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FREE COLOUR CENTRE - GUNNAR NILSSON PROFIL

AUTOSPORT

Andy Rouse and Leyland win at Brands Hatc

AUTOSPORT

BRITAIN'S MOTOR SPORTING WEEKLY

October 23, Vol 61, No 4

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EDITORIAL

The announcement yesterday (Wednesday) that Leyland Cars Ltd (formerly British Leyland) were making their official return to motor sport is most significant and, indeed, very welcome.

For many years now Leyland have been the poor relations of motor sport among the major car manufacturers, their efforts until the last couple of years having looked rather pitiful. But for 1976 they are returning officially with a powerful racing and rally programme designed to blow away the cobwebs and give the new company a fresh and incisive image.

It was 1968 when Leyland pulled out of motor sport officially although various pilot schemes under other banners have been run since then. Having taken the decision to pull out and then to have seen what manufacturers such as Ford, Datsun, Chrysler, Vauxhall and so on have put in and got out of motor sport, it is especially heartening for all of us to see them coming back. It is perhaps an indicator that motor sport does provide a modicum of vital technical knowledge required, and surely at the very least a powerful promotional platform for car manufacturers.

The real Leyland revival of interest began two years ago with the introduction of G1 racing, where a back-door operation was put into practice, and also a G2 rally programme was started; both programmes employed the Dolomite Sprint, Leyland's only really suitable vehicle at the time. The racing programme, under the wing of Ralph Broad, has been especially successful; the company winning the Manufacturer's title last year and the Driver's title in 1975; the latter was clinched last weekend. In terms of outright success the rally programme has not been quite as omnipotent for many different reasons, but Leyland have been the only manufacturer to seriously oppose Ford domination. Because of this success the old Special Tuning competition department was reconstituted under the auspices of Leyland ST and interest in competition potential has never been higher since the heyday of the Mini.

The new competition programme has the full backing of the new management of Leyland Cars, has been carefully planned, and will be run as a full works team rather than in the guise of a dealer operation. On the racing side the Dolomite Sprint programme will continue as before and will undoubtedly be as successful, but the real excitement is on the rally side.

The new TR7 model, which is not yet available over here but which will probably be launched soon after commencement of the rally programme in January, is the most potentially exciting car from Leyland in a very long time. As Keith Hopkins, sales and marketing director of Leyland Cars said yesterday: "Motor sport success is a major factor affecting the car-buying decisions of a large proportion of young people today." Hence the new pro-motor sport policy.

The rally programme, with the new car, has one of the most experienced drivers in Britain to lead it, and to back him up, the best driver prospect that this country has produced for a long time in Tony Pond.

At a time when the British car industry is at a very low ebb it is indeed pleasing to see Leyland coming back into motor sport to use it as a major vehicle in their aggressive new marketing and promotions policy. It's a boost for motor sport and hopefully it will be a successful venture for Leyland. We hope that the renewed association will be a long and happy one.

our cover picture

Last Sunday at Brands Hatch Andy Rouse scored yet another class win in the works Broadspeed Triumph Dolomite Sprint in the British Saloon Car Championship and clinched the Drivers' title. *Photo: David Winter*

Frank Williams (left) and Gunnar Nilsson confer.

Nilsson tests F1 Williams

Gunnar Nilsson, the current man of the moment, spent two days down at Goodwood last week driving one of Frank Williams' Formula 1 cars. The car he used in fact was the one raced regularly by Jacques Laffite.

Nilsson had never driven an F1 car before but acquitted himself well. He expressed a certain amount of trepidation before the start but soon found the F1 responded so much better than he'd anticipated. He was particularly impressed with the brakes. "They're fantastic," he said. The Swede then went on to say that he thought the jump from Formula 3 to Formula Atlantic was much bigger than that from Atlantic to F1. His opinions were remarkably similar to those of Tony Brise when he was put in a similar position earlier this year.

Nilsson spent the first day dodging the rain showers but still impressed Frank with his handling of the car. "He's got an exceptional lot of talent and big balls!"

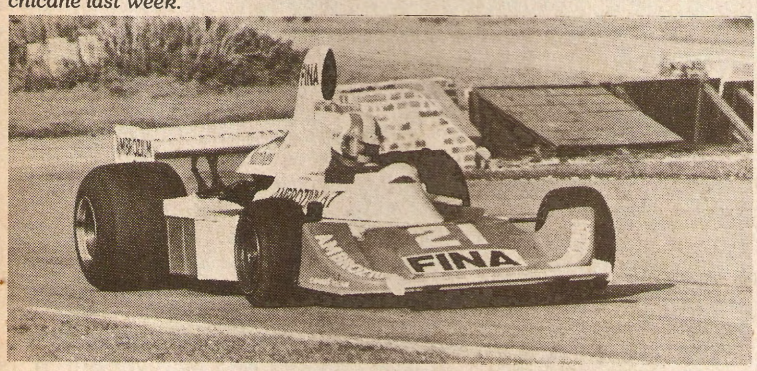
Although hampered by 3rd gear which kept jumping out, Nilsson continued his test the following day and got down to an impressive 1m 9.9s. This is only 0.3s off the quickest time achieved by Laffite. It compares well with similar times set up by Vittorio Brambilla in the F1 March this year and is about 1s slower than James Hunt's best in the new Hesketh 308C. As one designer put it, "looks like any time these days in the nines is competitive and the days of sevens seems long gone, but then we haven't got the tyres we used to have then."

Nilsson did about 370 race miles over the two days running consistent times before Frank decided to have a go himself.

Almost unbelieveably ex-racer Frank has never driven an F1 car before, not even his own. *Sans* helmet, he gave his F1 a whirl for four "shattering" laps. Frank was ecstatic about the experience, "the power is tremendous, you just can't relate it to anything." He intends to have another go.

As to Nilsson's future with the team, Frank has made him an offer, but he's not the only one after the talented Swede . . .

Gunnar Nilsson powers Jacques Laffite's F1 Williams through the Goodwood chicane last week.



Lord Hesketh to go Atlantic?

Alexander Hesketh was his usual rather uncommital self when we spoke to him at the Motor Show last week regarding possible sponsors for his Grand Prix team next year. Atlantic Records, one of the biggest record companies in the world, has been linked with the team and a representative of the company was Alexander's guest at Watkins Glen.

"I'm not saying anything," said his Lordship, "except that in the true tradition of Hesketh Racing our sponsor will be something very different." He then mumbled something about Aretha Franklin, the queen of soul music, recording the Hesketh theme song for next year.

It would also appear that Alexander's interest in motor cycles is not dead. When asked about the possibility of an involvement next year he just said: "It's amazing what riders will give up in the cause of patriotism."

CSI attempt to lure F1CA

Claude LeGuezec, on behalf of the CSI and through the pages of the French press tempted the Formula 1 Constructors with an increased financial offer last week. Originally the F1CA wanted $350,000 per Grand Prix next season but the CSI, on behalf of the race organisers, could only offer $220,000. This looks as if it's now gone up to $250,000 but it remains to be seen whether it's enough to keep the F1CA happy.

A final decision has to be taken by November 1 between both parties as to just what the Grand Prix races will cost each organiser next year. Failing that, and it looks quite likely, then we can expect a full blooded confrontation between the two.

As we have already said, most of the organisers are prepared to accept the F1CA asking price for next year's Grands Prix. Not one of them has said they can't raise the money but two of them, thought to be Monaco and Germany, are doing their best to try and divide the F1CA within their ranks.

At a recent meeting between the race organisers and the CSI, which we've already covered, only Great Britain were conspicuous by their absence, preferring not to get involved in personal vendettas between certain parties.

The Formula One Constructors reasons for asking for $350,000 per race next year is quite straightforward.

In 1972 they raced at each Grand Prix for a purse of 420,000 Swiss Francs. The following year this went up to either 550,000 Swiss Francs or £65,000. Although F1CA wanted the former, they were advised to accept the latter, a wrong choice in retrospect.

The £ then suffered very badly on the foreign exchange market and for the next two seasons, the Constructors ran "at a loss" having accepted an English exchange rate and a three year contract with organisers.

Their request for $350,000 is based on the following facts. If you go back to 1973 they agreed with the organisers to take the EEC cost of living index rise (9% in 1973 and about 13% today) plus an additional 7½%. It amounts to about 20% per annum. Over the last two years that's almost 40%. Taking this into account then you've come extremely close to $350,000 per Grand Prix in 1976.

Andy Rouse and the Broadspeed Dolomite. A triumphant combination.

Leyland's 1976 plans

In announcing a complete involvement and commitment to motor sport for 1976, Leyland Cars confirmed that they will be contesting the British Saloon Car Championship once again with a two-car team.

This is just part of a big package which the company have planned, the majority of which surrounds a rally programme.

As before, the official team will be looked after and run by Ralph Broad and will utilise the already highly successful Triumph Dolomite Sprint. This year's British Saloon Car Champion Andy Rouse will be the number one driver, although the number two has not yet been decided. The cars will be painted in a new striking red, white and blue scheme, the official colours of the newly-formed Leyland Cars Ltd.

The new programme announced this week completes the full return of Leyland to motor sport after a low key, feeling the temperature operation of the last two years.

With the 3-litre limit in the British Saloon Car Championship next year it is expected that, on current form at least, the Dolomite will be an overall winner, despite its 2-litre engine.

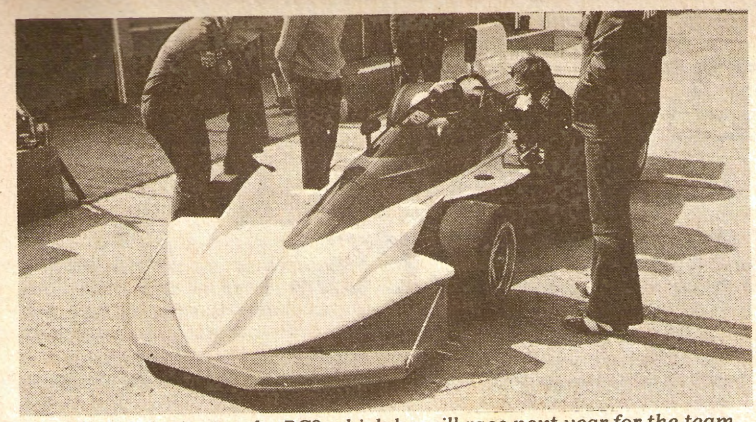
However, Simon Pearson, the man in charge of Leyland's motor sport programme, told us on Monday that they were not complacent and that further development would take place over the winter.

There was no announcement this week of a European G2 programme for Leyland, but this could well come later.

Further confirmation came of the Leyland Cars' National Mini Challenge series, which will be administered by the Mini 7 club next year. It will be run in three classes with 18 rounds for each class. The full prize fund will be announced next week, but information available so far suggests a brand new Mini 1275GT for the overall winner and generous cash awards.

● Although BMW GmbH have yet to finalise their racing plans for next year, they've indicated that they would still like to continue to race in the American IMSA GT series in 1976. They have expressed a wish to find a suitable team from which to base their "works" effort.

● Rumour has it that Belgian Claude Bourgoignie has tied up a £175,000 deal with an Italian sponsor to compete in F2 for the next two years.



John Watson in the Penske PC3 which he will race next year for the team.

Penske keeps Watson

Roger Penske announced last week that he has signed a contract with John Watson to drive the First National City Travellers Checks Penske car in all the Grand Prix events for the 1976 World Championships "sanctioned by the FIA."

Penske also announced that First National City would continue as the primary sponsor of the Penske Formula 1 programme and a major associate with Penske Racing in other types of motor sports competition.

Penske said: "We are impressed with the fine driving job that John Watson turned in for us at the United States Grand Prix this year, finishing in ninth place after having to start from the rear of the grid in our back-up Penske PC1 car. He also was very helpful to our Team during the brief testing sessions with the new PC3. Development and testing work is very important with the advanced state of the art in Formula 1 racing today, and we believe that John has both the proper attitude and ability to do the job for us in 1976."

John Watson, commenting on his decision to accept Penske's offer, said: "I am happy to be a part of the Penske Team and am looking forward to testing the Penske PC3 between now and the first race in Argentina in January. The relationship between driver and Team is the most important single factor in Formula 1 racing today. I am anxious to continue working with the Penske Team on the new PC3, which has shown much potential in our earlier tests."

With reference to the remarks made in our American Grand Prix issue the other week concerning a discussion between Roger Penske and Bernie Ecclestone over John Watson's contract, Bernie told us last week that the stories about him asking Penske to pay him £30,000 for Watson's services were "totally untrue." Ecclestone added that "John Watson is not even my driver anyway!"

This ties in with a letter we've received from John Surtees which says: "just to keep matters quite clear, we would like to confirm that the only contract in existence as far as we know relative to John Watson is one between this Company (Team Surtees) for the year 1975 and himself. We received no requests, notifications or any other form of communication from Messrs. Penske relative to his use of John Watsons' services, either for testing or for the American Grand Prix despite him being informed of the Watson contract."

Ashley and Oaten doubt?

"No engines" was the official cause of Ian Ashley failing to compete in the final round of the Shellsport F5000 Championship at Brands last weekend but there was more to it than meets the eye.

We had words with team manager Mike Smith who said "no comment," Ashley and engine builder Roy Fewkes. We then received a press release dated October 17, on behalf of Richard Oaten Racing which said the following: "Richard Oaten Racing Limited regret that they will not be running either of their Lola cars during the meeting at Brands Hatch on Sunday, October 19, 1975 — this is purely due to shortage of engines. As it is well known their engines, which are prepared by Roy Fewkes, have suffered three major failures in the last three meetings and therefore, they do not feel in a position to be able to prepare satisfactorily in time a car for this Sunday's meeting.

"It had already been advised to Ian Ashley on October 13, 1975, that the Team would not require his services for the Brands Hatch meeting."

