. The supporting Historic GT field streams along Cooper Straight toward Surtees Bend.

at the gates, before a couple of us would leg it like mad to secure the best positions track-side. This was in the years when we couldn't afford grandstand seats (which meant most of them). Having set out a blanket to spread out on, the rest of our companions would arrive shortly afterwards, carrying the picnic and bottles of wine and

beer. At the end of the day we would sit in a traffic jam for hours, just to get out of the car park. Sometimes it was hard work and we would be exhausted, but it was always the highlight of the year.

In order to boost crowds for the following weekend's British Aerospace 1000km endurance race,

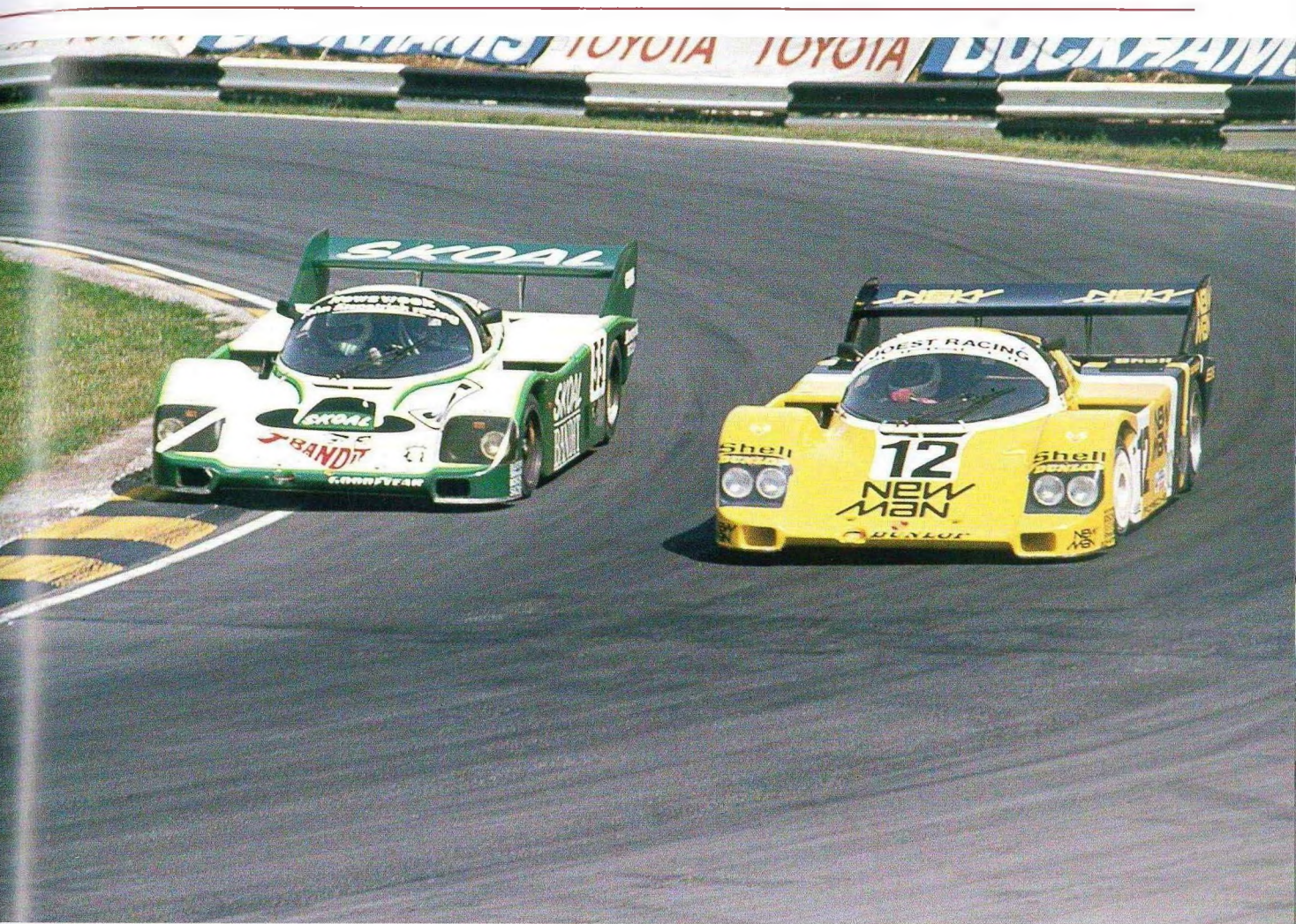


1984

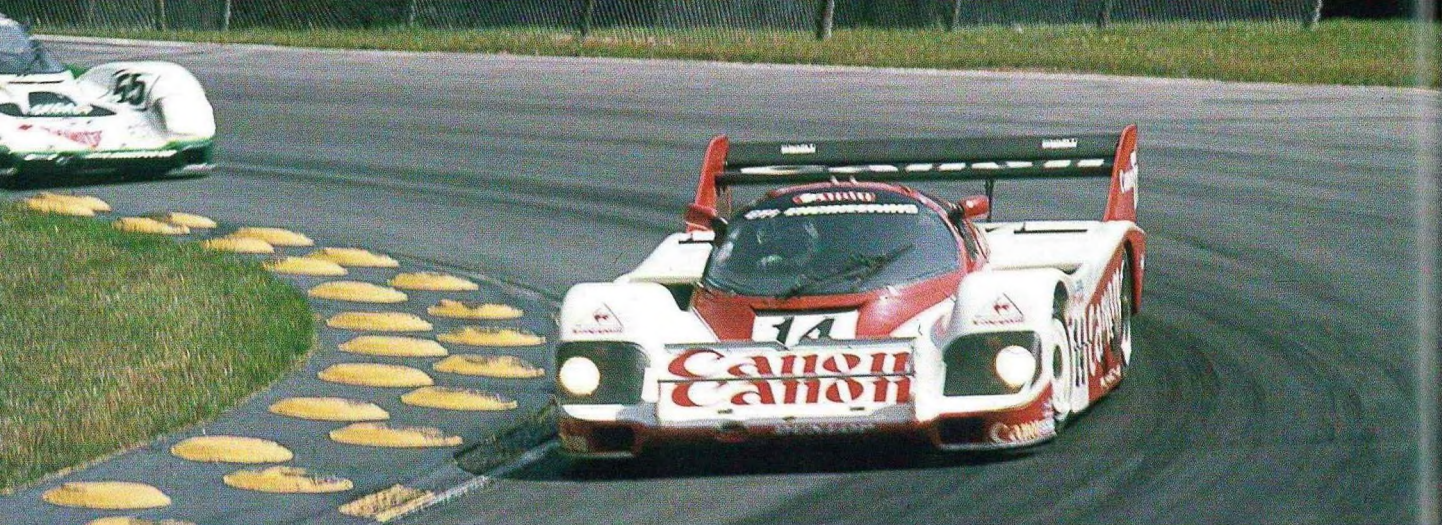


John Foulston leads the Historic GT field in his glorious McLaren M8D at the British Grand Prix meeting. Foulston was penalised for a jump start and eventually finished in fourth place.

Motor Racing at Brands Hatch in the eighties



The New Man Porsche 956 of Volkert Merl and the Skoal Bandit Porsche 962 of Guy Edwards round Druids side-by-side during the British Aerospace 1000km endurance race. The New Man car finished in ninth, while the Skoal-backed example managed a podium spot.



By fitting an extra nose-wing to their Canon Porsche 956, Jonathan Palmer and Jan Lammers were able to dominate the British Aerospace 1000km race.

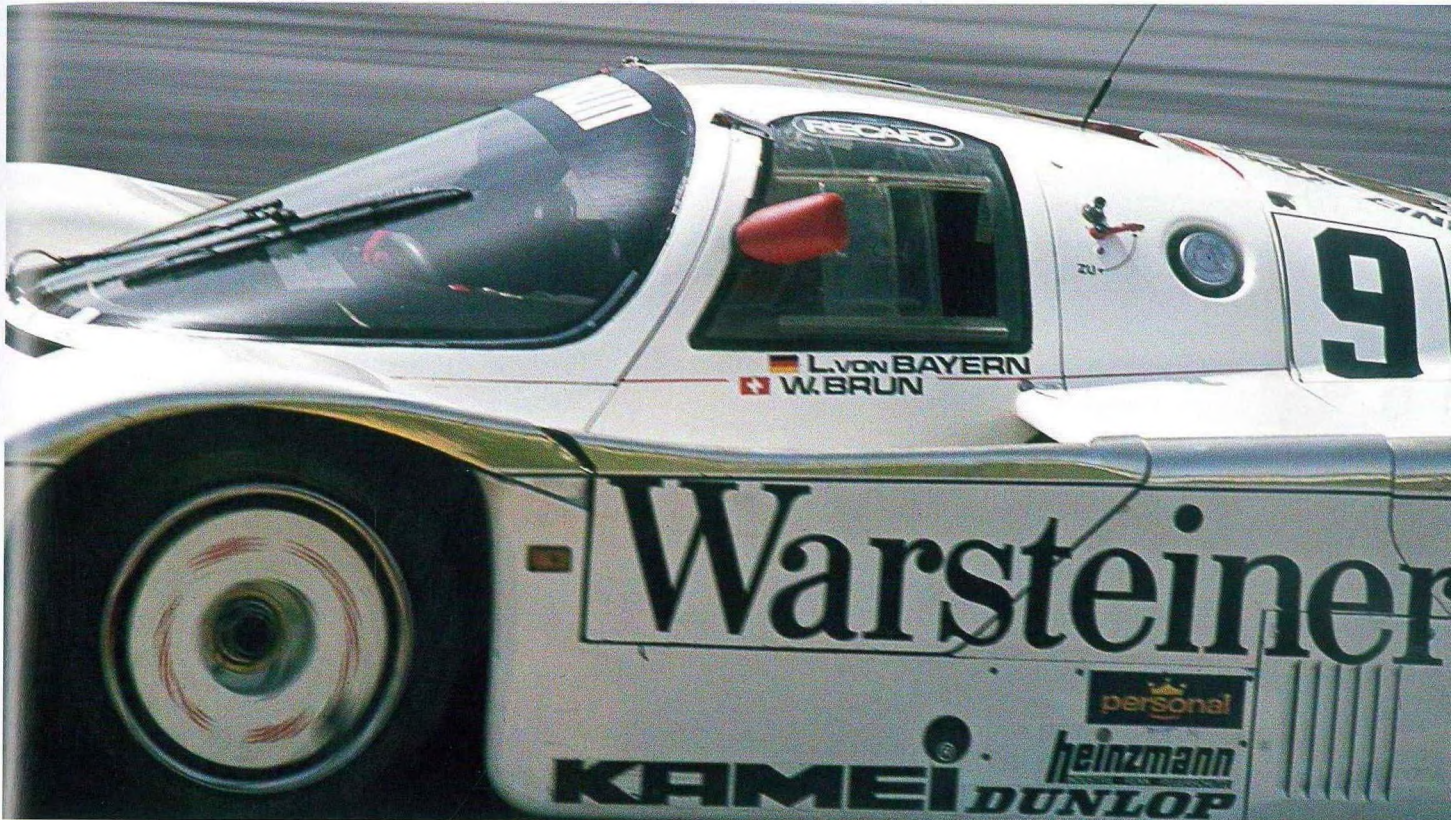
The Group B Porsche 928S of Raymond Boutinaud is lapped by the Group C1 Porsche 956 of Jochen Mass, Bob Wollek's Lancia Martini LC2-84, and the Porsche 956 of Volkert Merl.