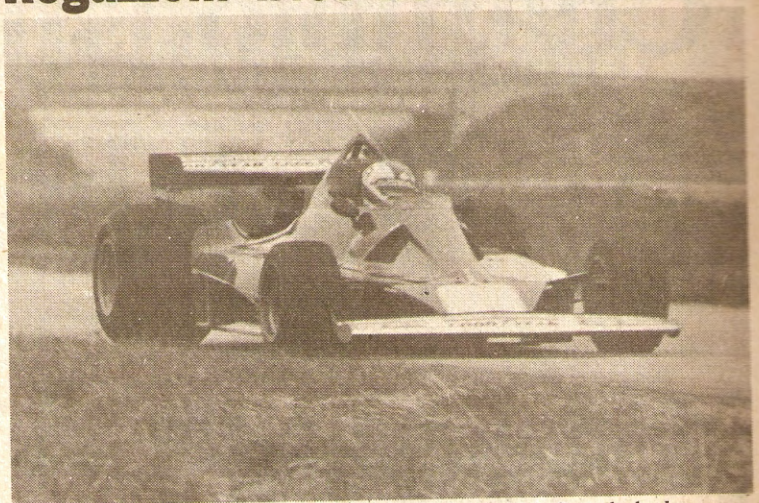
The fact that Keijo Rosberg's name was mentioned in connection with driving Ashley's T330 on Saturday morning, and further word from engineman Roy Fewkes that he had an engine waiting for collection all day Friday before taking it down to Brands on Saturday, meant that Ashley's position and future with the team is causing some concern.

● Expected next week are some exciting plans for next year's Formula Atlantic championship which, it is rumoured, involve Indy-style qualifying and self promotion.

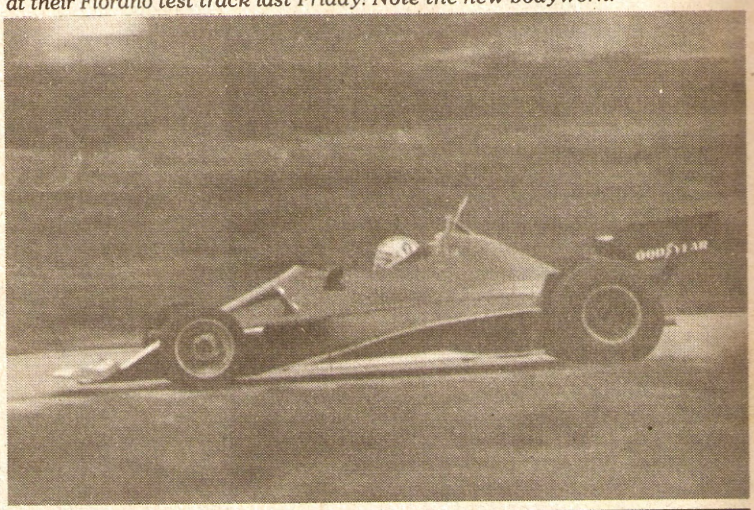
● Wealthy German industrialist Walter Wolfe has taken delivery of a Frank Williams F1 car. Wolfe, who has owned one of the team's earlier spec chassis' all year and last raced by Arturo Merzario, intends to drive it up and down his drive, *a la* Lord Hesketh.

● Brian Hart to build a motor cycle engine? Maybe.

Regazzoni tries new F1 Ferrari



Clay Regazzoni gave the new revised Ferrari 312T/2 it's first shakedown run at their Fiorano test track last Friday. Note the new bodywork.



The Rouse flag incident

Andy Rouse has become the British Touring Car Champion for the first time and deservedly so, but it was a close thing. Rouse, who clinched in the title in a thrilling, if somewhat controversial, finish at Brands Hatch last Sunday, was in a similar position to take the title at the same race last year but "blew it." It almost happened again.

While we congratulate Andy, Ralph Broad and British Leyland on achieving their success, may we expand a little on the incident which happened at the end of the RAC Touring Car race.

As can be seen from the report on page 31, Bob Ridgard's Camaro inverted itself against the bank at Clearways on the last lap which brought out the yellow flags. This, in effect, ruined what looked suspiciously like a "planned finish" for although Rouse overtook Brian Muir's similar Triumph Dolomite after the incident, he was still *technically* under the jurisdiction of the yellow caution area until passing the green "all clear" flag situated just one yard *from* the finish line.

We checked with the RAC on the procedure when such an incident like this occurs. We were informed that under the relevant section of their Blue Book, any driver overtaking another competitor within this area, whatever the circumstances, is classed as "driving recklessly." However, it is up to the RAC Stewards and Clerk of the Course to impose any form of penalty, providing they, or the observers, saw the incident. In this case they did but they felt that under the circumstances, in their view, the matter could pass without causing any ill-feeling at this stage of the championship.

Andy Rouse — worthy champion.

All we can say is that if this happened in a NASCAR race, a yellow caution period *means* no overtaking and no matter who it was, if they overtook another competitor, they'd have been thrown out. Without any disrespect to the parties involved, the point trying to be made is by making rules so flexible, there will always be a chance of getting away with it in the future.

Yarborough pips Allison

Tenth by tenth over the last fifty miles, Bobby Allison's AMC Matador closed in on Cale Yarborough's 18s lead during last Sunday's NASCAR race at Rockingham, North Carolina. Yet another NASCAR race was building up to a tremendous finish and despite several attempts on the last lap by the Penske-prepared machine to dive inside the Valvoline Chevelle, Cale hung on to win the America 500 at an average speed of 120.129 mph. It was a close result but one which Yarborough deserved having led for 396 of the 492 laps, including the last 253.

Second, one lap down, on the leaders was Dave Marcis in the K & K Insurance Dodge and with Grand National series leader Richard Petty retiring his STP Dodge for the second race in succession, this means that Marcis has moved a little bit closer in his bid to wrest the coveted NASCAR crown from Petty.

With Rockingham being the 26th round of the championship trial, only three rounds remain, the next of which is at Atlanta on November 2 and Petty isn't home yet. "It ain't much good when I've had the year I've had and I still ain't clinched it," said Petty. "I should have wrapped it up six months ago. The cats behind us have had lousy seasons and they're still within range. I've had a season like nobody's ever had before and I'm still trying to win the championship."

Bobby Allison – big effort.

Completing the top half-dozen at Rockingham were Lennie Pond who completed 487 laps, just one ahead of a certain AJ Foyt. A further lap down was Bruce Hill and all three were driving Chevrolet Chevelles.

Now it's Peterson's turn to test the new Lotus

Jim Crawford carried out further testing of the new Lotus 77 at Hethel last week in readiness of the car being given its first real run on a race track. This was due to have happened at Silverstone yesterday (Wednesday) with Ronnie Peterson at the wheel.

This will be Peterson's second appearance in the car, the other being a somewhat brief drive at Hethel just after the car's announcement. One problem encountered by the team, certainly at that stage, was braking problems. Apparently the new car can't run with ordinary brake fluid because it corrodes the specially made calipers from which the entire front suspension is hung. Therefore a much thinner "metholated" type of fluid is used which tends to hold air rather more easily, thereby requiring several pumps of the brake pedal. Just one little problem encountered when sorting out a new design concept.

USA F5000 tempts Brise

It hasn't taken the Americans very long but they're after Tony Brise. The young Englishman, whose handling of a F5000 car at Long Beach was a joy to behold, further enhanced his Stateside reputation at Laguna Seca the other week. He admitted to us earlier this week that he has had a number of offers to drive in the SCCA/USAC F5000 series next year, combining with his Embassy Hill F1 commitments of course, and the American offers are very lucrative.

However, Tony would prefer to stay in Europe and concentrate on a really good Formula 2 season, possibly with Modus. However, that idea has only been talked about and it all depends on Teddy Savory's team obtaining adequate sponsorship. Tony then added that if nothing came up in Europe on the F2 front, he may probably accept an American offer, not that he really wanted too.

FSV plans for 1976

Formula Vee Europe has just announced details of next year's European Super Vee Gold Cup and the Castrol GTX series'.

The Gold Cup has been upped to nine races and is of increased financial value. In addition, they are also trying to arrange an inter-continental competition for the end of the 1976 season.

At the present time, Championship regulations are being prepared and it is not anticipated that there will be any changes from the 1975 season.

No plans have been made to change from the current air cooled engines. Should the change be required in the future however, they will try to give at least 18 to 24 months' prior warning.

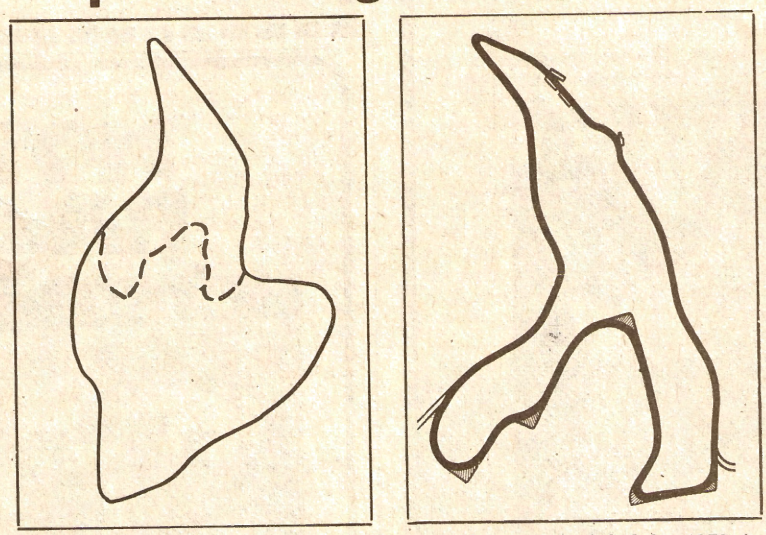
Rising costs of racing tyres have compelled the FVA to implement regulations which are in the interest of their teams and drivers. The FVA will endeavour to specify slicks and rain tyres of one type.

Volkswagen Gold Cup dates for 1976:
April 4, Nurburgring (D); May 9, Mantorp Park (S); June 6, Zandvoort (NL); June 20, Hockenheim (D); July 11, Mugello (I); August 1, Nurburgring (D); September 5, Zolder (B); September 19, Silverstone (GB); September 26, Hockenheim (D).

Castrol GTX Trophy dates for 1976:
April 11, Hockenheim (D); April 25, Sylt (A); May 23, Mainz-Finthen (D); May 30, Nurburgring (D); June 27, Norising (D); August 15, Osterreichring (A); August 29, Hockenheim (D).

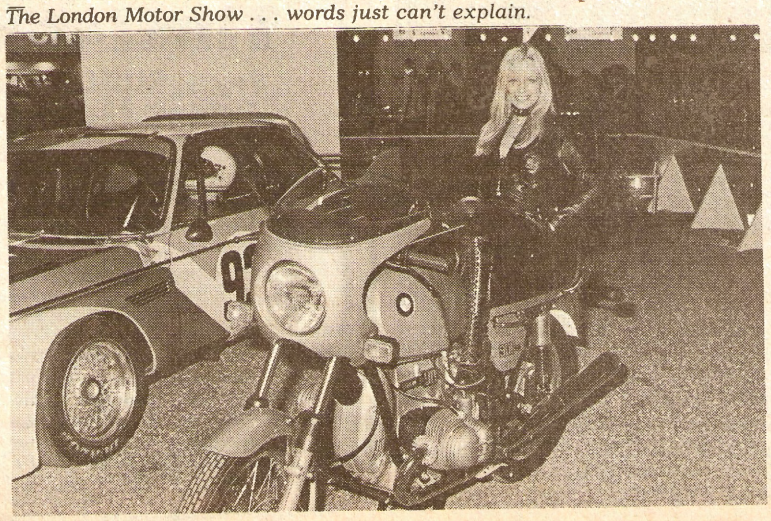
- Sir Clive Bossom, Chairman of the RAC, has recently been elected a vice-president of the FIA, the international controlling body for motor sport.
- The Embassy Racing Club is now closed. It has more than 6,000 members and no more can be accepted.

Proposed changes to Spa



The present circuit is on the left while the new track, scheduled for 1978, is on the right. Note where it takes off from Les Combes and travels across the valley to the other side.

The London Motor Show . . . words just can't explain.



F2 Guy?

"I think we'll keep the Lola" said Guy Edwards. He was talking about next year and what his team were thinking of doing. Although his F5000 Lola T332 is owned by John Butterworth, Edwards reckoned that they'll retain the car "to use on fast circuits like Silverstone."

Edwards was quite interested in the Group 9 single seater championship devised by MCD for next year because, like so many other teams, it means you can run an F2 car abroad as well as giving your English sponsor adequate exposure in this country.

Marsh mellow

Anthony Marsh, motor racing's most famous commentator, and part-time Services Manager for Brands Hatch over the last 10 years, has started a new company, Walmar Promotions Ltd, to concentrate on freelance commentating, and promotional consultancy with particular reference to Grands Prix.

Although he will still be doing major commentaries for MCD and Walmar will be based at Brands until the end of November, all future communication should be to Marsh at 4 Lennox House, Manor Way, London, SE3 9AP (01-852 8032).

Marsh is also involved with former Yardley PR man Martin Cartwright in a new venture called Grand Prix Marketing Facilities. This is a service for sponsors of motor sport and other popular spectator sports to advise of advertising, entertaining, promotions and PR. Further information from Marsh at Walmar or Cartwright at 31 Pond Green, Ruislip, Middx HA4 6EW (Ruislip 35007).

Alex Ribeiro tests Modus

Surprise, surprise. Alex Dias Ribeiro, the diminutive 26 year old Brazilian who's been a member of the works March F3 team this year and looked likely to be continuing with them for next year, has been testing Tony Brise's works Formula Atlantic Modus.

Alex Ribeiro – switching?

Ribeiro, who had a disappointing start to his F2 career at Vallelunga a fortnight ago with the third works March, was expected to give the Modus a run at Snetterton on Monday.

Ribeiro is due to return home to his native Brazil in the next couple of weeks, although he still has to complete his F3 programme with March culminating with the final round of the BP F3 series at Thruxton this weekend. Alex told us last week that "if I can't get a really good deal in F2, and by that I mean, good engines, good chassis and good tyres, I may as well go over to America for the Atlantic series."

Modus are known to be interested in F2 for next year and Ribeiro is no stranger to Jo Marquart-designed chassis, having run an F3 GRD last year and then an Atlantic.

Rosberg confused over entry

Keijo Rosberg, the Finnish Super Vee driver who's tipped to join the McKechnie Racing team in the near future, was a puzzled man at Brands Hatch last weekend. He'd been entered to drive a F5000 Chevron B28 under the Renior Racing banner but had never even heard of such an organisation. Nor had anyone else for that matter.

Rosberg was at Brands hoping to drive a F5000 car, albeit a Lola T332 for Richard Oaten Racing, but because of internal politics, said to be the unavailablity of an engine, Rosberg was resigned to becoming a spectator, although he rarely left the McKechnie Team all weekend.

● In announcing that Jody Scheckter was joining their F5000 team for next year, UOP Shadow confirmed that this year's team driver Jackie Oliver would also be in the team for 1976.

Not Richard Lloyd but Barrie Williams who drove the Simoniz Chevrolet Camaro Z28 at Brands last Sunday. It was a last minute drive to say the least!

LEC for NZ?

"Yes, we hope to do the Tasman series," said LEC team manager Mike Earle, "certainly the four New Zealand races where the Ford Cosworth V6 is eligible." We were told this on Saturday night, the day before David Purley extensively damaged the team's Chevron-Ford during the final F5000 race at Brands.

With the team still undecided as to what to do with their new Mike Pilbeam-designed car for next year, it's been drawn-up to accept either the Ford V6 or Ford DFV engine, the New Zealand section of the "Tasman" (although officially defunct) would have given the team their last chance to run their Chevron before the new car was ready.

However, with F5000 a non-starter for next year, LEC may well be contemplating Formula 1 after all.

Neve to drive an F1

Belgian Patrick Neve, who's first season in F3 this year with the Ray Jessop-designed Safir have brought some encouraging results, is due to have his first taste of Formula 1 in the near future.

The Safir team also possess the Formula 1 Token, which Jessop also designed, and although it's future in racing looks likely to be resigned to hillclimbs or next year's Group 9 (*nee libre*) single-seater championship, the car's Cosworth DFV still has a few miles left "on the clock" before it's due for a rebuild.

Neve, who was testing the F3 Van Diemen earlier this week at Snetterton, will probably give the Token an airing at Silverstone in the near future. As to his plans for next year, Neve is still undecided although he would clearly like to move on up into F2.

Berta shows

The Berta F5000 car has appeared again and raced, albeit in the Ameridan F5000 series. The car, which is designed and built by Oreste Berta, the Argentinian designer who, with backing from Renault SA, has proved the country's most forward thinking and promising race car engineer, made an appearance at Laguna Seca ten days ago driven by Luis di Palma, Berta's works driver.

The car in fact saw daylight at Long Beach and with sponsorship from a chain of Californian restaurants, it was driven in practice by Bill Simpson.

Steve's F3

Stephen Choularton's SDC 36 Formula 3 car is now under construction in the converted stables of his Warrington home in Cheshire. The design for the project has been conducted by himself and computer mathematician John Hughes.

The new car will be adaptable to either Formula 2 or Atlantic specification although commenting on why the car should take the form of an F3, Stephen said: "Many Europeans and Americans think that this is the way to go. There is so much mystique associated with the formula that even if it was for bicycles it would be supported."

EGT situation

Georg Loos tells us that the Monza organisers have informed him that Hartwig Bertrams *wasn't* able to score maximum points in the European GT Championship when he won the Monza 6 Hours event the other week. The reason was because the German hadn't completed the required two hour driving stint in order to qualify for maximum points.

Also the appeal by Loos against the disqualification of John Fitzpatrick's winning Porsche Carrera at Imola earlier this year (and the 2nd and 3rd placed cars) by the Italian organisers looks like being upheld in Loos' favour. This puts a different light on the European GT Championship positions which is currently led by Fitz's Loos Carrera.

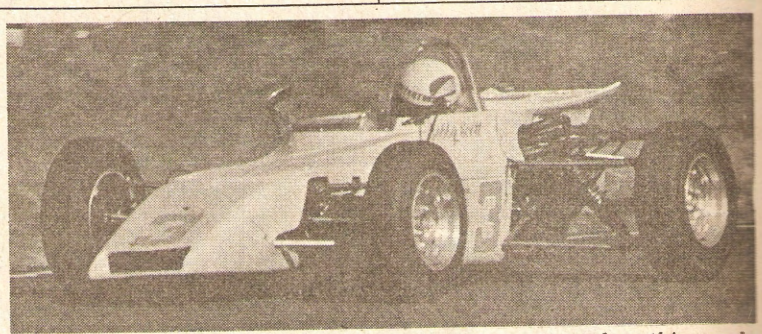
The next round, thought to be the last as it is expected the Estoril race in Portugal will be cancelled, is at Jarama on November 2. There was some doubt as to whether this race would take place as well, although the organisers telexed Porsche last week to say it was definitely on. However, the CSI are thought to be taking moves to cancel the race because of the political problems in Madrid.

Birmingham GP—a little nearer perhaps?

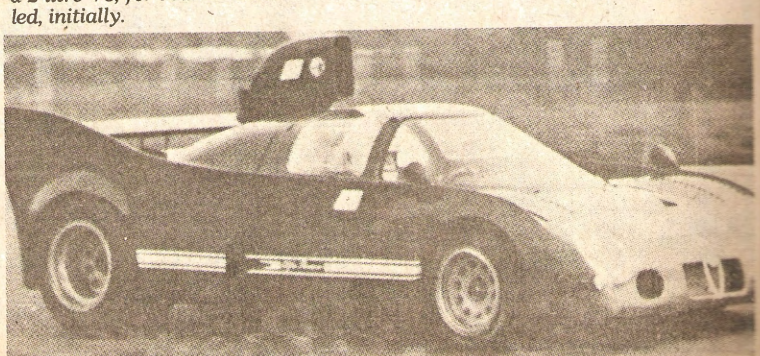
An announcement in the *Evening Mail* from the City Solicitor of Birmingham last week said that an extraordinary meeting of the City council will be held on November 4 to consider "A Bill for effecting all or some of the following purposes namely –

"To empower the Council to provide motor races on certain streets in the city."

The announcement contained 10 paragraphs altogether covering street closure, erection of barriers and grandstands and admission charges, TV and radio broadcasting, and so on.



Bobby Scott (above), a former hot rod champion, emerged as this year's South African Formula Ford champion driving the Barton's Tubes Merlyn Mk 25. Alfa-Romeo produced this coupe version (below) of a T33, powered by a 2-litre V8, for Jean-Claude Andruet to drive on the recent Tour of Italy. It led, initially.



F2 Association look to 1976

The newly revived Formula 2 Association, who admit that they aren't trying to become a new style F1CA but just hope their efforts will benefit the general organisation and running of Formula 2, had another meeting after Vallelunga. This was to discuss the items brought up at a meeting in Paris between Hughes de Chaunac, team manager of Elf Ambrozium (Jacques Laffite) and the Alliance of Organisers — Emil Brezing (general secretary), Francois Rageys (Promocourse) and Sig Maffazoli from Monza. There were no English organisers present.

It was agreed by the parties involved at this Paris meeting that there was a general problem over F2 prize and travel monies and that de Chaunac, on behalf of the F2 members, put forward an idea that the scale could be increased based on the current European inflation rate. The matter would, of course, be put toward the CSI for approval. De Chaunac blamed the rising costs of engines, tyres and general running costs as the cause.

A further meeting between the F2 race organisers and F2 delegates will take place in December. One item which did come up in Paris, but which the CSI still have to approve, is the abolition of the Graded driver system, thereby allowing *all* drivers to compete for the European Championship on equal footing.

It's Graham versus Brise

"Oh," said Tony Brise, "sorry you had to tell me the bad news." This was in reply to us explaining the Tarmac Championship positions to him after last Sunday's race at Brands Hatch.

Prior to the weekend, Brise had increased his lead to 11 points over his nearest challenger Stuart Graham by virtue of a fine fourth place in the Laguna Seca F5000 race. It looked as if he would be able to clinch the title from reigning title holder Graham at Brands but it was not to be.

The Tarmac points system is scored on a "best 10 results" from each racing category the driver takes part in. Now although Graham has scored all his points in the G1 Brut Camaro, his win at the Tourist Trophy was catergorised as a Trophee de L'Avenir round and *not* Group 1 thus Graham obtained a maximum score. At Brands last weekend, it was thought that Graham would have to drop a number of points but it was only *two* in fact. Thus by winning the G1 race he gained a maximum of 20 points and dropped the necessary two by obtaining fastest lap. Graham thereby sweeps back into the lead, virtually pipping Brise at the flag.

However, Tony has one chance left and that's at the final Riverside F5000 race this coming weekend in America. We've informed Tony that he must finish at least fourth (10 pts) to be able to take the title and the £2,000 that goes with it.

McKechnie now look into F2

Alan McKechnie's Formula 5000 team have been staunch supporters of the formula since its inception in this country seven years ago but they have never looked like moving into other fields. However, things may well be different now that F5000 will no longer be run to the same format.

The McKechnie Team are looking toward Europe and Formula 2. Team Manager John Thornburn admitted this at Brands last weekend and ideally he would like to run Keijo Roseberg, certainly in one F2 car at least for next year.

"Naturally it depends on sponsorship," said Thornburn. "We're talking to two people at the moment but that's all I'll say."

Rosberg, having quit FSV, naturally wants to move upwards and felt that F5000 with McKechnie could have got him the recognition he deserves. Now he has no choice. It has to be F2, unless the team find it financially viable to go to the States.

This weekend...

THRUXTON

The BARC are hosting their championship finals meeting at Thruxton this Sunday. There are still two of the six championships to be decided so the racing promises to be fast and furious.

Top of the bill is the BARC's prestigious championship, the BP Super Visco F3. The title has already been decided in the favour of super-Swede Gunnar Nilsson, but he'll be there all the same. Although he had things very much his own way in Formula Atlantic in recent weeks, the opposition in F3 is much more competitive, and the cars very much of an equal so he'll have his work cut out. In fact Nilsson may well be used in the works March team's tactics to make sure their number two Alex Ribeiro takes second place in the championship. He's one of three drivers that could take the runner-up spot. Prior to this weekend the position is that Danny Sullivan has 52 points, Ribeiro 50 and Patrick Neve 47. Just five points splitting three very ambitious men with one race to go spells excitement. They may be the men in with a chance of featuring in the championship but also entered are a host of young drivers hungry for a good end of season result. So expect names like Larry and Terry Perkins, Herve Regout, Ingo Hoffman, Rupert Keegan, Bob Arnott, Richard Hawkins, Dick Parsons, Eddie Cheever and Stephen South to feature.

Perhaps most of the interest will centre around the final of the British Air Ferries Formula Ford final. Three drivers are in line for a championship win here. Geoff Lees has 67 points, Rick Morris 64 and Jim Walsh 61. With the 9-6-4 1 scoring system all three have a chance, but if Lees continues in the form he showed two weeks ago he should take his second FF championship of the year.

The Britax Production Saloon championship round finds Jock Robertson and Phil Dowsett still squabbling over top honours. Robertson looks to have it in his pocket though. His reliability record suggests that he will finish in the points and if he does the title's his. Dowsett's only hope is that he wins and takes fastest lap and that Robertson doesn't get a single point. Also mixing it, of course, will be all the usual Mazda rotarians, the heavy metal kids in the Camaros plus Capris, Vauxhalls, Minis, Simcas, Ladas and Hondas.

The Miller Modsports will undoubtedly put on their usual good show with all the top names like John Pearson, John Cooper, Dave Bettinson, Richard Jevey entered.

Phil Winter clinched the Forward Trust Special Saloon Car championship some time ago, but his eyes are on the BARC's President's Cup which he currently leads from Jock Robertson. There's a possibility of a surprise entry from Gerry Marshall in a turbocharged Firenza.

The National Organs Clubmen's championship has already gone to Geoff Friswell with Nick Adams taking the small class, but there's a very full entry so the racing should be good.

Championship finals meetings are always run in a light hearted atmosphere, despite what's at stake. Thruxton has improved facilities for spectators in the form of a Paddock restaurant.

Racing starts at 1.30 pm.

● The championship finals meeting at Brands Hatch on November 2 will feature a Shellsport Escort race consisting of two teams from regulars at two London pubs, the Winsor Castle, Notting Hill and the Victoria, Bayswater.

Championship positions

Tarmac British Racing Championship (leading positions): 1, Stuart Graham, 230 points*; 2 Tony Brise, 221; 3, Richard Lloyd, 207*; 4, James Hunt, 190; 5, Derek Lawrence, 171*; 6, Andy Rouse, 168*; 7, Vince Woodman, 146*; 8, Guy Edwards, 145*; 9, Bernard Vermilio, 140*; 10, Derek Bell, 135 pts, etc.
* best results.

Southern Organs RAC British Touring Car Championship (final positions): 1, Andy Rouse, Win Percy and Stuart Graham, 78 points*; 4, Richard Lloyd, 65*; 5, Vince Woodman, 54*; 6, Bernard Unett, 53*; 7, Gordon Spice, 46; 8, Roger Bell, 40*; 9, Stan Clark, 38*; 10, Stuart Rolt, 34* pts, etc.
* best nine results.

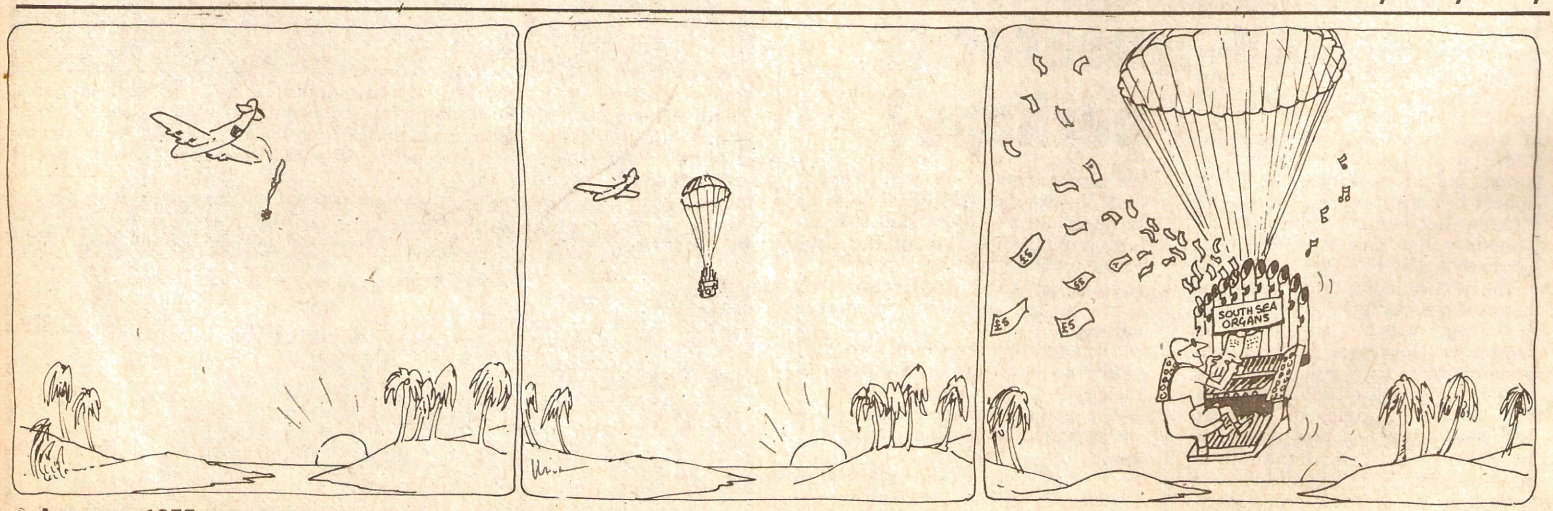
Southern Organs/MCD Formula Atlantic Championship (final positions): 1, Ted Wentz, 42 points; 2, Gunnar Nilsson, 36; 3, Tony Brise, 31; 4, Richard Morgan, 29; 5, Val Musetti, 18; 6, Brett Riley, 17; 7, Ray Mallock, 12; 8, Alo Lawler and John Nicholson, 8; 10, Derek Cook, 7 pts, etc.