## *Motor Racing at Brands Hatch in the eighties*

Brands offered a free ticket to the event for anyone who had purchased a Grand Prix ticket. This was too good an opportunity for me to miss, particularly as long-distance sports car racing had always been a favourite of mine, and we witnessed a superb display by Jonathan Palmer and Jan Lammers in their Canon Porsche 956, fitted especially for the event with an extra nose wing. The

added downforce that this produced allowed the pair to dominate the event, making it a bit of a procession but enjoyable nonetheless in the warm summer sun. Behind Palmer and Lammers came the Porsche 956B of Jochen Mass and Henri Pescarolo, with the Porsche 962 of Thierry Boutsen, Rupert Keegan and Guy Edwards in third.



Close-up of the Walter Brun/Leopold von Bayern Porsche 956 that finished in eighth place.



(Above) Opposite lock for the Marlboro Martini-BMW 002 of Michel Ferté during the warm-up for the last-ever Formula Two race before the category was replaced by Formula 3000. Ferté finished second in the rain-interrupted race, behind the AGS-BMW JH19C of Philippe Streiff.



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**SEPTEMBER 23**

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(Left) Formula Three always produced good, close racing at Brands. Here, David Scott in a Ralt RT3 leads the similar cars of Paul Jackson, David Hunt, and the rest of the field at Druids, during the British F3 championship round that supported the Formula Two event.

## Motor Racing at Brands Hatch in the eighties

I couldn't resist going along in September to see the last-ever Formula Two race, before the category was replaced by Formula 3000 the following year. I'd always enjoyed the F2 races I'd seen at Thruxton and Silverstone, yet this, the last-ever, was the first to take

place at Brands for many years. It was another of those wet September days, the rain being so heavy that the race was stopped at one point and then restarted. It was stopped again, short of the intended race distance as conditions worsened once more, with victory going



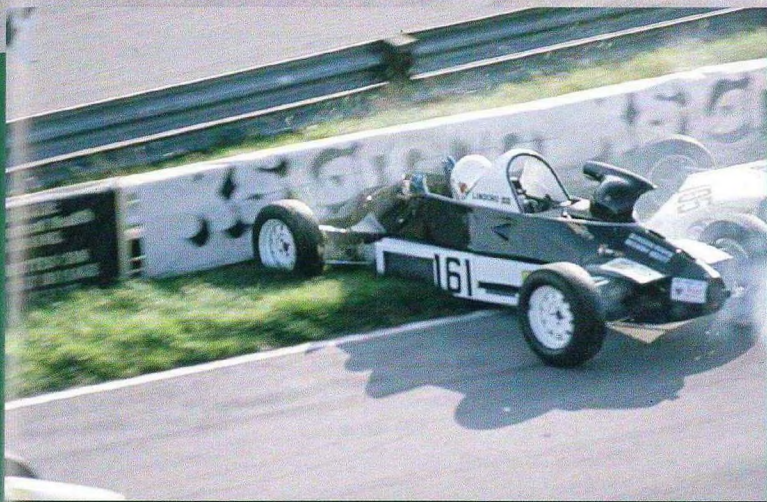
Another supporting race was for the Renault 5 Turbo Elf European Cup. Joel Gouhier and Jan Lammers lead the field.



A superb view from the top of the hospitality suites as cars line up on the grid for the first semi-final at the 1984 Formula Ford Festival.

to the French driver Philippe Streiff in his AGS-BMW JH19C. In second place was the Martini-BMW 002 of Michel Ferté, ahead of Roberto Moreno's Ralt-Honda RH6/84.

A friend of mine was working as a cameraman for the BBC at the Formula Ford Festival, and managed to get me up on to the top of the hospitality suites, where he was positioned. The view from up there is



(Above) Eventual winner Gerrit Van Kouwen (Lola T644), Uwe Schafer (Van Diemen RF84) and Mark Peters (Van Diemen RF84) lead Harald Huysman (Reynard 84FF), Johnny Herbert (Van Diemen RF84) and John 'Brolly' Booth (Reynard 84FF) off the line at the start of the first semi-final. Van Kowen went on to win the final as well, with Schafer in second place.

Lindoro da Silva's Reynard 84FF hits the barrier hard, with Alan McGarrity's Crosslé 55F also involved in this start-line pile-up in the second semi-final.





A pack of cars rounds Paddock Hill Bend in the autumn sunshine at the 1984 Formula Ford Festival.

spectacular, but my abiding memory is of Murray Walker, whose commentators' box was positioned alongside, banging on the window and gesticulating to me to get out of the way as I was blocking his view ...

The event was won by Gerrit van Kouwen in a Lola T644E, with Uwe Schafer's Van Diemen RF84 second and the Reynard 84FF of Bertrand Gachot in third.

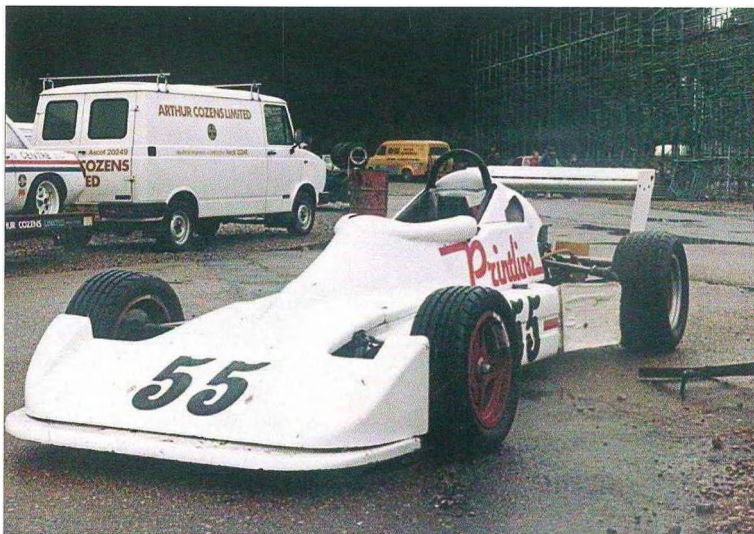
## 1985

The creased and dog-eared condition of my programme from the BARC championship races of 4 August tells me more about the weather conditions than my memory does. Obviously it poured down and the poor programme got very wet. The reason we had gone along was because my friend Alan Hall was racing his Reynard SF79 in the pre-'80 Formula Ford 2000 event, but history does not relate where he finished, if at all.

Brands pulled off something of a coup in 1985 by managing to stage yet another extra Grand Prix in the UK. Just as in 1983, when it had taken over a gap in the calendar at the last minute, so this year it applied for and got permission to run a Grand Prix of Europe on 6 October when the proposed Rome GP was called off.

Once again the circuit hosted a double-header, with a World Endurance Championship race a fortnight before, and pole position for the Shell Oils 1000km went to the flying Lancia of Riccardo Patrese. The Italian led away at the start from team-mate Bob Wollek and the Porsche of Hans Stuck, who got a bit over-anxious on the fifth lap, tried to pass Wollek and spun down to seventh after making contact at Surtees. This was more like a sprint than an endurance race. It was Stuck's team-mate Jochen Mass who now put pressure on the pair of Lancias at the front while Stuck made his way back up the field. By lap 30, the Rothmans Porsches were running 1-2, ahead of the Lancias. After the first pit-stops and driver changes, the Italian cars were flying again and Alessandro Nannini, who had taken over from Patrese, regained the lead.

However, the Lancia's tyres weren't coping as well



The Reynard SF79 of Alan Hall sits in the Brands paddock prior to its pre-'80 Formula Ford 2000 championship race in August 1985. It was a very wet day and the radiators were blanked off to help bring the engine to its optimum operating temperature.

with the hot weather and Jacky Ickx retook the lead on lap 70, with Derek Bell following into second place a couple of laps later. The race was really just about this intriguing Porsche-Lancia battle at the front. It was amusing to see the pit board used by Porsche for the Bell/Stuck car with 'BEST' at the top of it to designate the respective drivers. It also foretold the way the race was going to evolve. The other team board was headed 'MIX'. The two Porsches swapped the lead, while the two Lancias fought over third place, a battle which became a little too extreme when they collided at Graham Hill Bend, sending Patrese into the pits for repairs. And so

# Shell Oils GRAND PRIX OF EUROPE

**6th OCTOBER 1985**

QUALIFYING 4th & 5th OCTOBER 1985

**BRANDS HATCH**

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it finished with Bell/Stuck, leading home Mass and Ickx, ahead of the Wollek/Andrea de Cesaris/Mauro Baldi Lancia in third and its Patrese/Nannini sister car fourth. In winning the race, Bell and Stuck also clinched the drivers' endurance title. There was no luck for the British Racing Green TWR Jaguars which both retired with engine problems, but I had been reminded why I enjoyed this form of racing so much.

Two weeks later and we were back at the circuit for the Grand Prix of Europe. The race produced a wonderful result for the home crowd, with Nigel Mansell scoring his first-ever Grand Prix victory in his Williams-Honda FW10B, while Alain Prost clinched his first drivers' title by finishing in fifth position in his McLaren TAG MP4/2B. Camping overnight in October didn't hold the same attraction as it did in July, and so we travelled to the circuit very early in the morning and found a good spot on the exit of Druids, on the run down to Graham Hill Bend. It gave us a good view of Mansell running wide at the hairpin on lap one. Ayrton Senna led at the end of the lap in his JPS Lotus 97T from Rosberg's Williams, Nelson Piquet's Brabham-BMW BT54, and the charging Mansell. Rosberg was

*Motor Racing at Brands Hatch in the eighties*

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Nigel Mansell finally scored his first Grand Prix victory in front of his home crowd at the 1985 Grand Prix of Europe, driving his Williams-Honda FW10B.



In fifth place was the McLaren-Tag MP4/2B of Alain Prost, who clinched the world title, becoming the first Frenchman to do so. Note the lack of tobacco branding on the car, which normally carried Marlboro sponsorship, but was removed for races in Britain, Germany and South Africa.

trying to find a way around Senna for the lead, and on lap seven he spun at Surtees and was collected by Piquet. The Finn crawled back to the pits with a puncture while the Brazilian retired on the spot.

When Rosberg rejoined he was just ahead of Senna, who now had Mansell on his tail, and the Finn seemed disinclined to let the leaders past. Instead of moving over and letting the black and gold Lotus lap him, he held his

line up to Druids, past us down to Graham Hill Bend and out of our sight. The roar from the crowd on South Bank told us more than the drowned-out commentary ever could. As his team-mate held up Senna, Nigel Mansell had taken the lead and he proceeded to pull away.

The crowd was really only interested in seeing a home win, but there was also a world championship that could be decided at the race. The two remaining contenders, Michele Alboreto in his Ferrari and Alain Prost in the McLaren, weren't challenging for race victory though. Alboreto retired with flames coming from the back of his 156/85 on lap 14, meaning Prost needed just two points

from this race or the next to take the title. Fifth place was enough, and so the Grand Prix marked not only the first win for Britain's new F1 hope, but also the first-ever world title for a Frenchman. Not that we really cared about the latter, you understand. Mansell completed a lap of honour, the crowd streamed forward onto the edge of the track, and someone managed to stand right in front of me, just as I was about to take a picture ...