Shellsport European Formula 5000 Championship (final positions): 1, Teddy Pilette, 174 points; 2, Peter Gethin, 143; 3, Guy Edwards 122; 4, Ian Ashley, 101; 5, David Purley, 98; 6, Richard Scott, 85; 7, Bob Evans, 76; 8, Alan Jones, 64; 9, Brian Robinson, 49; 10, Gordon Spice and Vern Schuppan, 30 pts, etc.

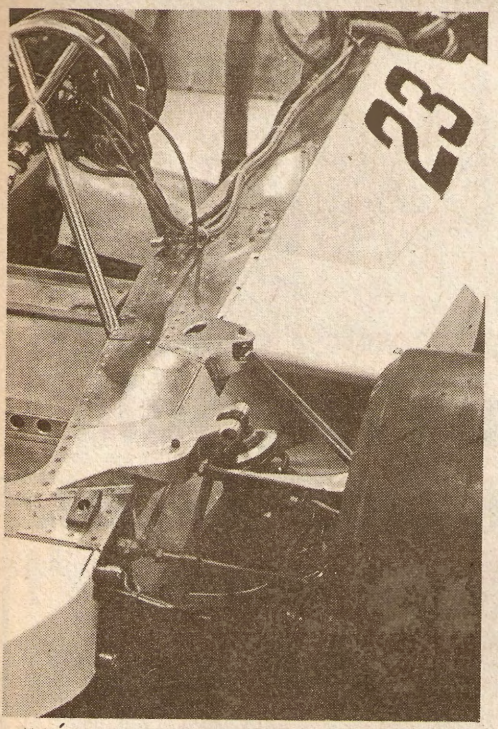
SCCA/USAC Formula 5000 Championship (leading positions): 1, Brian Redman, 211 points*; 2, Al Unser, 137; 3, Mario Andretti 129; 4, Jackie Oliver, 77; 5, Eppie Wietzes, 60; 6, David Hobbs, 50; 7, Warwick Brown, 42; 8, Vern Schuppan, 36; 9, Bernie Swanson, 32; 10, Chris Amon, Tony Brise and Elliott Forbes-Robinson, 12 pts, etc.
* champion.

CATCHPOLE

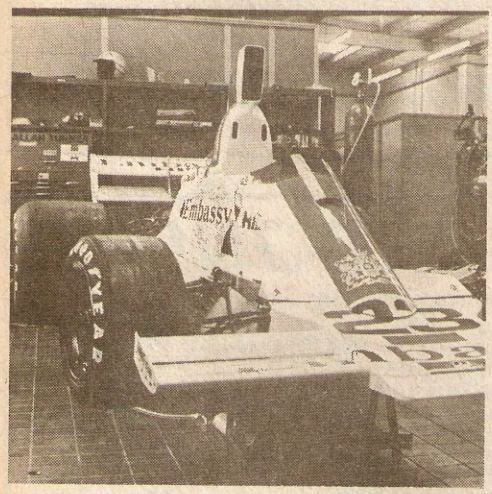
By Barry Foley



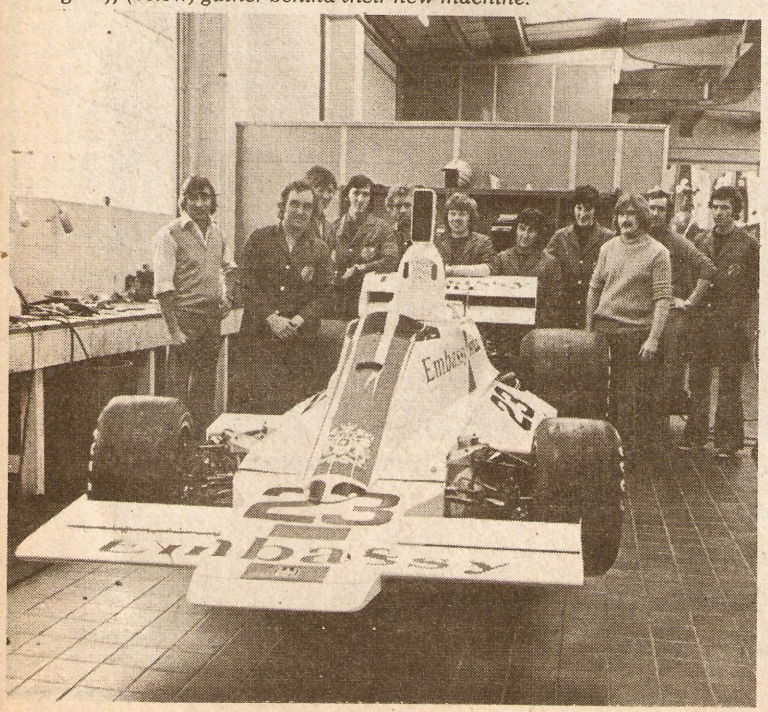
© Autosport 1975



The front suspension (above) utilises mild steel double fabricated wishbones. Note the radiator intakes behind the wheels.



An indication of how low the front of the monocoque is shown above. The racing staff (below) gather behind their new machine.



The new Andy Smallman-designed Hill Grand Prix car, flat and squat.

The new Embassy Hill GH2

After a great deal of overnight work the new Embassy Hill GH2 Grand Prix car arrived at Silverstone on Tuesday afternoon for its initial shakedown tests in the hands of Tony Brise.

The new car has been designed by Andrew Smallman, the ex-Shadow draughtsman who joined Embassy Hill Racing earlier this year and produced the Lola-based GH1, which has proved to be successful in Brise's hands.

The team were hoping for a full day at Silverstone on Tuesday before Brise departed for America and the final F5000 race, but a split fuel tank on Monday night delayed the operation. Alan Jones, who ran as the team's number 2 while Rolf Stommelen was injured, will continue the testing at the circuit during this week. Further tests are scheduled for Paul Ricard later this month.

The all new low and shallow monocoque is made from 16swg L72 alloy sheet, bonded and rivetted, with the outer skin in 16swg alloy sheet incorporating crushable structures. The main rollover bar is of titanium while a secondary structure is dash pannel mounted and allows unrestricted leg movement. All suspension pick up points and engine mountings are in high grade mild steel. All the light alloy components are anodised black and all mild steel cadmium plated. mounted and allows unrestricted leg movement. The steeply raked cockpit follows its line at the front. All suspension pick up points and engine mountings are in high grade mild steel. All the light alloy components are anodised black and all mild steel cadmium plated.

The front suspension utilizes mild steel double fabricated wishbones controlled by Koni light alloy double-acting adjustable shock absorbers and progressive rate conical titanium wire co-axial springs.

At the rear the same dampers and springs are employed with independent lower parallel links and an upper single link with twin radius rods. The lower suspension pick-up points are located beneath the Hewland FGA400 gearbox on a magnesium alloy casting. Hill driveshafts are employed and the hub carriers are of magnesium alloy with inserted titanium upper and lower pivots.

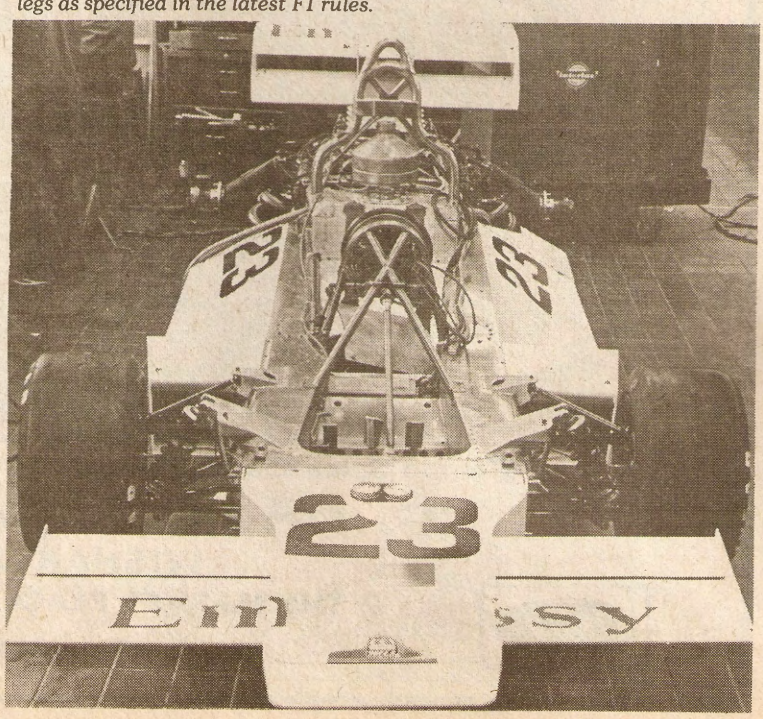
The Lockheed brakes are outboard at the front and inboard at the rear, while it features a lightweight rack and pinion steering with magnesium alloy housing. The twin Serck radiators, of brass fin and tube construction (water) and alloy (oil), are mounted just aft of the front wheels.

The main centre section of the body is by Specialised Mouldings in glass re-inforced plastic and the nose in aluminium alloy. All the aerofoils including the bi-plane and conventional rears are to NACA aerofoil specification.

The engine is, of course, the Cosworth DFV which is prepared by Nicholson-McLaren engines, while Goodyear supply the tyres.

Dimensions: Wheelbase: 110.9 ins. Front track: 58.0 ins. Rear track: 58.6 ins. Length: 179.3 ins. Chassis width:. 54.5 ins. Total width (including tyres): 77.6 ins. Height (to main rollover bar): 36.75 ins. Weight: 1290 lbs.

An exploded view of the new GH2. Note the new roll-over bar over the driver's legs as specified in the latest F1 rules.



Simon Pearson – motorsport supremo.

Leyland's official Superteam

TR7 assault from Culcheth and Tony Pond

After weeks of rapidly snowballing rumour the story is out at last and it is possibly one of the most significant to break on the rally scene for some years, for on Wednesday Leyland Cars marked their official, formal, return to big time rallying with the announcement that for '76 the works, run as always from Abingdon would be campaigning two 16-valve TR7s running in Group 4 to be driven by Brian Culcheth and new signing of two weeks vintage, Tony Pond.

Tony has for some time now enjoyed a position as the hottest property in national rallying and amid great speculation over his team whereabouts for next year, he has maintained a typically professional and diplomatic silence over his future. The team will be launched in a new and patriotic red, white and blue livery and will be backed up by Sherpa vans and Range Rovers. The first of the TR7s, is now nearing completion at Abingdon and the debut for this powerful new force in national rallying will be the Tour of Dean in January. As one spokesman put it: "We hope to present a fresh challenge to the rallying world . . ." The Unipart banner will no longer be connected with the cars but there will be a full promotional back up for the equipe, and Castrol is expected to be involved with the team. The cars themselves were homologated from the 1st October and will be fitted with five speed gearboxes. The engines are expected to be giving more power than Culcheth's Sprint power unit this season and a full development programme has already started. Both drivers are expected to be involved in protracted testing in the near future and both are very enthusiastic about the cars' potential.

Leyland will in addition be running either an Allegro or a Marina next year as an official works entry and the car is to be driven by Pat Ryan. It is clear that although no one is saying anything at present, the TR7s are likely to make more than the occasional foray abroad, and this project seems likely to link up with an allied scheme of which very little is being said at present. Either way, Leyland are back in the rallying world with a vengeance after several years in the doldrums and it is clear as to their intentions; the signing of Tony Pond is in itself a highly significant factor and we certainly have not heard the full story yet. Meanwhile for the RAC Culcheth will be at the wheel of a G1 Dolomite Sprint as we reported in these columns some weeks ago, Phil Cooper will be at the wheel of the Marina, and Pat Ryan will be driving the Howells/*Western Mail* Allegro.

Culcheth – "team captain."

BRIAN CULCHETH: From our point of view it is a very exciting step to take; even the presentation and appearance of the vehicle is something special — I see it as the Englishman's Stratos. Our early impressions of testing have been most encouraging and I'm very excited about the prospect of Tony Pond joining us, it will be great to have a team-mate again so that comparisons with the machinery are possible . . . and of course we all value Tony's abilities as second to none. With this project I feel almost all my ambitions will have been fulfilled."

Tony Pond – hot property.

TONY POND: I would not have entered into any kind of contract with anyone without considering the prospects for overall success most carefully; I consider that the TR7 will be a highly competitive car. I'm naturally extremely happy to be joining Brian and the team and next year we hope to be able to give Ford something to think about."

Alpine effort

Alpine Renault are set to make a big effort to snatch the limelight in Corsica for the World Championship round which takes place on the Mediterranean island over the second weekend in November. There will be two A310s, a 16-valve car for Therier and an eight valve machine for new boy Vincent. Backing them up will be two A110s, probably Gitanes entries, to be driven by Larrousse and Serpaggi. Lancia are set to go with three Stratos and these cars are most likely to be driven by Darniche, Munari and Pinto; the former getting a ride as part of an Italian 'thank you' for winning the Tour de France.

Centralized

The 1000 Lakes and the Marlboro Arctic rallies are being brought closer together by an organisation rejoicing under the title of Famous Finnrallies (FFR) and a committee has been set up to centralise the organisation of the two events. Hannu Kiiski of the 1000 Lakes is chairman and Matti Lamminen of the Marlboro Arctic is vice-chairman. The first official act of the committee has been to employ Mauri Lindell as executive manager of FFR and the main purpose of it all is to "improve marketing of both events and reduce costs and work." FFR will be holding a reception at RAC Rally time to make their efforts more widely known and this will be held on November 21st at 16.00 in the Post House, York.

Sutton introduces Johansson

David Sutton Cars are fielding a five car team for the RAC and it is to be spearheaded by talented Norwegian Erik Aaby in the 2-litre ex-works Escort he has been campaigning all year. Number two in the team and also in an ex-works 2-litre Escort will be Finn, Matti Johansson who is currently rallying an RS2000 in his homeland. Jill Robinson will be giving the brand new Sutton Escort 2 its first outing. This is the car that Chris Sclater is expected to be driving next year in the RAC Championship. Colin Vandervell/Ian Cooper will be in Jill's Castrol championship G2 RS2000 and these two will be running under the banner of Team Avon Tyres. Vandervell's Tour of Britain car has recently been sold to Chris Beynon and the latter will be campaigning it on the rally, sponsored by Century Oils. Chris' ex-Tordoff Carrera is currently lurking at Sutton's premises without an owner.

● Last weekend Timo Makinen won the Finnish Northern State Rally with Erkki Salonen in his 1000 Lakes Escort 2. Second were Tapio Rainio-/Erkki Nyman in a Saab 96 and third was Timo Salonen in a Datsun 160S.

● Limerick MC will be running their Duckhams Thomond Rally on Sunday, November 2. The rally will be over 170 miles in total with 90 tarmac stage miles and five of smooth loose — split into just 12 individual stages.

● Taunton and Burnham-on-Sea MC's are organising the "Wildlife Safari Stages Rally" to take place on Saturday November 8. The rally will be based at Cricket St Thomas Wildlife Park, near Chard and the event is planned along the lines of the Arkell. Spectators will only be allowed at the park. Total stage mileage within a 100 mile overall route is just 20 for an entry fee of £12. Entries secretary is: Tom Green, The Gatehouse, Halswell Park, Goathurst, Bridgwater.

● Malcolm Wise returns to the fray after a year's lay-off, due to expansion of his motor trade business, with an entry on the Cheltenham Festival Rally. The car is an ex "Boreham" Mk 1 Escort with a 2 litre BDA built by David Wild. For this one event the entrant is Opposite Lock East Eleven, with support from Henderson Garage Doors. Co-driver is Rod Palmer who has been keeping his hand in this year on *Motoring News* events. He is also entered on the Lombard RAC Rally.

A triumph for the Bowler hat brigade – Derek Skinner and Peter Rushforth bring their ageing MGB in to win the Kleber Southern Rally. See page 49 for report.

PREVIEW

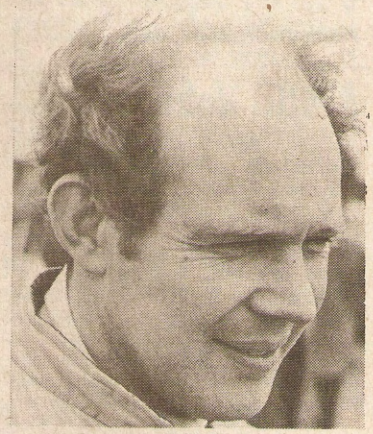
Cheltenham moves to Wales

The penultimate round of the Castrol/AUTOSPORT championship starts and finishes in Llandrindod Wells this Saturday, for it is the turn of the Cheltenham MC to host the Championship with the Cheltenham Festival Rally. The organisers have amassed a total of 80 competitive miles comprising 14 stages in the total 220 mile route. They have achieved this figure by running all the stages at least twice and two of them three times. It had originally been hoped to ascertain a section of Eppynt for the rally but there is now no tarmac on the agenda.

The organisers are most concerned about the problem of spectators blocking the narrow entrances and exits to stages, thus very little spectating information is being given away. However there is one advertised stage which is to be run three times. This is Halfway forest, MR 160/835328 — this reference is the entrance to a large car park (reputed to have room for 500 cars) and the competitors are due in this area at 08.30, at 12.00 and again at 16.30. Halfway forest is situated about five miles east of Llandovery.

Scrutineering starts at 17.00 in Francis' Garage, Llandrindod Wells and goes on until 22.00. The rally starts at 08.00 the following day and the lunch halt is at Greystones Restaurant, seven miles east of Llandovery on the A40 where the first car is expected to arrive at about 14.15 hrs. The organisers have received permission from the RAC to run certain stages at 30 second intervals. First car is expected back in Llandrindod at 18.30. After his win last year, Colin Malkin starts at number one with Del Lines' Porsche and there is a very strong entry to back him up. The organisers presently have 96 entries and they are hoping to start 100. As is now mandatory in Wales, servicing must be carried out off the public highway, and specific service areas have been allocated to competitors by the organisers. There are three such areas all told so that service crews will have the time to enjoy the kind of easy life which they had on the Castrol '75.

Del Lines' car (below) starts at No 1.



Tony Fowkes – favourite.

The entry

Leading entries are as follows: 1, Colin Malkin/John Foden (Porsche Carrera); 2, Billy Coleman/Dan O'Sullivan (Escort RS1800); 3, Tony Fowkes/Bryan Harris (Escort RS); 4, Nigel Rockey/Derek Tucker (Escort RS); 5, George Hill/Phil Short (Vauxhall Magnum); 6, Laurie Richards/John Tew (Escort RS); 7, Richard Iliffe/Mike Broad (Escort RS); 8, Donald Heggie/George Dean (Escort RS); 9, Jeff Churchill/Roger Jones (Escort RS); 10, Ronnie McCartney/Ron Neely (Porsche Carrera); 11, Robert James/Brian Tilley (Escort RS); 12, Chris Wathen/Walter Ainsworth (RS 2000); 14, Gordon Batchelor/Ron Channon (Escort RS); 15, Brian Evans/John Horton (Porsche Carrera).

Other leading runners include Paul Martin/Nigel Mills in the former's Twin Cam Escort which has been in the charge of David Stokes since the Castrol '75; David Lang the quick Australian, with Kevin Gormley beside him; Castol/AUTOSPORT ladies champions Jill Robinson and Dilys Rogers; Graham Elsmore/Stuart Harrold in the Avon Tyres RS and leading the group one contingent, Paul Appleby and Keith O'Dell in the RS2000. Other leading G1 runners include Ian Lawless, Bernard Banning, Rod Badham, Chris Field, Bob Jeffs and Tim Walton. David Hardcastle is also reported to be in attendance with the 3-litre Capri. For the first time on this event Target timing is being used for all sections which should smooth the progress of the rally and, in addition, digital electronic stopwatches will be employed at stage finishes, which should eliminate errors caused by misread watches.

Coleman out?

It now appears most unlikely that Bill Coleman and the Thomas Motors Escort 2 will be starting the Cheltenham Festival owing to the fact that both their gearboxes are currently languishing at Terry Samuels' workshop and the team have so far not been able to lay hands on a suitable alternative.

Casinos tempt the crews to Algarve

Despite the current political situation in Portugal, entries are going well for the 1975 5th Volta do Algarve, the 5th International Rally of the Algarve, which takes place on October 31-November 2.

With strong backing from Algarve Casinos, Sacor, Fiaal and Ford, the organisers have been able to tempt several foreign crews to sample their brew of an 800-kilometre route split into two legs, with 18 special stages over mainly loose terrain. Prize money is good, with cash awards for classes, groups and ladies wins as well as the top ten.

The event was last held two years ago when Alcide Paganelli and Lois Netto dominated in their Fiat 124 Spyders taking first and second places respectively. This year the road sections promise to be almost as demanding as the stages with the daylight average speed of 50 kph going up to 60 kph after dark.

British entries so far include both Team Robert Moss cars — the Escort Twin Cam for Richard Wooldridge and Duncan Spence and the 1300GT for John Jago and Mick Hogan. The twin cam has enjoyed three class wins out of five starts this season while Jago will be making his overseas rally debut after ten years rallying in the UK.

The Algarve organisers aim to make the event as popular with foreign competitors as the similarly well-sponsored Sherry Rally. There may still be time for entries and anyone interested should contact Richard Wooldridge or the organisers direct at Racal Clube, Rua dos Operarios, 28 Silves, Algarve, Portugal.

● After last year's serious congestion, the promoters of the Cirencester Park stage of the RAC Rally (Cirencester CC and Cirencester Park) have initiated improvements to traffic flow and parking in the area. The stage has also been altered to increase mileage by two miles (total seven miles). Cirencester is also the closest point on the route to London.

Bagshot spin-off

Pre-publicity for the RAC Rally has been flooding in at a level we have never before witnessed. Last week's "Bagshot Day," capably managed by RAC Rally PR consultant Nick Brittan, turned out a huge success with a full complement from Fleet Street and various radio and television stations.

Resulting from the day's fun at the MVEE test grounds is on-event and pre-event coverage from: BBC Sports Desk, seven BBC local radio stations; World of Sport — a 20 minute film for screening the Saturday after the event; British Movietone with a ten-minute film for national cinema distribution; Southern TV with two pre-event pieces; BBC TV, Bristol, and Harlech with pre-pieces and day to day coverage. ITN will provide day to day progress reports for national use and a list for magazine and newspaper features is planned including reports by such as the Guardian, The Observer, and the unlikely She and Tit Bits. Sixty thousand explanatory leaflets are being printed for pub notice boards, golf clubs and public handouts along the route. All in all — most encouraging.

Full house Hercock decides the series

Perhaps surprising in view of the time of the season, but the organisers of the Hercock Simpson, the last round in the BTRDA and the *Cars and Car Conversions* rally championship was vastly oversubscribed and 30 would-be starters were turned away. Thus a full house entry of 120 cars gets underway this Saturday from Victoria Park, Leicester on the A6 where the first car is due to depart at 11.31 hrs. All the stages are closed as the organisers feel that to allow spectators in would jeopardise the co-operation of local landowners but anyone who is especially keen to acquire the necessary information should contact chief marshal, David Olley on Leicester 402328 who will gladly furnish the necessary information. The lunch halt will be at Morcott on the A47 where the first car is expected at 14.00 hrs. The finish will be at the hunting Lodge, Cottingham, near Market Harborough and reports reliably suggest that the licence remains operative until 02.00 . . . (and then of course with a seasonal time change to accomplish as well there may even be the chance of another hour). The rally, as we explained last week, is critical to the outcome of both championships and promises some really exciting action.

The leading crews are as follows: 1 Whittal-Williams/Hemmings (Escort RS); 2, Stokes/Andrews (Escort RS); 3, Wathen/Gorman (Escort RS); 4, Kaby/Rainbow (Mini); 5, Farrington/Hignett (Escort RS); 6, Crabtree/Essex-Crosby (Porsche Carrera); 7, Lang/Freeman (Escort); 8, Rollett/Turvey (Escort RS); 9, Daisy/Bateman (Avenger GT); 10, Walker/Cross (Escort RS).

● Russell Close's new G2 Escort, which is being built to '76 regulations and is to be sponsored by the Motor Centre, is well under way at Andy Dawson's workshops.

Nilsson: Everybody's talkin'

CHRIS WITTY outlines the career of GUNNAR NILSSON

The telephone rang, it was Frank Williams. "You know this fellow Nilsson, where can I get hold of him? Everyone at the American Grand Prix has been talking about him." Well, everyone in England's talking about him too and, for that matter, most of Europe. He's a Swede, fast, dedicated, a race winner, the man who's just won the last five British Formula Atlantic races and taken the BP Super Visco Formula 3 Championship at the same time. He's simply become the hottest property in British motor racing since Tony Brise's claim to fame, in a similar style, earlier this year.

The Swedish press have likened Gunnar Nilsson to fellow countryman Ronnie Peterson. The similarity ends there for they are different in many respects. Both, however, possess the uncanny recipe for success — the ability to win and to win with style. Nilsson's arrival on the scene has been without the hair-raising opposite-look approach of Peterson. It's a far shorter career, one which extends back only three seasons, but one which is interesting; for Nilsson his near perfect English forming the essential part of his radiant personality, has been threatening such success for some time now. It's only the very few who have been in a position to view the coming of a fresh new talent, admittedly from foreign shores, but who needed the competitiveness of British motor sport in order to prove his worth.

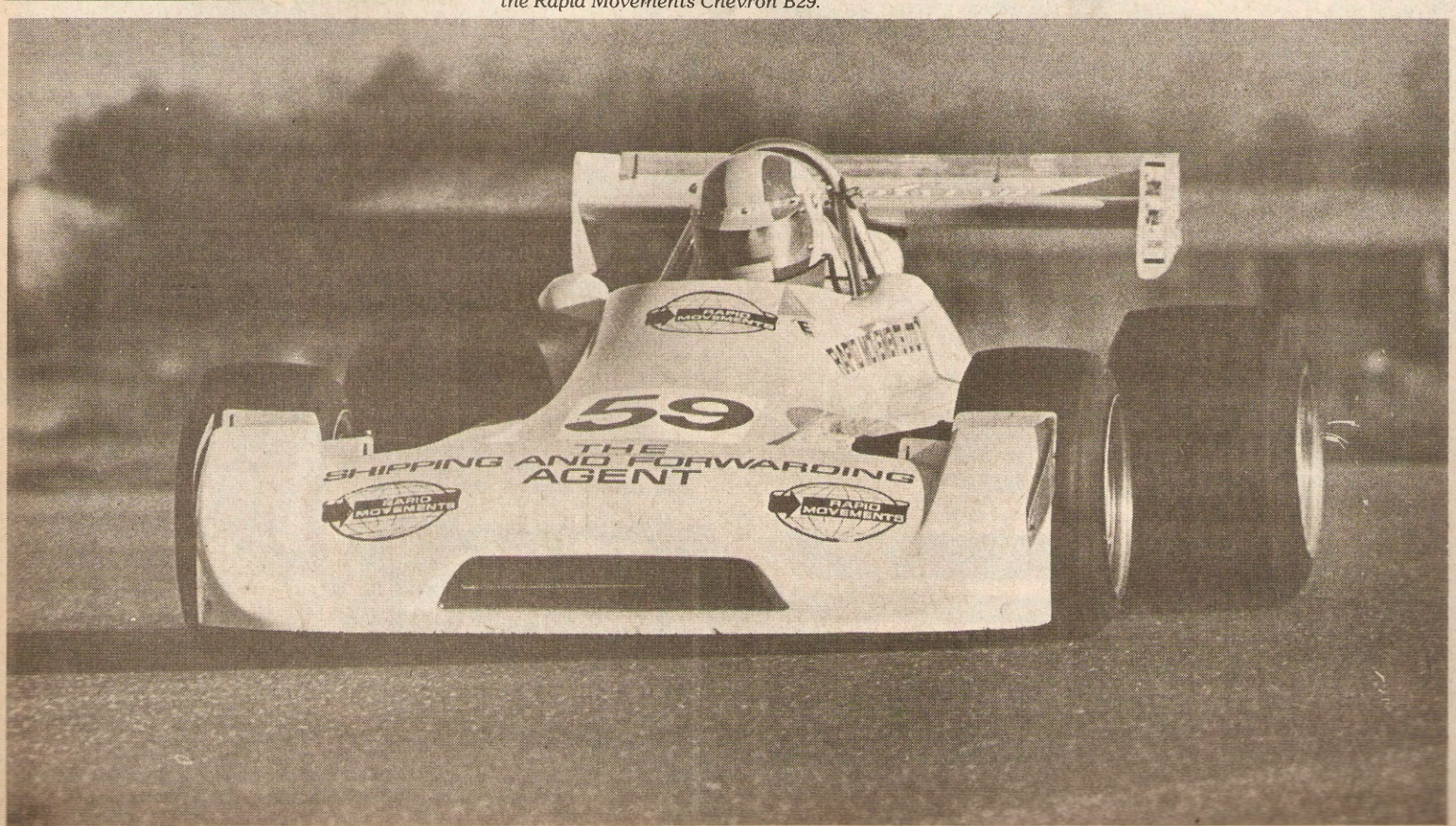
It was over a pub lunch about this time last year that I sat down with March Engineering's chief designer Robin Herd and talked motor racing. It's almost an annual event, talking of young drivers, drivers who had impressed throughout our European travels and those who we thought would make the grade. March Engineering may not have had the success rate of their rival constructors in Grand Prix racing but, through a commercial policy of running works supported teams in the lesser formulae, they have the unequalled reputation of being able to see future Grand Prix stars in the bud. Their record speaks for itself: Ronnie Peterson, Niki Lauda, James Hunt, Jochen Mass, Jean-Pierre Jarier and Hans Stuck. That's not a bad record. It's unfortunate they haven't always been able to cash in on the benefits of discovering such talent.