## 1986

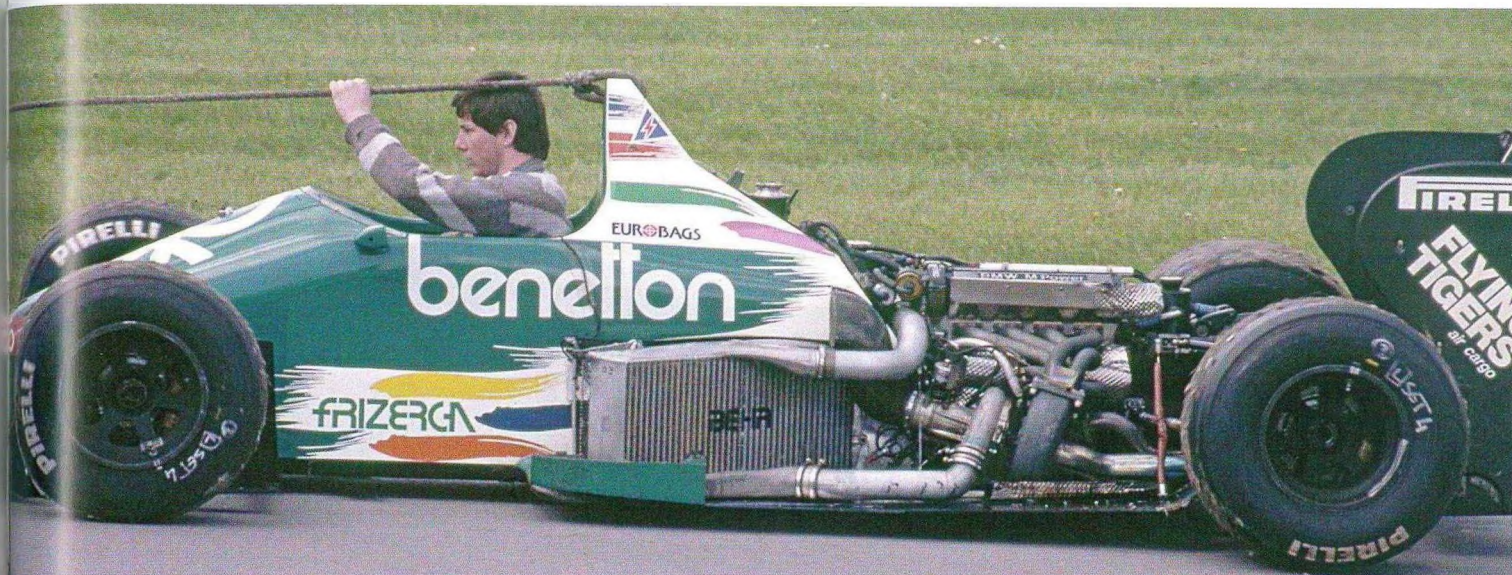
Rumours about the future of Brands Hatch had been circulating throughout the winter of 1985-86. Grovewood Securities, which owned the track, was a part of Eagle Star Holdings, which in turn had been sold to British American Tobacco. It was unclear what the plans for the track were, and there were fears that it would be sold and redeveloped. In May 1986, however, it was announced that the track's future had been secured, bought by millionaire Historic and Thundersport competitor John Foulston.

Pre-Grand Prix testing took place at the circuit again, in May this time. The weather was a bit iffy with rain disrupting proceedings, but Nigel Mansell ended up



With no television cameras present at the Formula One test days in 1986, the cars could run with full tobacco branding, as demonstrated on Ayrton Senna's John Player Special Lotus-Renault 98T.

The BMW-powered Benetton B186 of Teo Fabi is towed away after breaking down during the Formula One test days.





Nigel Mansell in his Canon Williams-Honda FW11. Note how the rumble strip at the side of the track is painted in red and yellow, in deference to Grand Prix sponsor Shell Oils.

quickest over the two days in his Williams-Honda FW11, ahead of the McLaren-Tag MP4/2C of Keke Rosberg, Mansell's team-mate, Nelson Piquet, and Alain Prost in the second McLaren.

All of the usual race day facilities at the circuit were open these two days, and resident commentator Brian Jones provided commentary throughout the test sessions, which ran from 09.00 to 13.00 and 14.30

to 18.00 each day. In addition, cars from the British Formula Three Championship were out on circuit from 09.00 to 09.55 both days. I always enjoyed these events, as they provided an opportunity to witness the F1 cars and drivers under far more relaxed circumstances than prevailed at a Grand Prix meeting. I even managed to get Lotus driver Johnny Dumfries to sign my two-sheet, photocopied 'programme.'

*Motor Racing at Brands Hatch in the eighties*



Patrick Tambay broke down on the far side of the circuit in his Beatrice Haas Lola-Ford THL2 later in the afternoon.



1986

But it was the Grand Prix itself which was to prove the highlight of the year, as usual. The Shell Oils British Grand Prix at Brands in 1986 was to be the last-ever held at the circuit. Silverstone, which had alternated with Brands as the venue for the home Grand Prix since 1964, had done an exclusive deal to host the event for the next five years. It was never to return to the Kent circuit. To us fans, the news came as a bombshell. We simply couldn't believe it. Brands was such a wonderful track on which to watch Formula One, and the circuit had won a number of awards for the efficient way in which it organised its Grands Prix. The whole thing seemed ludicrous.

The event itself held a special significance for me as I was getting married the following weekend, and so used the Grand Prix as my 'stag party.' A group of us travelled up on the Saturday morning, watched qualifying and the races for Formula Ford and Historic GT cars, then had a barbecue in the car park and wandered back into the circuit to soak up the atmosphere and generally get drunk. We succeeded on both counts. One of my friends had bought me a child's sit-on racing car, which was attached by a rope to a motorbike and I was towed around the field where we were camping. We tried taking it into the circuit to test it on the track itself but this idea was frowned upon by the marshals at the gate. Never mind, it seemed a good idea at the time ...



**Shell Oils**

1986

# BRITISH GRAND PRIX

## BRANDS HATCH

**13TH JULY 1986**  
QUALIFYING 11/12TH JULY 1986  
F.I.A. FORMULA 1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

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Motor Racing at Brands Hatch in the eighties



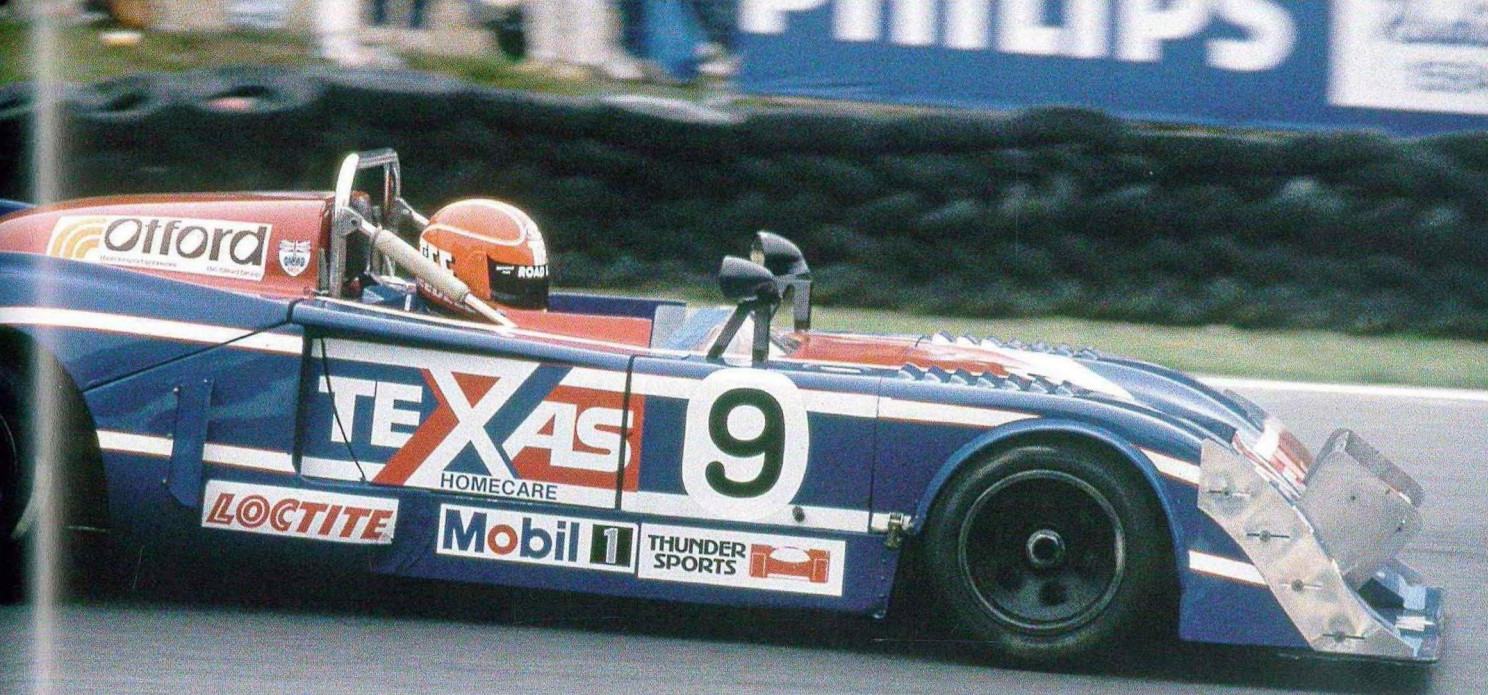
Saturday practice day for the 1986 British Grand Prix, and Allen Berg has spun his Osella-Alfa Romeo FA1H/85 into the barriers on the approach to Druids.



(Above) Team-mates but also fierce title rivals. Nigel Mansell and Nelson Piquet go side-by-side around Druids during practice for the 1986 Shell Oils British Grand Prix, the last to be held at the Kent track.



Alessandro Nannini moves on the inside of the Brabham-BMWs at the Druids hairpin in his Minardi-Moderna M185B during practice.



(Above) Thundersports were on the support bill at the Grand Prix weekend. This is Tiff Needell in the Texas Homecare Chevron B26/36, which he shared with Richard Piper. The pair qualified sixth and finished third.

The Holman Blackburn/Nick Oatway Chevron B62M is passed on the outside by John Foulston's massive Lola T530, which went on to win the following day's race.



Richard Longman takes his Datapost Ford Escort RS Turbo around Druids. Longman won his class in the following day's British Saloon Car Championship round.

Race day we rose more the worse for wear than usual, and consequently contrived not to get into the circuit at the minute the gates opened and grab a track-side spot, which was our usual routine. Instead, we were stuck somewhere near the back of the crowd on the exit of Paddock Hill Bend. It still afforded us a great view of the carnage at the start though ...

Nigel Mansell enjoyed a stroke of luck at the expense of poor Jacques Laffite, who was caught up in a multiple accident on the approach to Paddock Hill Bend on the first lap, and crashed his Ligier-Renault JS27 heavily into the barriers on the inside, sustaining bad leg



Mike Wheatley in his BRM P154 grabbed pole position for the Historic GT race, but the eventual winner was John Foulston in his McLaren M8D.

Ted Williams in the Lola T160 was out of luck and retired from the following day's race.





Race day, and Alain Prost leads Keke Rosberg, Nigel Mansell, Rene Arnoux, Johnny Dumfries, Derek Warwick, Michele Alboreto, Martin Brundle and Teo Fabi around Paddock on the first lap.

Behind them, a multiple accident – in which Jacques Laffite has heavily crashed his Ligier-Renault JS27 into the barriers, sustaining bad leg injuries – has eliminated nine cars. At the very top of the hill the Osella FA1H of Allen Berg is parked in the barriers on the outside of the track, while the Minardi M185Bs of Alessandro Nannini and Andrea de Cesaris, together with the Zakspeed 861 of Huub Rothengatter, have also been caught up in the mayhem. The race was stopped and not restarted until nearly four in the afternoon, nearly an hour and a half after the initial attempt.



## Motor Racing at Brands Hatch in the eighties

injuries. The race was immediately stopped and a fresh start initiated, albeit nearly an hour and a half later. This allowed Mansell, whose drive shaft had broken on the line, to use the spare Williams-Honda FW11. It was his team-mate Piquet who stole the lead initially, though, until Mansell got past him at Hawthorns after 22 laps, much to the delight of the highly-partisan crowd (which, of course, I was part of). The two Williams-Hondas were in a class of their own and lapped the entire field, Mansell coming home just under five seconds ahead of Piquet, with reigning World Champion Alain Prost in a McLaren-Tag MP4/2C a distant third.