Two drivers hold a very special place in Herd's heart, two youngsters who have given him tremendous personal satisfaction. They are Lauda and Jarier. Perhaps there is a new one looming up on the horizon? A year ago Herd likened Gunnar Nilsson's approach to that of Lauda. "He thinks the same way, he has the same positive, analytical approach. He's eager to learn and totally dedicated to the cause." At that stage, Nilsson wasn't driving for the works. He ran a private F3 March and had come over with fellow Swede Conny Andersson to take in the last British F3 races of the season. Being strangers on foreign soil, Bicester became their home. A year later only one remains. That's motor racing.

Born in Sweden on November 20, 1948, Axel Arvid Gunnar Nilsson hails from Helsingborg, a town situated on the southernmost tip of the country which forms the natural sea link between Denmark and the port of Copenhagen. The lure of motor racing came late in his youth and it wasn't until he was well into his twenties that he even contemplated driving a racing car.

Gunnar's father was a prosperous building contractor and although he had a much older half brother, it was the natural progression upon leaving school in Helsingborg to journey up to Stockholm to take a four-year training course to become a building engineer. He passed his exams, "although only just" but even with the death of his father, Gunnar didn't really become involved in the building trade, certainly not to the stage where he opted to choose it as a complete career, possibly through his lack of business knowledge.

Six starts, four poles, five wins. That's Gunnar Nilsson's record since he switched to Formula Atlantic in the Rapid Movements Chevron B29.



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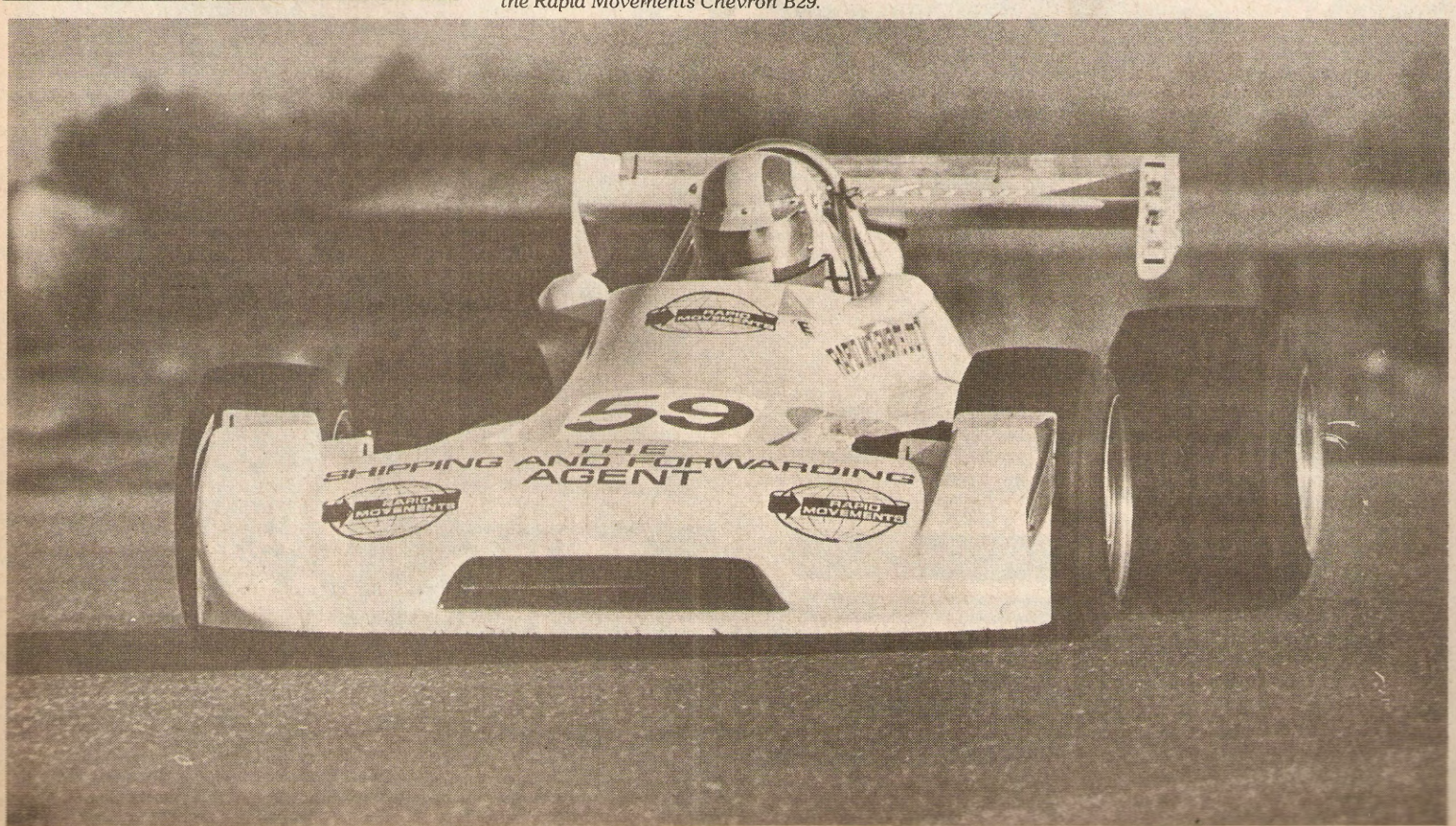
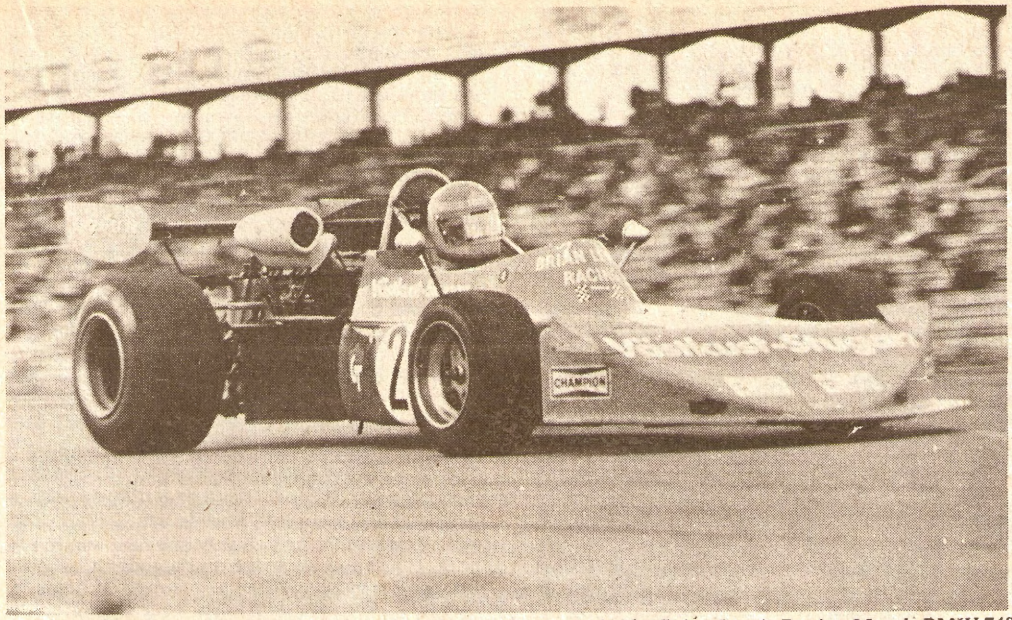




Last Formula 2 appearance was at Hockenheim late last year in the Brian Lewis Racing March-BMW 742 where he finished "a ripping" 4th in the second heat.

That's not to say he wasn't capable, just that he lacked the bricks and mortar character to be able to tie himself down to such a resigned faith.

Knowing him well as a person, he's lazy, unreliable but pretty shrewd. He lacks the maturity which he shows so well in a racing car. As a race driver, he knows exactly what he wants. He's hungry and he's not as naive as he sometimes appears. Perhaps these are the qualities that Robin Herd first saw when comparing him to Niki Lauda.

Nilsson may not have been a race driver when he acquired his first car, a venerable Volvo PV544, at 18 years of age but the Nilsson technique, displayed to the British spectator this year, was more than adequately displayed to the Swedish police who seemed to be constantly chasing him around the streets of Helsingborg. "I was always speeding," chuckled Nilsson, "and I've been very close to losing my Swedish driving licence." He laughed, having obviously remembered those early scraps with the notoriously hard Swedish law and recalled how he'd been caught at least three times for speeding in his impetuous youth.

His second car was an old '58 model Volkswagen. Nilsson sat up on recollection of this machine. It obviously meant a lot to him. His eyes lightened and he recalled how this particular car ended its days. "I'd been driving along one day in this car which I'd bought for about £100 or so and spent about another £50 on it having it painted and so forth. You know, fixed up to make it look better. Anyway, I came up behind this guy on a motorway and I couldn't get by him. I really began to get annoyed." Nilsson was jumping up and down now, obviously this story had a resounding climax. "In my anger, I banged the gear lever down into third in an effort to get by and the engine just exploded. In fact everything just blew up. The pistons came through the side of the block, they looked like flowers in a vase afterwards, the gearbox was completely finished, the whole thing. What annoyed me even further was I'd lost £100 on it!"

The years at college couldn't have gone by without owning an American car. They didn't. Young Swedes have a weird urge to own American cars. I've seen it at circuits like Karlskoga, this pseudo-American graffiti recreated in the strange sing-song Swedish dialect. For Gunnar, his choice was a Pontiac. You know, with suspension like a Slumberland mattress, tyres with the grip of a cat on hot coals and a fuel consumption to match. It was bought from a pimp who'd been arrested and bundled into prison. He hadn't been able to pay the import charges and the Pontiac lay impounded until Nilsson swung "a very good deal." "We used to have drag races on the streets," said Nilsson gleefully. What an idiot. "Yes, that's what the police always said!"

Life at college wasn't all blue film shows, beer, discotheques and American cars, it was the usual pastime of extending one's vocabulary, both orally and physically. "I became engaged to this Swedish actress for two years but then I broke it off. She was a stage actress," Nilsson emphatically stressing the word *stage* as my eyes lit up. He had anticipated my next question perfectly.

Upon leaving college, Gunnar then spent a couple of years in the Swedish navy doing his compulsory national service. He spent the time as a telegraph operator on submarines and air/sea rescue boats stationed in the Baltic Sea. "I helped a lot of drunken Englishmen through the thousands of islands that lie between Stockholm and Finland. We had some really good laughs in those days," recalls Gunnar.

After two years, Nilsson left the navy and returned home. He then formed a haulage company with a good friend Dan Molin, a business which he still has a half share in today. It was about this time that he became interested in car racing, the enthusiasm generated perhaps by Molin who sold him his elderly 1300cc Formula Vee, built by the current Swedish Formula Super Vee racer Bror Jaklund, at the end of 1972. "I'd built a home made kart before then, but never took it seriously. This was the first time I'd considered racing." Nilsson undertook a crash course programme of six local races, with the aim of obtaining enough signatures to gain an international licence.

Although his Vee escapades were anything but startling, he achieved his aim and managed to organise himself a pretty good FSV drive for the following year in one of the Ecurie Bonnier FSV Lolas. His team-mate for that year was to be Freddy Kottulinksy, a man from whom Gunnar was to learn a lot, a man for whom Nilsson has tremendous respect, both on and off the track.