The delays of the Grand Prix meant that the programme went on longer than expected and we were late getting away, but were past really caring.

I didn't attend the following week's Shell Gemini 1000km World Sports Prototype Championship race having a previous engagement, known as a honeymoon, to attend. The event was won by the Porsche 956 GTi of Bob Wollek and Mauro Baldi.

Formula Three took a leaf out of Formula Ford's book by holding a 'Superprix' in August, along the lines of the hugely successful FF Festival. Future Formula One drivers such as Damon Hill, Perry McCarthy, Martin Donnelly, Johnny Herbert, Stefano Modena and Julian Bailey all took part, along with many others who would go on to enjoy success in other categories, such as Andy Wallace, David Leslie, Paul Radisich, Gary Brabham and Maurizio Sandro Sala. Wallace emerged the victor in less than pleasant weather conditions, ahead of Donnelly and Herbert. I chose my usual spot at the top of Druids to watch and take photographs.

David Leslie was another to fall foul of the appalling weather, spinning his Ralt RT30 at Druids in the first semi-final.



(Above) Dead car park at Druids during the Cellent Formula Three Superprix in August 1986. The Ralt RT30/865 of David Hunt and Ross Cheever are entangled with the Reynard 863 of Andrew Ridgeley. The three went off in the first semi-final in separate incidents, caught out by the treacherous conditions.





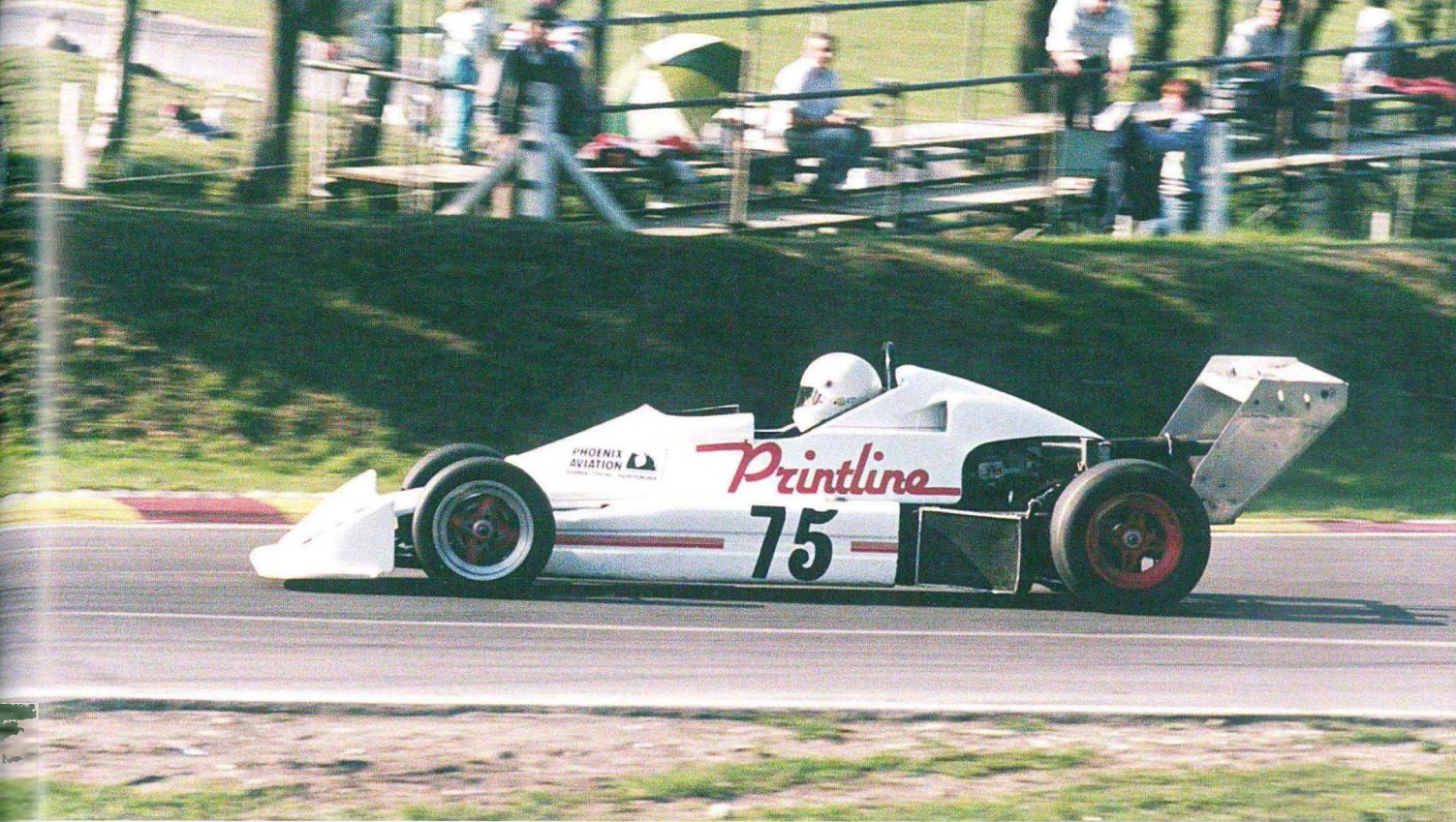
1986

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The Renault 5 Turbos provided some variation from the plethora of single-seaters, but some struggled in the wet conditions. Here, Robert Edgar runs wide out of Druids, while David Martell receives help from the marshals.

Paul Radisich in a Ralt RT30/86 battles with the similar cars of Gary Brabham, Damon Hill and Johnny Herbert during the very wet second semi-final of the 1986 Cellnet Formula Three Superprix.





The Reynard RF79 of Alan Hall rounds Druids in August 1985 during a pre-1981 Formula Ford 2000 race. The camera gallery on the inside of the circuit, which spectators could access via the Dunlop bridge, can be seen in the background.

The Ralt RT30/86 of Damon Hill gets tangled up with the spinning RT30 of David Leslie as Keith Fine, in another RT30/86, goes past.

The F3 brigade was back a few weeks later at the end of August, as was my mate Alan in his pre-'81 FF2000 Reynard, and Wallace was again victorious. Once again, history fails to relate where Alan finished, but I do know that he started 17th out of 22 runners.



History does, however, relate that Nigel Mansell spectacularly failed to win that year's Formula One championship, just when it seemed in his grasp. Like thousands of others, I got up in the middle of the night to watch the Australian Grand Prix, only to gasp in horror as Mansell's rear tyre exploded at high speed.

By way of consolation, John Webb and his team at Brands organised a 'Tribute to Williams' day at the circuit at the end of November, during which Mansell ran demonstration laps in his Williams-Honda FW11 and signed hundreds of autographs.



Nigel Mansell's Canon Williams-Honda FW11 casts long shadows in the autumn sunshine as he rounds Graham Hill Bend during the 'Tribute to Williams' meeting at the circuit.

*Motor Racing at Brands Hatch in the eighties*



Mansell, along with commentator Murray Walker, signed many autographs that day for the delighted fans.



(Above) Gary Ayles in a Reynard 865F leads Dave Coyne's Swift DB3 in the BBC Grandstand FF2000 Trophy race, while at the back Paul Warwick's Reynard locks-up and runs into the rear of the similar car of Alexander Arbis.

No harm done and the pack continues out of Druids and down the hill.

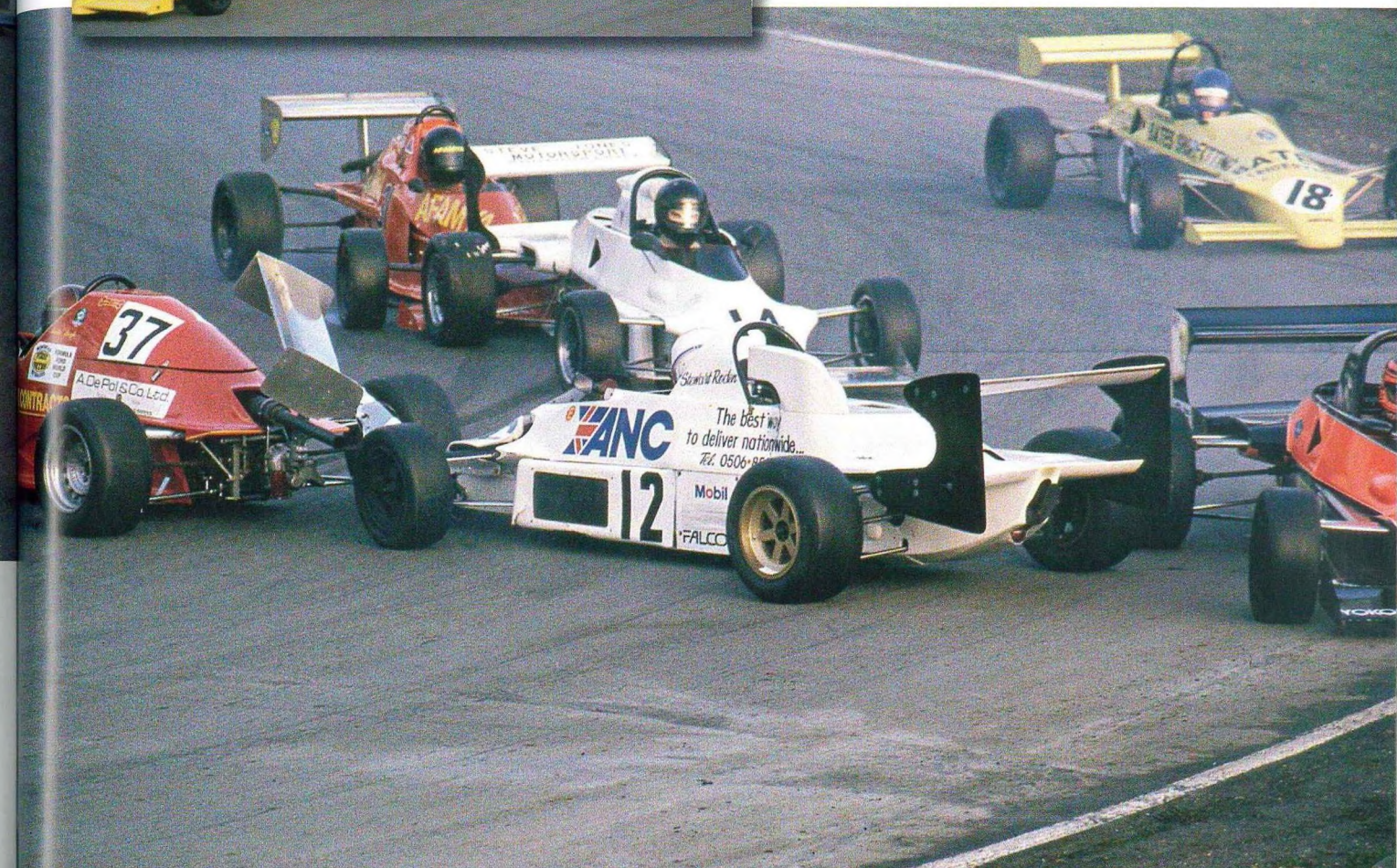




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Spoke too soon! Claude Borbonais' Swift is clear, but behind him Martin Boyle's Crosslé 63F and Stewart Roden's Reynard have collided ...

... and chaos ensues.



## 1987

Being a fan of big, noisy sports cars, I was pleased when Brands introduced the Thundersports category of racing – endurance races on a smaller scale with pit stops and driver changes – in 1983. The rules, which allowed any sports racing car to compete, had been changed slightly for 1987. The field was now split into four classes, covering single-seater Can-Am cars,

two-seater sports cars of up to and over two and a half litres, and a separate class for Sports 2000 cars. Easter Monday proved the perfect opportunity to see these monster machines, with victory going to Mike Wilds and Ian Flux in their 5.7-litre Can-Am Lola Chevrolet T530.