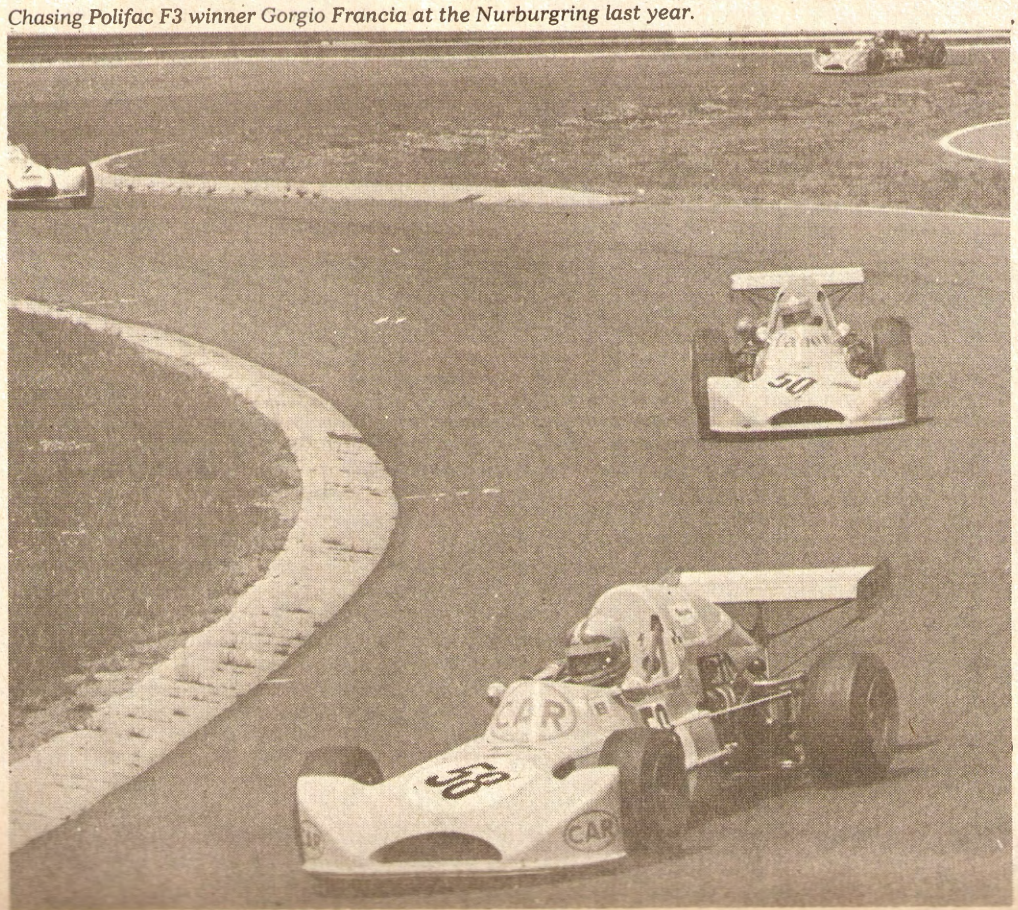
It was quite a good year for Nilsson, especially when you consider it was his first proper season. "I think I finished either third or fourth in the European championship," It was a tough season too, a year in which he learnt the hard way, especially after some encounters with his team-mate Kottulinksy. Many, especially Bev Bond, have experienced the aggressiveness of the Swedish-domiciled German Count. Gunnar's lesson came at a Hockenheim meeting. "We were really having this big-dice," Gunnar recalls, "for about third or fourth place. Anyway, I pushed Freddy off on the last lap. I then realised what I'd done and was terrified. I slowed right down to allow Freddy to pass again. I think he had two punctures and every wheel bent or something. Anyway, we finished eighth and ninth, with him in front of course. Then, in the paddock afterwards he took me aside and told me that if I ever did anything like that again, he'd send me on a journey, his finger pointing upwards! From then onward we became really good friends and I learnt so much from him, about race craft and such, I couldn't have had a better teacher."

Nineteen-seventy-three also saw him visit the British race circuits for the first time, competing in an FSV race at the Thruxton Easter Monday meeting where he diced with Kottulinsky for seventh place, although Gunnar tried to conveniently forget his previous knowledge of the Hampshire circuit when asked, earlier this year, whether he'd ever raced there before. "Sometimes it's better to forget certain things," he says, with a broad grin across his face. "It just helps!"

Nineteen-seventy-three also saw him make his Formula 2 debut, although it's one which could have so easily been lost in the annals of motor sport for all time. It wasn't very impressive, although the final result looked quite good on paper and, to be fair, he was thrown in at the deep end. "We were racing Super Vees at Norisring in Germany," recalls Gunnar. "Ten minutes before practice for the Formula 2 race, Picko (Troberg) came up to me and said would I drive the second Pierre Robert GRD as Reine (Wisell) hadn't turned up. What would you say? All the other Super Vee drivers were very upset I think because I got the drive."

Nilsson qualified the car last on the grid, something like 6s slower than pole man Jarier in the works March. He diced in company with Jo Vonlanthen, Brendan McInerney and Roland Binder in the race, eventually lasting the distance to be classified on aggregate as fourth overall.

Chasing Polifac F3 winner Gorgio Francia at the Nurburgring last year.



In the works March that won him the BP Super Visco Formula 3 Championship this year.

albeit six laps behind race winner Tim Schenken. Because he was the second non-graded driver home, he scored six championship points, "the most any Swede got that year would you believe!"

Despite a developing friendship with the infamous Picko Troberg, the team was more or less disbanded due to lack of funds and Gunnar chose to pursue his future elsewhere. Formula 3 seemed the next logical step and in 1973 he bought, out of his own pocket, a brand new March 743 and a Novamotor Toyota engine. On a very limited budget he contested the European Polifac F3 series. It was a gypsy-style existence, but one which many drivers who have competed in F3 know so well. It is invaluable experience as well. "I really learned a lot then, especially to cope with people, situations and many things. To go through the borders with no papers, you know, all those sort of things."

Nilsson never won any F3 races that year but he led quite a few. He was fast and furious but suffered from unreliability. When he did finish, he usually found himself second or third. At the start of the season, he lay well up in the financially worthwhile series which was eventually won by Italian Giorgio Francia.

It was about this time that he was approached by Rolf Nilsson, no relation, but owner of a Swedish company called Västkuststugan. They are the largest builders of pre-fabrication houses/chalets in Scandinavia. Rolf Nilsson liked motor sport and sponsored a group of national drivers. Would Gunnar like to join? "He came up to me at the Nurburgring one day and said, would you like some money?" The relationship still exists today.

Gunnar can also thank his namesake for the chance of making a proper F2 debut at Karlskoga, last year. Västkuststugan decals were plastered over the cars of Ronnie Peterson, Wisell and Nilsson, the latter having been able to arrange a hire deal with Brian Lewis Racing to run in their ex-Jarier March 732, the car in which the Frenchman had won the championship in the previous year. Nilsson impressed that weekend and I remember being approached by Rolf Nilsson who told me to watch this young man. I did and I was quite impressed. So was the hard-to-please Brian Lewis, pleased enough to run Nilsson again at Hockenheim later that year. Although Gunnar ran strongly and pretty well up in both races, he encountered problems that omitted him from the final results. Still, I will always remember Karlskoga and the boundless enthusiasm of this Swede, whose English and positive attitude seemed so totally different to any Swede I'd met before.

Aside from his two F2 outings, Gunnar still carried on with the F3 and it was when he decided to come over to Britain (on instructions, I might add) late last year that his presence and potential was first felt. His first appearance at Brands saw him on pole and ahead of Brian Henton's works March. That didn't go down too well with our Brian but Gunnar retired. His second race at Thruxton saw him leading Henton and Conny Anderson on the first lap until he spun, through over enthusiasm, despite his theories about the error. He's pretty good on those. Admittedly the F3 fields were pretty thin last year but Nilsson's visible speed through the corners as he strove to make up the lost ground created more interest than what was happening up front. The seed had been sown.

It took Gunnar a long time to work his way into the works March F3 team. The reasons why are irrelevant to the story, but needless to say, he justified the faith shown in him by winning the first round of the BP F3 series this year at the Thruxton Easter Monday meeting. It was two years since his first appearance here. It was his *first* ever serious race victory. That reminds me of Jarier and his tie up with March. When they took on the Frenchman, he had only one race win to his credit. It just goes to prove that you don't have to win races to be recognised as talented. If helps of course, but if you're to achieve your ultimate, it's vital!

Nilsson's progress this year in Formula 3 has been too recent to recount in any great depth. Suffice it is to say that he and his Brazilian team-mate Alex Ribeiro have been involved in some pretty controversial incidents, many of which pointed the finger of suspicion at Alex. Nilsson took the opportunity of building on his early points lead in the chase for the prized BP title. A spate of crashes and non-finishes punctured his progress. The pressure was lifted a little, when he gave up his aim to try and win the Swedish national F3 title at the same time, with a couple of well calculated victories, culminating with him lifting the BP crown at Oulton Park last month. But by then F3 had taken almost a back seat. He was now fast becoming the new hero of British Formula Atlantic races.

It was at Thruxton that Ted and Kenny Moore of Rapid Movements approached him with a view to finishing off the season in their Chevron B29. Gunnar may have been in the works March team but he was at liberty to accept other offers and still is, providing they don't conflict with his prior commitments.

He considered the offer of driving a Chevron after having spoken with both Robin Herd and Max Mosley of March. Their opinions differed but Gunnar elected to try the car at least. It whetted his appetite and with the Atlantic world still enwrapped by the presence of Tony Brise, and rightly so, Gunnar moved in. Apart from that first race at Mallory, the story has been one of success ever since. Nilsson is *the* man of the moment.

It's a funny situation really, especially if you try and analyze it a little more closely. Nilsson had proved himself one of the quickest, if not the quickest, driver in F3. He had worked closely with March, respected what they've done for him and given one hundred per cent to the cause. He succeeded in that direction but Gunnar was still ambitious.

He wanted to progress, to move on. March weren't in a position to offer him F2 or Atlantic but Ted Moore was. It has been a good decision in retrospect, admittedly one taken with a certain amount of trepidation but a move which has paid off handsomely.

Gunnar Nilsson, wherever he goes from now, must always remember two things about this year. One, his loyalty to those at March who believed in him and wanted to help him succeed and also Ted Moore at Rapid Movements for giving him the key to open the door.

Clowning around at this year's Racing Car Show.

Start of a perfect race for the Viceroy team – Andretti (right) and Unser storm off towards a comfortable 1-2. Redman, McRae, Brise and Hobbs chase.

LAGUNA SECA

Perfection for Parnelli

By GORDON KIRBY **Photos by CHARLES LORING**

If there is such a thing as perfection in motor racing it was captured last weekend under Laguna Seca's California sun by Vel's Parnelli Racing. The team's pair of Viceroy/Hilton Lola T332s, driven by Mario Andretti and Al Unser dominated the eighth round of the USAC/SCCA Formula 5000 Championship in a way that has never been seen before. They qualified first and second fastest — Andretti thereby taking his seventh pole of the season — they each won their heats and then, from the front row they pushed off powerfully into first and second places. Running perfectly the two red and white Lolas sang on to the end, chasing their way to the flag just two seconds apart, Andretti first, Unser second. It was a beautiful display.

Just as the Vel's Parnelli team demonstrated a touch of perfection so the Haas/Hall team and their man Brian Redman showed more of the remarkable resilience which helped bring them this year's F5000 Championship. Towards the end of the first day of practice Redman crashed badly, due he said to his own error, and the Boraxo Lola came back to the pits on the end of a rope, its right side suspension torn off, the gearbox damaged and the monocoque tweaked. The team spent the next day and a half remaking the car, and Brian climbed into it to take third place, keeping Unser in sight until the very last laps. Not far behind the Champion into fourth, came Tony Brise, who found that this time he and the Taylor/Yip Lola just *couldn't* match the speed of the top three cars in the Formula. Mind you, the gap was considerably less than the stoney-faced lad would have led one to believe.

Otherwise Laguna Seca was another fine late-season American F5000 race. Only two of the top dozen machines failed to finish and the rest of them put on a bellowing, fighting chase all the way to the chequered flag. It was a memorable event, a motor race of the first order.

ENTRY AND PRACTICE

It is, almost invariably, a great pleasure to go to Laguna Seca in the autumn. There's the reliable warmth of the Californian sun, tempered often by a cooling breeze from the Pacific Ocean just a few miles to the west. There's the pleasant ambience of the rolling, canyonlike countryside and, too, there's the gastronomic delights in nearby Monterey. But even more than this there's the inevitable upswing in the depth and the breadth of the field, which always seems to gather at Laguna.

This year was no exception, and with the momentum from Long Beach carrying its way north, the prospects for the race, the penultimate of the season, were intriguing. With Brian Redman and the Haas/Hall team having already won the championship the race was laid open for a no-holds-barred battle between he, the two Viceroy/Hilton Lolas of Mario Andretti and Al Unser and the Theodore Racing Lola driven by the new pretender, Tony Brise.

Laguna was an ideal place for this confrontation to carry on from Long Beach. The short (1.9 miles), narrow course runs through a valley and up and down the side of a steep hill and turns itself into a contrasting combination of a series of fast left-handers and a tight succession of dropping, snapping flicks. It's the kind of circuit where all the basic aspects of a racing car — aerodynamics, chassis balance, horsepower and brakes — need to be moulded as close together as possible – also it's a course which offers only one or two passing opportunities.

Forty cars arrived for the two days of practice and after the first of the five sessions it was decided to split the field into two groups (as at Long Beach). This time the "seeding" was decided simply on the basis of points — those who had earned some this year would run in the first group and those who hadn't would run in the second group. Unfortunately, the obvious sense of this plan was blunted a little by restricting each of Saturday's three sessions to ridiculously short durations of 30 minutes apiece.

Things were also complicated when much of the first day was lost because of a light drizzle which blew itself over the hills during the morning. By the afternoon the wind managed to break up the grey skies, but the weather remained cool and the track surface remained dirty. Despite this Mario Andretti was able to lap within half a second of his pole position of last year which was two seconds better than all, save team-mate Al Unser and F5000 Champion Brian Redman. Both were inside a second behind Mario with Redman the faster of the two. Brian was exceptionally pleased with his car on that first day, clambering from it early in the afternoon to exclaim in his own obviously gleeful way, "It's *much* better than it was at Long Beach!"

But suddenly that situation changed. In the very last minutes of the day's practice the Hass/Hall Lola shot sideways off the road on the exit of a fourth-gear left-hander and thumped hard against the guardrail. The driver jumped out fairly quickly, bothered only by a sore neck, but the car was left in a sorry state. It was brought back to the paddock where the Chaparral mechanics began to inspect it and take damaged pieces from it while Jim Hall and Carl Haas began to think about attempting a rebuild or turning to their T400 sitting unused in the trailer. Later that evening they decided to rebuild the well-worn T332.

Brian explained that the shunt was his fault, "It was a case of pilot error," he said, sheepishly. Later he added that he had followed Al Unser through the corner a few laps earlier and watched the Viceroy Lola drift off onto the "speed bumps" on the verge of the exit and had decided to try it himself. But when he did so ("I didn't even try to hold it on the road itself"), the speed-bumps upset the car, pulling its tail *out* and into the guardrail. Just like that, and the Lola had lost most of its right side. It meant that Redman would be unable to practice on Saturday and would have to rely on his Friday best of 58.944s for his grid position.