The Thundersports were emulating the Formula 5000 cars of the late sixties and early seventies in that they were running at Oulton Park on Good Friday, and then heading south to Brands for their second encounter of the Easter weekend on Bank Holiday Monday.

The Rover Vitesse of Graham Dawkins and the Ford Escort of Jeffrey Mills have conspired to spin together at Druids during the Uniroyal Tyres Production Saloon Car Championship race on Easter Monday, 1987.



Stefan Stingbrance and his March 817 Can-Am car during the Thundersports race on Easter Monday.

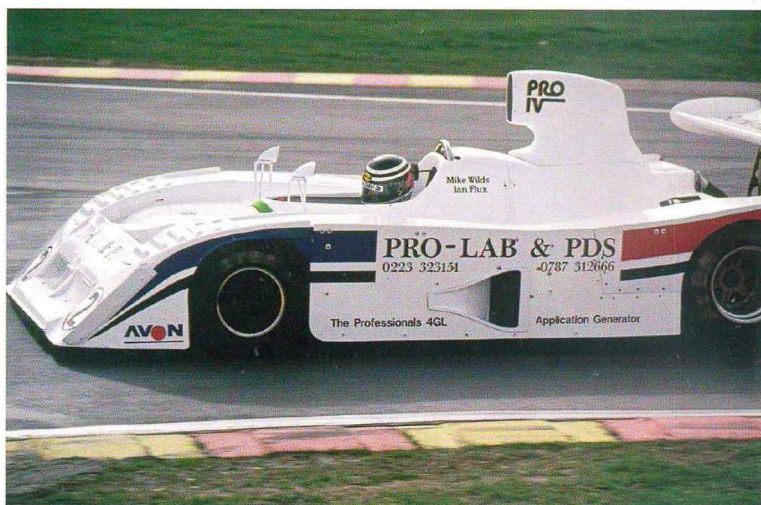
Robin Smith and Stefan Stingbrance qualified their March 817 on pole, but it was the Lola of Wilds and Flux that took the lead at the start. John Foulston, who had won convincingly at Oulton Park in the Lola he shared with John Brindley, moved up to second and started to challenge Wilds for the lead. This potential ding-dong battle came to a premature end on lap four though, when the transmission failed on Foulston's car. This left Wilds way out in front, extending his lead over the Stingbrance March to half a minute by lap seven and going on to lap the entire field on his way to a dominant victory.

The programme was a typical Brands mix, guaranteed to have something for everyone. Supporting the rumbling Thundersports machines were the similarly named Thundersaloons, the ubiquitous Formula Ford 1600s, Alfa Romeo saloons, pre-1971 single-seater racing cars, Formula First and production saloon cars. A varied and entertaining Easter Monday programme.

Incredibly, that was the only meeting I went to at Brands that year. A visit to Le Mans, the British Grand Prix at Silverstone and other events meant that time and money were in short supply.

It meant that I missed seeing the Jaguar XJR8 of Raul Boesel and John Neilsen take victory in the Shell Gemini 1000 in July. It was always a shame to miss a long-distance event at Brands but the Le Mans visit – at which Porsche had triumphed – meant that at least I'd had my fill of endurance sports car racing for the year.

In September came the shock news that John Foulston, who had owned the circuit for just 14 months, had been killed while testing his McLaren Indycar at Silverstone.



Ian Flux shared this Lola T530 with Mike Wilds, the pair taking victory following the retirement of John Foulston and John Brindley in their Lola.



## 1988

Dingle Dell Corner had been re-profiled over the winter into a right-left-right chicane at the top of the hill, so it was all a bit different for the drivers in the Lucas British Formula Three championship when they turned up in April. Qualifying was the first chance they had to try out the new chicane, which was described in *Autosport* by F3 driver Ross Hockenhull as: "Blind as you turn in, fourth gear, with a jump in the middle."

The race was red flagged almost before it had got under way, when Paulo Carcasci stalled his Reynard on the grid and was collected by the fast-starting David Germain in another Reynard. Both drivers were taken to hospital, but were not badly injured. At the second attempt, pole-sitter Martin Donnelly in a Ralt RT32 led away, chased by another Ralt of fellow front-row starter Eddie Irvine, who attempted to pass Donnelly on the outside of Paddock. It was still Donnelly from Irvine with JJ Lehto's Reynard 883 close behind as they arrived at Druids, when all hell broke loose.

Irvine ran into the back of Donnelly and collected Lehto, who was trying to go round the outside. So the first three were relegated to the back of the field before even half a lap had been completed. This was good Brands stuff and reminded me why I enjoyed spectating at Druids Bend so much.

It meant that Damon Hill, son of former double World Champion Graham, was now in the lead in his

*Despite starting from the front of the grid in second place, Eddie Irvine finished 16th after colliding with Martin Donnelly and JJ Lehto at Druids on the first lap of the April Formula Three encounter.*



A mixed bunch of Formula Three runners round Paddock Hill Bend during the April round of the Lucas British Formula Three Championship. Class B runner Craig Simmiss, in his Reynard 873, is ahead of Scott Stringfellow's similar car, the class A Ralt RT32 of Antonio Simoes, Rowan Dewhurst's Class B Reynard 873, and Eddie Irvine in a class A Ralt RT32.





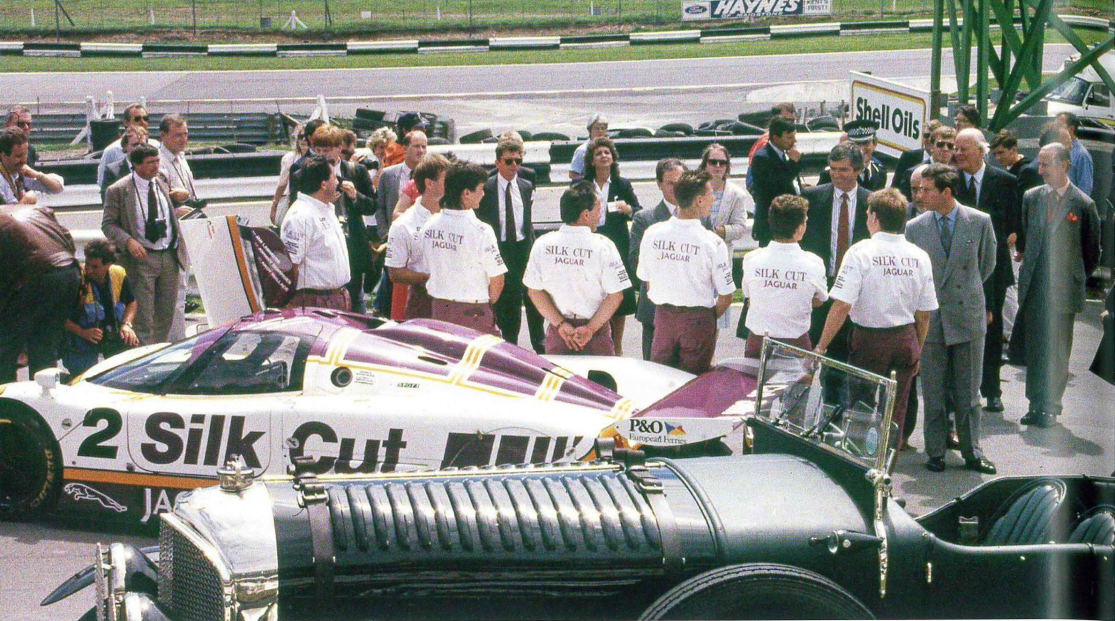
*The beneficiary of the first lap incident was John Alcorn, driving a Reynard 883, who beat the Ralt RT32 of Damon Hill into second place.*

Ralt RT32, chased by the Reynard 883 of John Alcorn, who fought his way past at Surtees on lap three. And that was how it stayed to the flag, with another famous name – this time Gary Brabham in another Ralt – coming home in third.

Looking at the entry list for that race, it's amazing how many future stars were there that day. Apart from Donnelly, Irvine, Lehto, Brabham and Hill, others who would rise to prominence in one category or another included Roland Ratzenburger, Rickard Rydell and Alain Menu.

Having made the trip to Le Mans to see Jaguar triumph for the first time since 1957, I skipped the Brands Hatch 1000km in July, which provided a home win for the Martin Brundle/Andy Wallace/John Neilsen Jaguar. A big accident at Clark Curve eliminated the Sauber-Mercedes of Jochen Mass and Jean-Louis Schlesser, which had been challenging for the lead in the early part of the race.

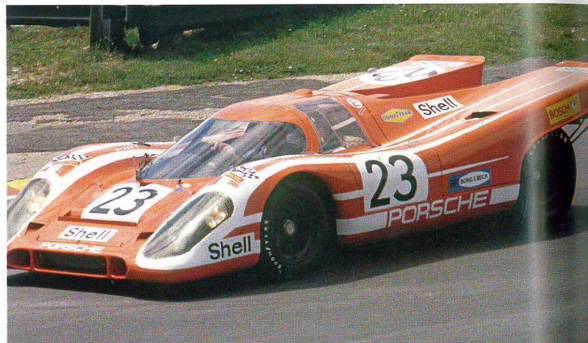
I managed to get the day off work in July to go to the mid-week 'Cars of the Century' event, attended by HRH Prince Charles. The victorious Le Mans-winning Jaguar



HRH Prince Charles met the Le Mans-winning Jaguar team, just back from its victory the previous month, at the 'Cars of the Century' event, held at the circuit on 21 July 1988.

team was there with its XJR9, along with a host of other delectable racing cars from down the ages. I never did quite understand what the purpose of the event was, but I enjoyed the chance to watch the cars parade around the circuit and take some good photos.

One of the many cars taking part in the 'Cars of the Century' parade was this glorious Porsche 917K, driven by 1970 Le Mans winner Richard Attwood.



1988

# Brands Hatch F3000

Saturday/Sunday, 20th/21st August



FORMULA

3000

INTERNATIONAL



Official Souvenir  
Programme £1.50

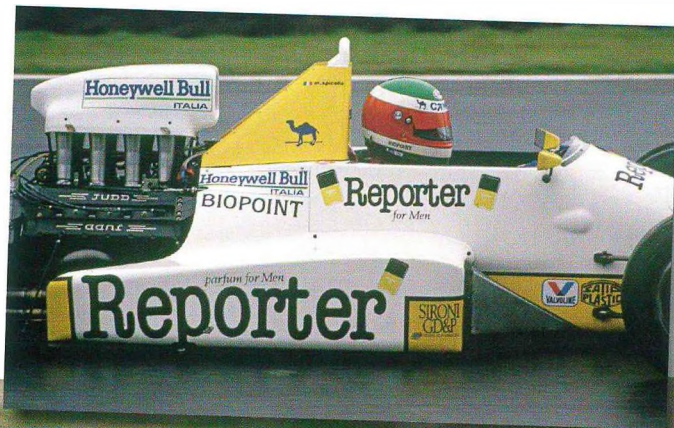
Sunday 21 August 1988 is a day I'll never forget, as one of the worst accidents I'd ever seen occurred at the circuit. We were watching the FIA Formula 3000 event from Druids, hoping for a good result for either Johnny Herbert or Martin Donnelly in the Eddie Jordan Racing Reynards.

Formula 3000 was probably at its peak around this time, with an entry of 41 cars attempting to qualify for 26 spaces on the grid. The entry was top quality as well, with the likes of Donnelly (who had graduated from F3 since the last time I saw him at the circuit earlier in the year and was about to make his F3000 debut), Herbert, Mark Blundell, Jean Alesi, Andy Wallace, Aguri Suzuki, Bertrand Gachot and Roberto Moreno among the international field, many of whom would go on to race in Formula One or endurance sports cars in the future.

To put the meeting into context, the first race of the day was a round of the British Touring Car Championship, a category that today headlines its own events. The BTCC was also enjoying a period of success, with the likes of Andy Rouse and Robb Gravett battling in their turbocharged Ford Sierra RS500s against Frank Sytner and

1988

(Right) The morning warm-up at a big race meeting was always a good time to take photographs, before the crowds had arrived. This is Marco Appicella in his Reynard 88D at the Formula 3000 meeting in August 1988, taken from the inside of Druids. Appicella retired from the event after his car was damaged in the severe accident that brought the race to a halt.

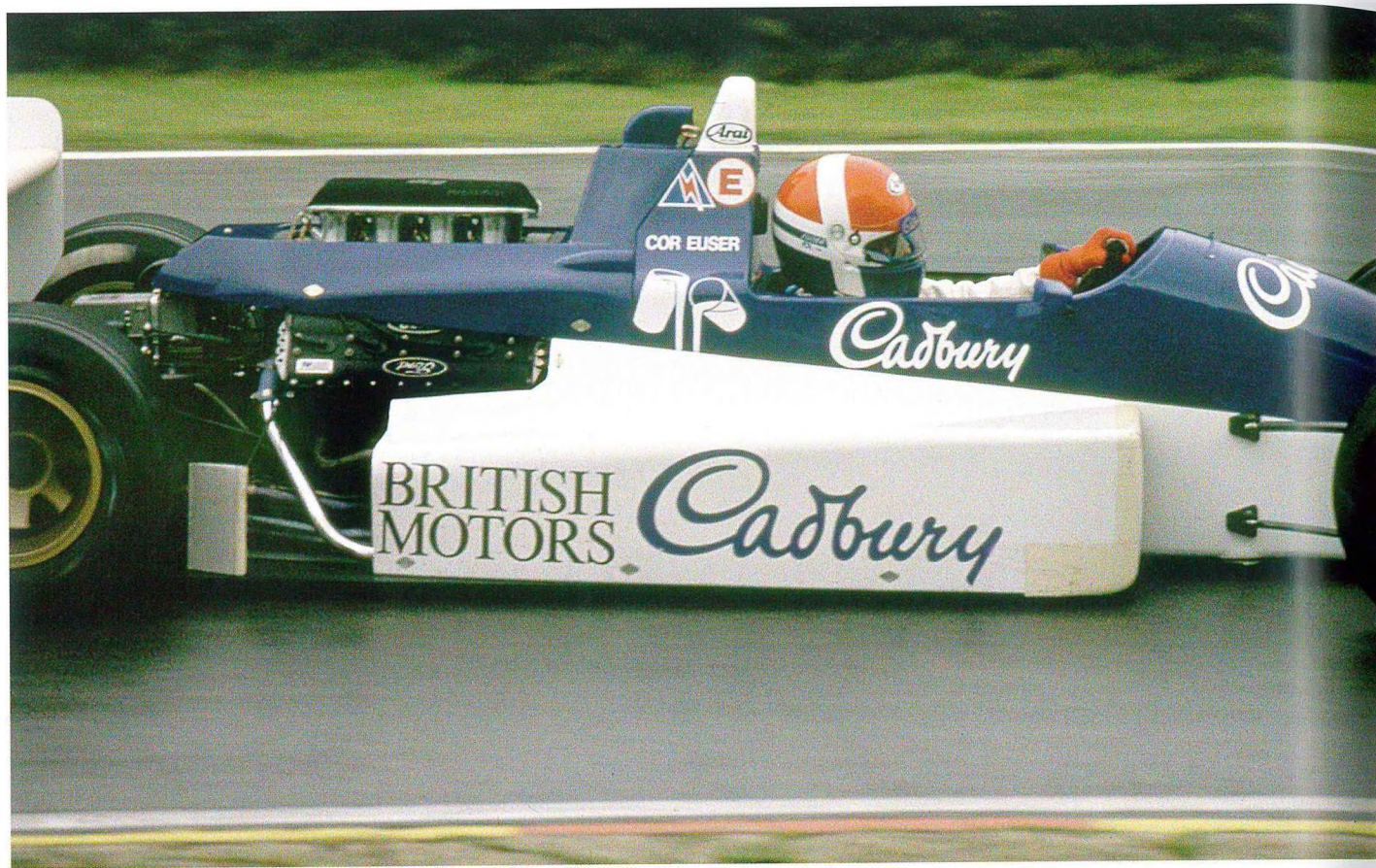


Belgian driver Bertrand Gachot in his Reynard 88D during the morning warm-up for the F3000 encounter. Shortly afterwards the damp conditions caught him out and he crashed the car.

*Motor Racing at Brands Hatch in the eighties*



Overnight rain has left the track slippery, and Volker Weidler has missed his braking point at Druids in his Onyx March 88B, ending up in the gravel trap.

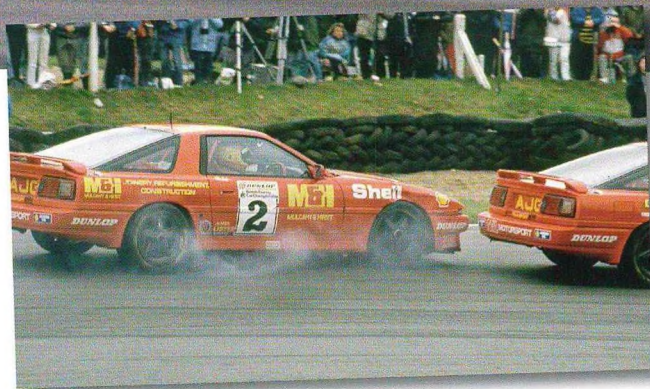


Cor Euser was one of only six drivers to take the second restart of the race. He finished fifth in his Madgwick Reynard 88D.

Roland Ratzenburger in BMW M3s in the top class. In those days, the BTCC was split into four classes for cars of different engine capacity – class D was for up to 1600cc, class C for 1601-2000cc, class B for 2001-3000cc and class A for 3001cc and over. It

provided a wonderful mix of machinery and meant that there were championship battles going on all the way down the field.

The race provided a lights-to-flag victory for Rouse in his Kaliber-sponsored Sierra RS500, ahead of Tim



(Above) The British Touring Car Championship was often one of the supporting events at a major meeting, the August Formula 3000 event being no exception. This is Roland Ratzenburger driving a BMW M3. The Austrian finished 11th overall and third in class.

Vic Lee appears to be locking up in avoidance of his team-mate Ian Flux at Druids. The pair finished 15th and 14th respectively in their Toyota Supras.



Harvey's Istel-backed version. Frank Sytner, finishing eighth overall, took the honours in class B and thereby ensured that he retained his narrow lead over Rouse in the overall championship.

A pits walkabout during the lunch break gave

spectators a chance to look at the F3000 machinery close-up. Those who had arrived early had already had a chance to see them on track during the 20-minute warm-up session, which was held in damp, drizzly conditions.

The lunch break included a pit-lane walkabout, and all of the F3000 cars were on display outside their pit garages. This is Mark Blundell's Lola T88/50.



## Motor Racing at Brands Hatch in the eighties

Johnny Herbert, here driving his Camel Q8 Reynard 88D, was to suffer appalling leg injuries during that afternoon's Formula 3000 race after being involved in a twelve car, race-stopping accident.

It had brightened up in time for the start and Herbert led the field up to Druids – where we were standing – ahead of team-mate Donnelly in their EJR Reynard 88Ds. This is what we had come to see. In front of us, Jean Alesi was tipped into a spin but re-joined at the back of the field. Herbert and Donnelly continued to pull away at the front, but behind them Pierluigi Martini, Gregor Foitek and Roberto Moreno were scrapping furiously over third place. On lap 24, Moreno and Foitek collided at Paddock, bringing out the red flags.

Neither driver was injured but there was a lot of clearing up and barrier repair to be completed before racing could resume again, just over half an hour later. This time it was Donnelly who made the better start, ahead of Martini, with poor Herbert, who had suffered too much wheelspin off the grid, left to bang wheels with Foitek over third place and defend heavily into Druids.

They didn't come round again. Standing on the outside of Druids, the cars pass behind you a hundred metres or so away as they go under the vehicle bridge on their way down Pilgrim's Drop towards Hailwood Hill. Out of our sight, but very much within our hearing, Herbert and Foitek collided at this point, cannoning into the parapet of the bridge while travelling at around 150mph. The incident triggered a multiple accident, leaving the track blocked and wreckage strewn everywhere. The red flags flew again and we groaned at the prospect of yet another delay.

We waited a while, and when it became obvious that this was something big, I walked the short distance



A gruesome scene greeted spectators at Pilgrim's Drop. Olivier Grouillard is slumped in his Lola T88/50 after being involved in a collision between Gregor Foitek's Lola and the Reynard of Johnny Herbert, which escalated into a twelve car pile-up, bringing out the red flags.



After a long delay, the race was eventually restarted with just six runners, Martin Donnelly taking victory in his Camel Q8 Reynard 88D.

from the back of Druids to the bridge. There, a scene of carnage greeted me. There was debris all over the track, three severely wrecked cars and drivers still trapped inside. There was a dark fluid running down the track from one of the cars, and I wasn't convinced that it was oil ...

Poor Herbert sustained serious leg injuries in that crash, and it wasn't until two hours later that the race was finally restarted for the third time with only six cars left on the grid. Martin Donnelly took the win ahead of

Martini and Blundell, but it was a subdued occasion and the fact that Donnelly had scored a victory on his debut outing in the category was overshadowed by the rest of the day's proceedings.

It is ironic that the programme for the event contained an article by the chief medical officer of the organising club, the BRSCC (British Racing and Sports Car Club), about the medical facilities at the circuit and how his team dealt with major incidents during a race meeting ...

# 1989

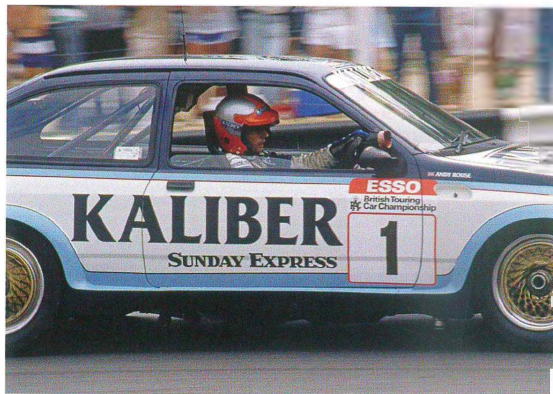
The Lucas British Formula Three Championship made a couple of visits to Brands early in 1989, one at the end of April and then again at the end of May. Looking at the entry list it's amazing how healthy the category was in the days before so many one-make formulae began to erode the number of entries. The class of '89 included David Brabham, Paul Warwick, Vincenzo Sospiri, Allan McNish, Rickard Rydell, Mika Salo, Alain Menu, Paul Stewart and future World Champion Mika Hakkinen. Brabham, driving a Ralt RT33, emerged victorious in the wet April encounter, ahead of the Reynards of Niclas Schonstrom and Mika Hakkinen, after the race had to be restarted following a startline shunt.

Brabham and Hakkinen were both on the podium again a month later, this time in first and second places respectively, with Allan McNish completing the top three.

Apart from these F3 events (to which I didn't take my camera) my only other trip to the circuit this year was for the World Sports Prototype Championship Brands Hatch Trophy race over 480km of the Grand Prix circuit in July.

Once again the cars of the British Touring Car Championship were playing a supporting role, giving fans an excellent day of quality racing, as proceedings kicked off with a Thundersports race and finished with production saloons as well.

It was a blisteringly hot day, with t-shirts and shorts the predominant style of clothing. Robb Gravett emerged the winner of the touring car race in his Ford Sierra RS500, with Andy Rouse chasing him home. Championship leader James Weaver took victory in class B in a BMW M3. The race was brought to a premature



The British Touring Car Championship runners were once again on the support bill at the Brands Hatch Trophy race in July 1989. This is Andy Rouse in his Kaliber-backed Ford Sierra RS500. Rouse started and finished in second place, behind the RS500 of Robb Gravett.

end after only 17 of the scheduled 20 laps had been completed, when Godfrey Hall and Ian Forrest tangled at Paddock, bringing out the red flags.

Basking in the July sunshine, we eagerly awaited the start of the feature event. This was the era of the Group C sports cars, when endurance racing was enjoying a golden age, and the entry for the Brands Hatch Trophy race reflected this. *Autosport* described it the following week as probably the best entry ever seen for a world championship race in this country, with 38 cars represented, including Jaguar, Porsche, Mercedes, Nissan, Toyota, Mazda and Aston Martin.



Close racing at Druids in the Brands Hatch Trophy race as the Nissan R89C of Julian Bailey passes a slower car at the hairpin. The car retired after only 19 laps while running third, after Bailey went off at Clearways.

This was a sprint race over 'only' 300 miles, taking just two and three quarter hours to complete, as opposed to the longer 1000km events which were the norm for this type of racing. The rolling start was a disaster for pole man Jan Lammers in his Jaguar XJR-11, as he got bogged down, and it was the Mercedes C9-88 of Mauro Baldi that led the pack into Paddock Hill Bend, followed by team-mate Jean-Louis Schlesser, the Jaguars

of Davy Jones and Lammers, the Porsche 962 of Tiff Needell and the Nissan R89C of Julian Bailey.

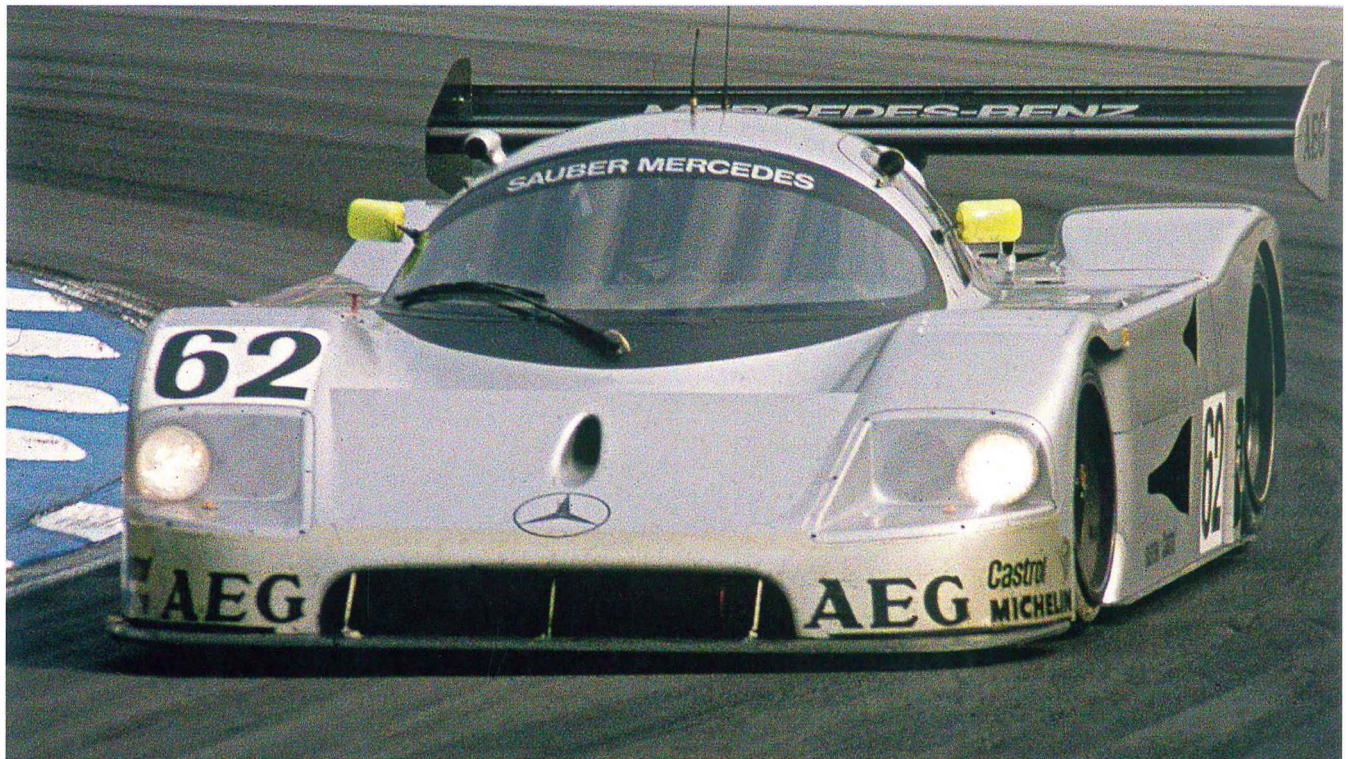
The first few laps provided some frantic racing, with the two Mercedes in front swapping the lead. On lap nine Johnny Dumfries, who had worked his way up to fifth in his Toyota 89CV, forced his way past Lammers, and in so doing managed to damage the side exhaust of the Jaguar. The action continued, fast and furious,

throughout the field, with far too much to be able to take in easily or recount in these pages. Eventually it was the silver Mercedes of Mauro Baldi and Kenny Acheson that took the flag, ahead of the Porsche 962 of Bob Wollek and Frank Jelinski, with the second Mercedes of Jean-Louis Schlesser and Jochen Mass completing the podium.

The massed Jaguar fans were to go home disappointed, despite the quality of the racing. The best

their much-fancied team could manage was fifth, Jan Lammers and Patrick Tambay finishing behind the Aston Martin of David Leslie and Brian Redman, their race compromised by the exhaust damage sustained early in the race, while the other two XJR-11s both failed to finish.

The inside of Druids hairpin was (and still is, I'm pleased to say) a haven for photographers. As safety regulations have dictated that more and more fencing

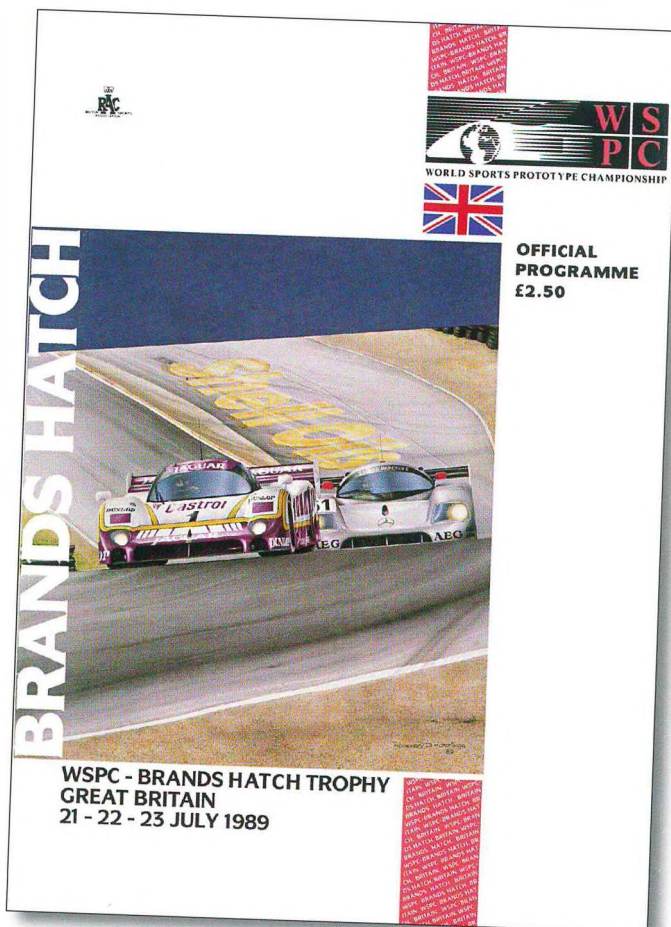


Silver Arrow at Brands – the third-placed Sauber Mercedes C9-88 of Jean-Louis Schlesser and Jochen Mass rounds Druids.



The number three Jaguar, driven by Alain Ferté and Davey Jones, ran as high as third at one point, before retiring with engine problems.

is erected around the motor racing circuits of the world in order to protect spectators, the opportunities for an uninterrupted view for the amateur photographer have diminished. Druids, happily, still allows you the chance to see and capture the cars close up and without chain link fencing confusing the automatic focussing on your camera. At Brands, certainly in the 1980s, there were plenty of other places for an unrestricted view, but nowadays it involves a walk out into the country onto the long circuit. That was something I loved about endurance sports car races such as this (even though this event was only a 'sprint' compared to the six-hour spectacles I had been to before) – the opportunity to walk around the circuit and view the track from a number of different vantage points, while the race was going on. It sometimes made following what was happening a bit difficult, particularly if the PA system wasn't working properly in places, but on a warm, sunny afternoon, there are few finer ways to pass the time than to stroll at a leisurely pace around the wooded Grand Prix loop at Brands, following the contours of the track as it plunges and climbs through the Kent countryside, watching



full-blown sports racing cars driven on the limit by some of the finest drivers in the world.

As the decade came to a close, so did a motor racing era. John Webb, who had managed the circuit for nearly forty years, left, along with his wife Angela who had been deputy managing director. Together they had been 'Mr and Mrs Motor Racing,' and their departure drew a veil over a long and successful period in the history of Brands Hatch.

# Appendix

Official statistics for the British Grand Prix held at Brands Hatch 11-13 July 1986, taken from *Nigel's Day*, published by Brands Hatch Publications.

## Visitors

55,000 advance admission tickets sold  
186,000 total attendance over the three days  
2225 helicopter movements  
340 acres of car parking  
22,500 corporate guests  
258 competitors  
1200 journalists and photographers representing the world's media, including 36 television companies

## Workers

19,000 working personnel  
4321 officials and marshals, including: 50 doctors,  
16 timekeepers, 14 scrutineers, 60 lavatory attendants,  
110 litter pickers

## Refreshments

200,000 coffees, teas and soft drinks consumed  
150,000 glasses of beer and lager  
21,500 bottles of champagne and wine  
100,000 strawberries  
30,000 slices of smoked salmon  
9 tons of ice

## General

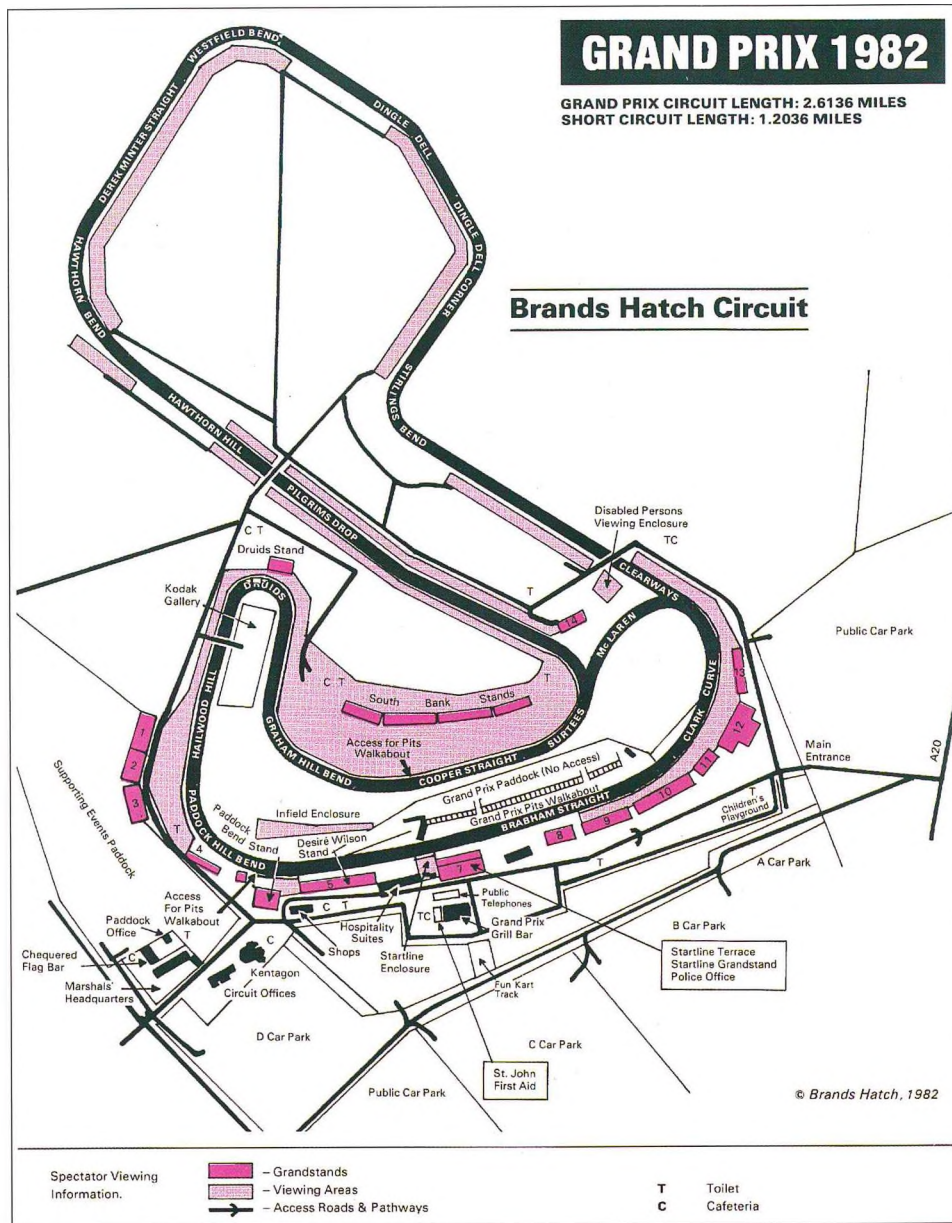
700 gallons of paint used in preparation  
50 tyre wall repairs over the weekend  
1,170,000 sheets of lavatory paper used  
700 tons of rubbish collected in nearly 30,000 refuse bags  
Only 40 letters of complaint from spectators

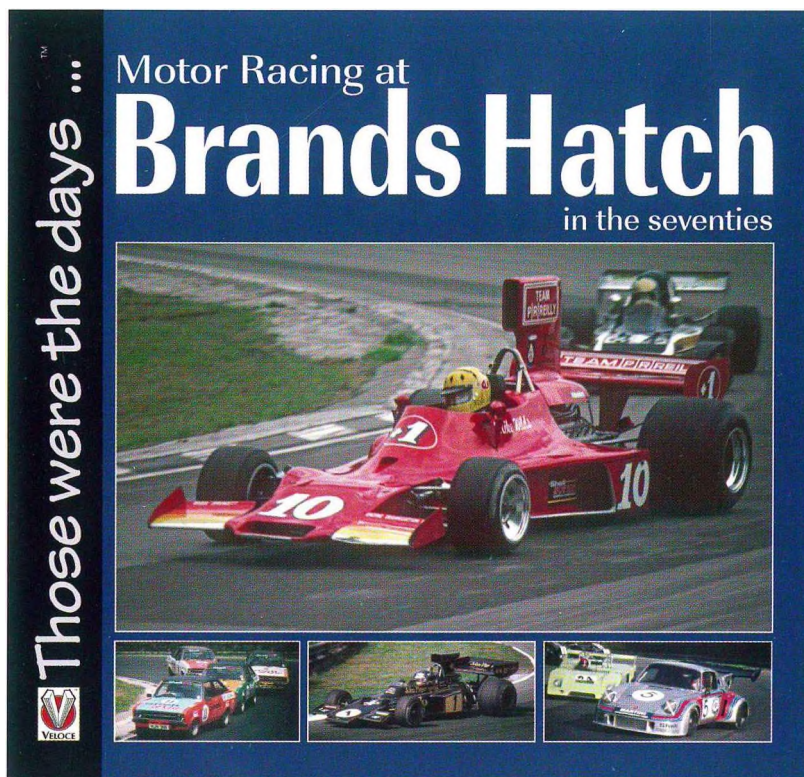


## Appendix

### Map of circuit

The Brands Hatch circuit as it was in the eighties, taken from the programme for the 1982 Marlboro British Grand Prix.



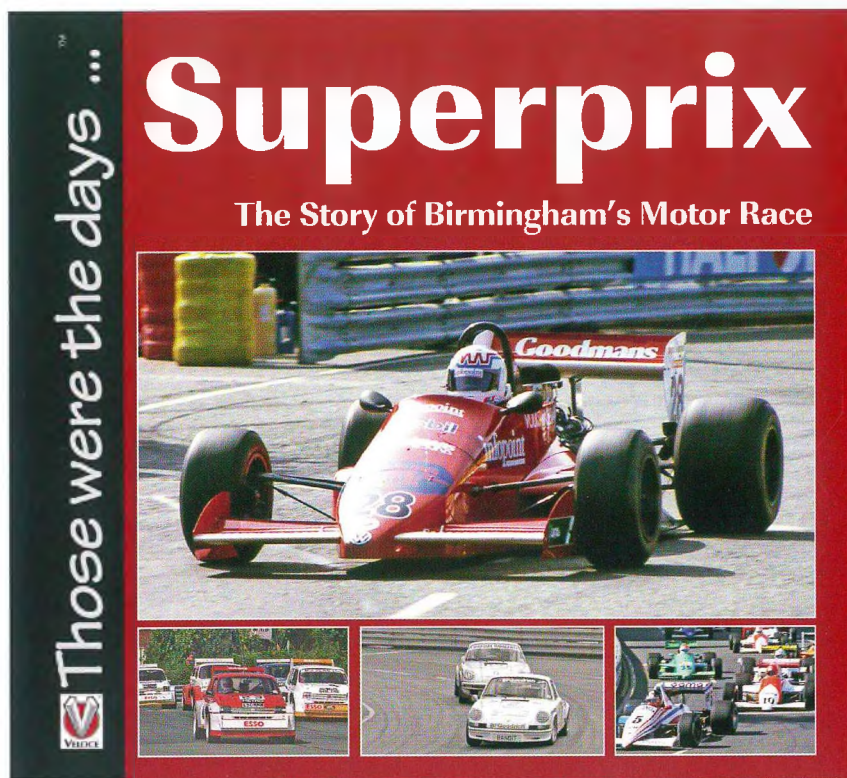


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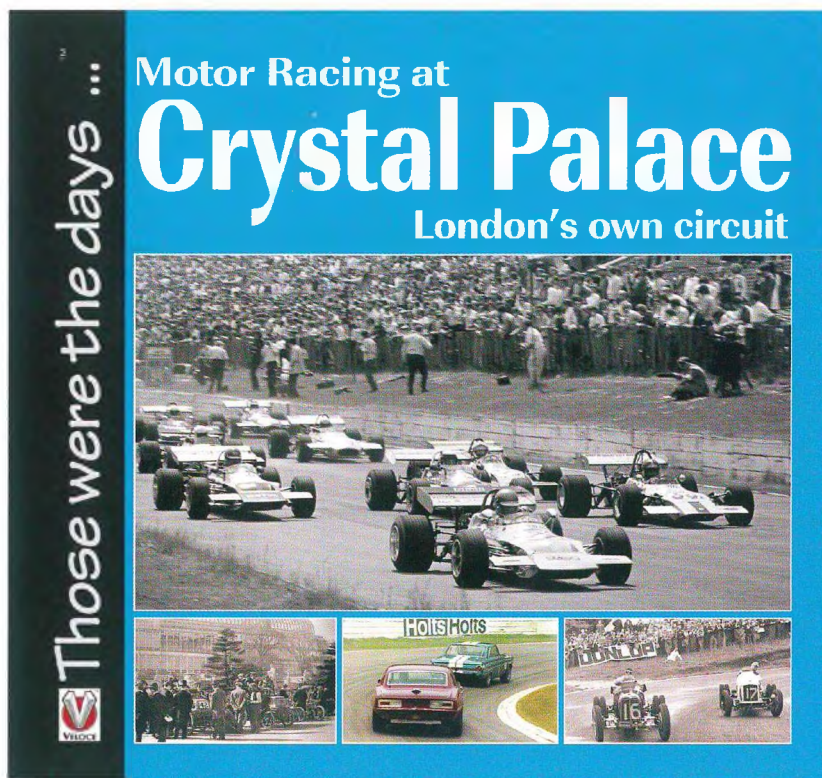


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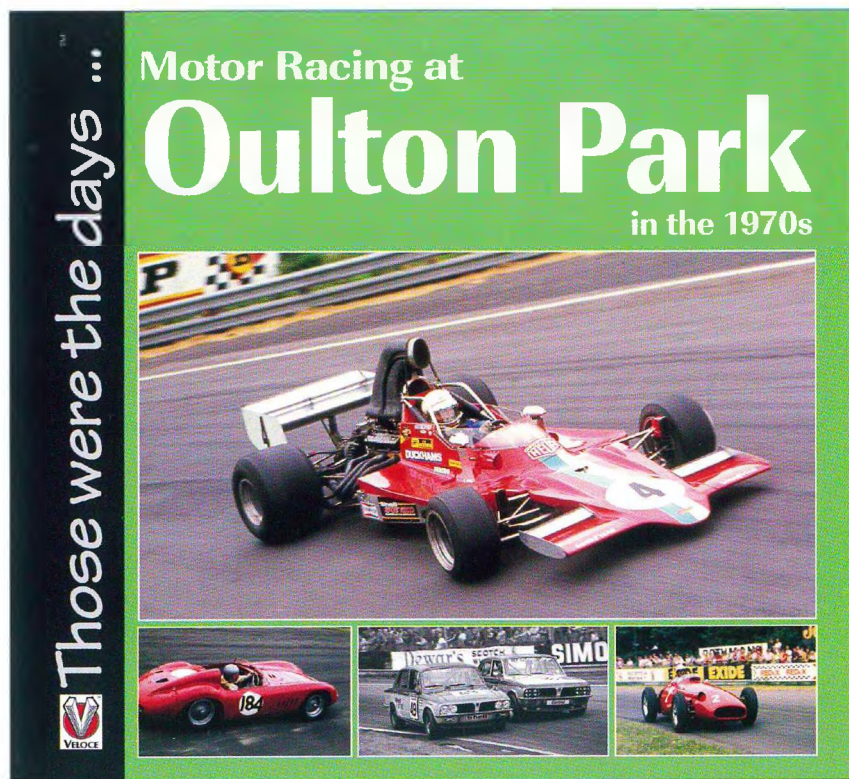


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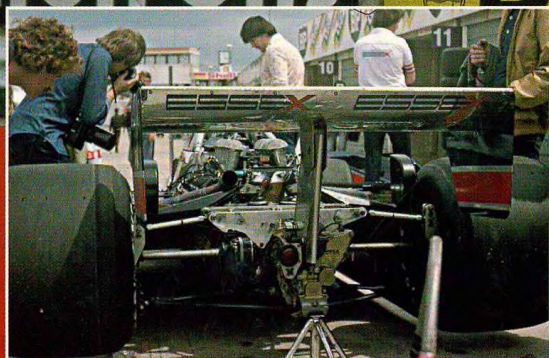
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