As it was, only Al Unser was able to eclipse Brian's time the following day, so that he was able to retain third place in the wake of the two Viceroy/Hilton Lolas. Andretti continued to maintain the same kind of cushion to the rest of the field and improved to 57.774s, just about equal to his best from last year and again half a second slower than Mark Donohue's best ever with the turbo Porsche 917/30K. On the lap following his quickest effort Mario's Lola-Falconer T332 ran out of fuel. Step one on the road to perfection . . .

Running for the first time this year on a road racing course with which he had recent experience (it was here last year in Chuck Jones' T332 that he began his road racing tuteledge) Al Unser was the only man to approach his team-mate's times. He improved by nearly a full second on Saturday, winding up with a 58.279s best. For the third time this year the Vel's Parnelli Lolas occupied pole position for the two qualifying heats.

With Redman the only other man to get below 59s the red and white cars looked to be in very healthy situations. It looked as if only another miracle of overnight repreparation by the Chaparral mechanics might be able to turn the VPJ tide this weekend.

Behind the first three and all within the 59s bracket, were half a dozen cars. Rather surprisingly the fastest of these was former F5000 champion Graham McRae. Following on his good showing in practice at Long Beach the swarthy New Zealander looked as good as ever at Laguna. Driving Eddie Lewis' Lola T332 hard and strongly McRae got down to 59.214s and in reply to a question about the comparative modifications to his own rather scruffy car and the well-developed VPJ and Chaparral cars the gentleman suggest, "The car's awful, but I'm brilliant!" he did say

though, that the car was oversteering and that some wider wheels would be available for Sunday which he hoped would cure the problem.

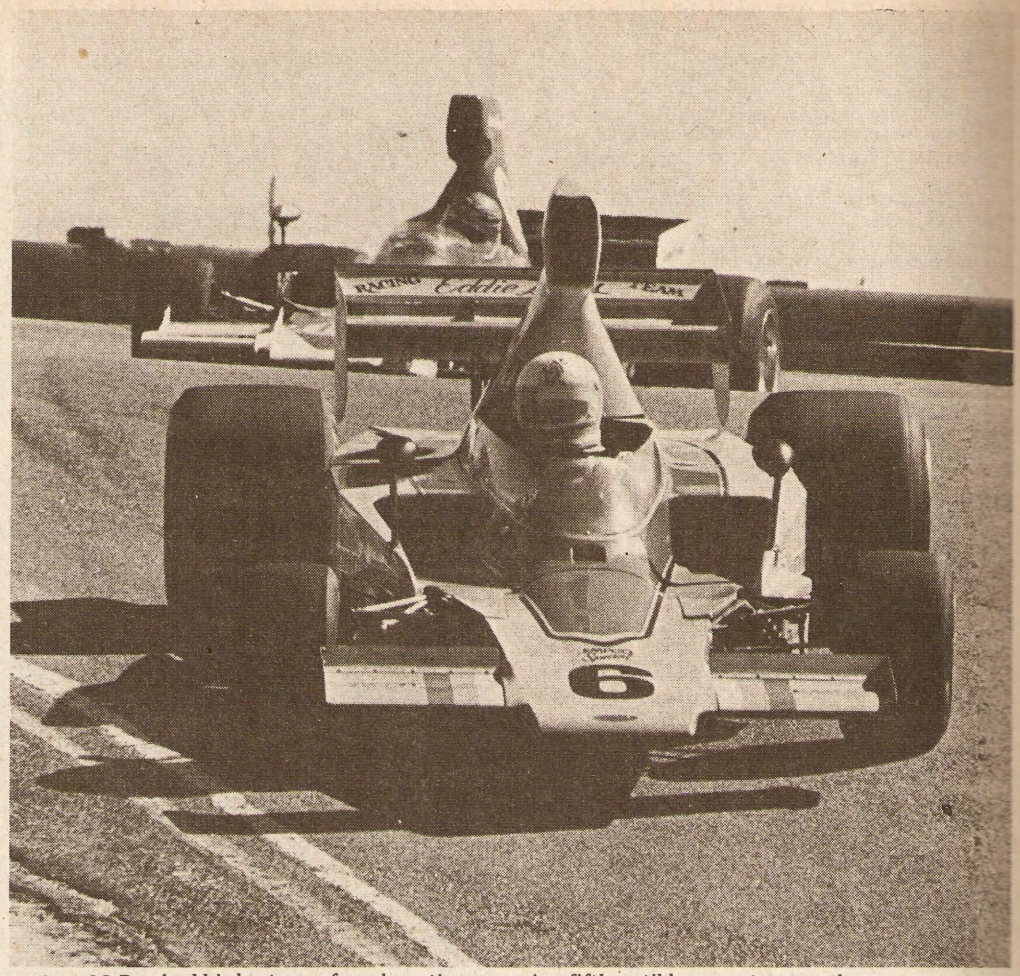
Fifth fastest was Tony Brise, his practice with the Taylor/Yip Lola-Smith T332 recovering on Saturday from an abortive Friday. The whole of that first day was wasted while the team tried to cure a vague understeer problem which turned out to the result of an upright bearing beginning to move around, break up and allow the rear wheels to steer themselves. The next day Brise improved to 59.354s and began ruminating as to just how the Theodore Lola's different engine, aerodynamic (around the tail section) and gearbox differential equipment might handicap its performance.

Despite trouble with understeer and a wheel failure, David Hobbs improved markedly on Saturday afternoon so that he qualified sixth fastest on 59.556s. Hobbs was back in the Hogan Racing Lola-McLaren T332 which he normally drives and which Jody Scheckter raced at Long Beach. Behind Hobbs was a surprise in the form of John Morton. Running on a circuit with which he has considerable experience and with his Krinnitt Racing Lola T400 now completely 'kitted' to T332 spec Morton recorded 59.854s for easily his best effort yet in F5000.

Fastest car other than a Lola was the lone Norris Talon MR1A driven by Warwick Brown. Offering no complaints other than of his own efforts the Australian flicked the red Talon around in 59.879s to nose out Eppie Wietzes' Formula Racing Lola-McLaren T400M by a hair. The Canadian said his unique car, which retains rising rate at its forward end, did not seem to like Laguna too well and that also the car's engine had steadily lost revs throughout the second day of practice. Wietzes' best was 59.940s.

Heading the next bunch — a group of nine — was Elliott Forbes-Robinson and Francisco Mir's Evil Knievil Lola T332 (60.248s). The car was fitted with a Wisemann differential for the first time and EFR was finding that it required some getting used to, adding with confidence however, that he thought he was getting the hang of it and there was still more time to come. Recording an identical time to Forbes-Robinson was Jon Woodner whose Inter-scope Talon-McLaren MR1A has only been completed the night before practice began — it had received new bulkheads and an extensively reskinned tub after Woodner's Long Beach shunt. On Friday Woodner was a spurprising fourth quickest yet on Saturday, "with everything balanced just right," he was barely quicker and slipped to eleventh on the time sheets.

Twelfth fastest and naturally rather miserable about it was Jackie Oliver and the single UOP Shadow-Dodge DN6 (60.265s). The Shadow rolled out of its transporter displaying a new, untested configuration with the radiators mounted further forward, just behind the front wheels, in the interest of better weight distribution. But the experiment proved to be too much to sort-out during a race meeting and by late Saturday afternoon the team had decided to change the car back to its standard specification for the race. Their general feeling was that the modified set-up had potential but they were unable to pursue that because of not having the right range of spring-rates to try out.



Graham McRae had his best race for a long time, running fifth until he spun to seventh.

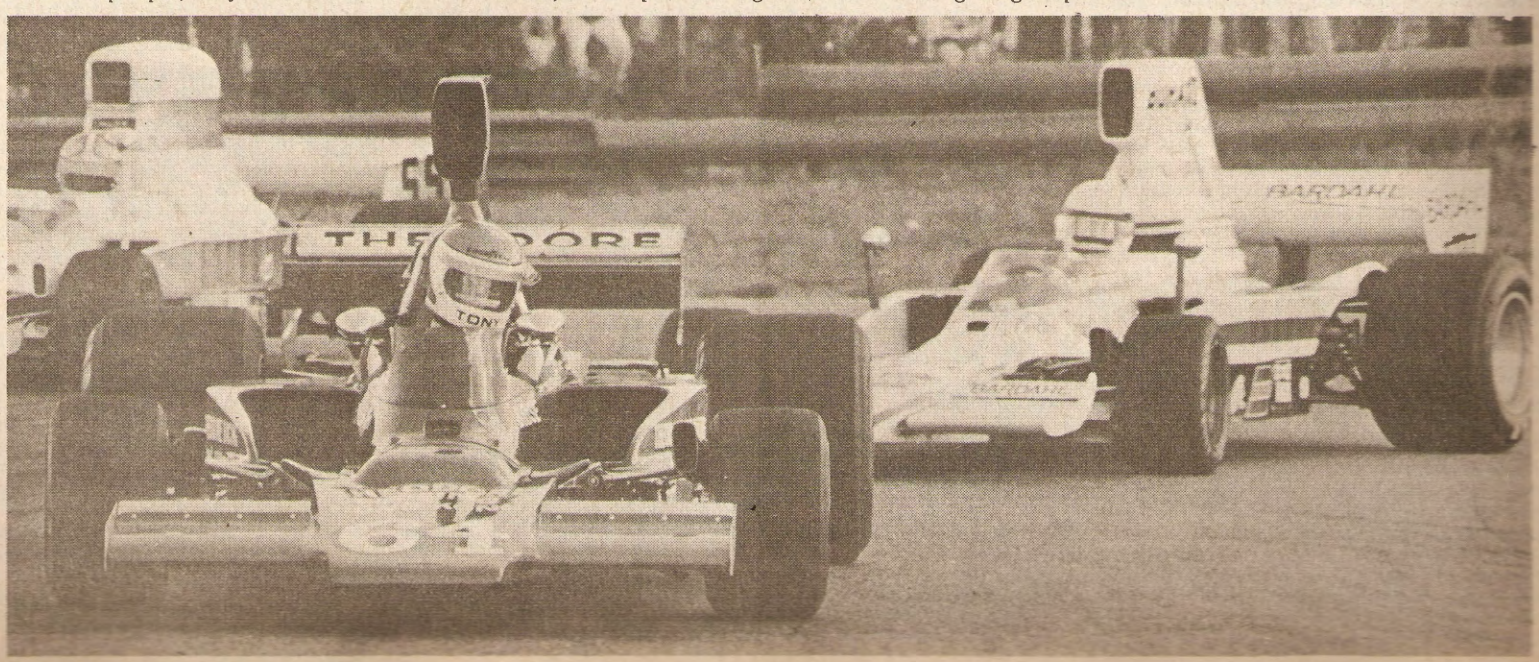
Just behind Oliver, qualifying thirteenth fastest for the third consecutive F5000 race was Gordon Johncock and the Sinmast Lola-Bignotti T332 (60.415s). The USAC team's progress continues at what has become an ever narrowing rate of increase. Next up was John Gunn and his Racing Consultants' Lola-King T332 which missed the first day of practice completely and, running in the slower group got down to 60.689s on Saturday. Fifteenth was the Eagle of Vern Schuppan which the driver found he could not balance properly. If he got it working through the fast turns it would be horrible in the slower ones he reported and if he began to go the other way the car would suddenly reverse itself. Schuppan returned 60.745s and the AAR team grew long faces again after their pleasant hiatus at Long Beach.

There was promise in sixteenth place in the form of Bob Earl, the Bob Bondurant instructor making his third F5000 start in his Lola T330. On Friday Earl was ninth fastest but Saturday brought distributor troubles and some mistakes through inexperience, in balancing the car's wings so that he improved only minimally to 60.714s. Completing the group within a half second of Forbes-Robinson and Woodner was the latter's team-mate Danny Ongais who worked his Interscope/Bell Electric Lola T332 down to 60.746s.

John Cannon had troubles balancing out John Lane's March 73A/751 and was unable to better 61.113s which left him down in 18th place. Right behind him came Benny Scott and the Grant King-prepared Viceroy/Black American Racers Lola T332 which he first raced at Long Beach. Scott worked down to 61.188s bettering Gus Hutchinson's best of 61.432s with the Chris Oates Lola-Fewkes T330 which had been practiced by Brett Lunger at Long Beach. This would be Hutchinson's first F5000 race of the year.

The only others to get below the 62 second mark

Britain's top hopes, Tony Brise and Brian Redman, diced for third place throughout, with Redman getting the place.



were Randy Lewis' Wrangler Lola T332 (61.597 secs) and Evan Noyes' own Lola T332 (61.667 secs). George Follmer again appeared with the Lance LSR1 but he went off early on Friday and there were no spares to repair the car so that ended that. Oreste Berta also brought out his neat sports-car nosed car for Luis de Palma to drive but they too were in trouble and couldn't better 63 secs.

The Chaparral mechanics went to bed on Friday night and began their rebuild of Redman's Lola early on Saturday morning. About four am Sunday morning they finished the job and by eight o'clock they were at the track ready for the raceday morning warm-up. Redman climbed into the car and went out for half a dozen laps on fresh rubber, came in, changed all four wheels for another fresh set of rubber then went out again. At the end of the warm-up he sat in the car chatting with Jim Hall, each of them throwing quiet little smiles at each other. Then Brian climbed from the car and chuckling to himself said, "It's better than it should be," then after a pause, "I think it's *almost* as good as it was!"

Jackie Oliver was in much the same frame of mind as Redman for he had gone as fast in half a dozen laps of the warm-up as he managed throughout Friday and Saturday. The Shadow was back to it's conventional trim ("Back to our normal fourth place maybe," laughed Jackie) with radiators mounted at the back corners of the tub and springs and geometries as they were at Long Beach.

While the Englishmen found things improving a pair of USAC aces found their luck running the other way. Gordon Johncock's engine suddenly began to show signs of failing and after an attempt to repair the engine George Bignotti decided to withdraw the Lola rather than run it with what he said was an uncompetitive spare engine. Meanwhile Al Unser didn't even get out in the warm-up because his Lola refused to start. The problem was finally traced to a third, safety override switch which had shorted out. It was repaired and Unser, who had stood chatting easily to a couple of friends while his mechanics thrashed away at the car and the others roared noisily around the circuit, was able to take up his place on the pole for the second heat.

Andretti leads Redman, Brise, Wietzes and Morton into the Corkscrew in the first heat.

HEATS

Sixteen starters came to the grid for the first heat with Andretti on the pole beside Redman and Brise and Morton on the second row. Wietzes, Woodner, Earl and Ongais were also in the first 27 lapper. Away from the turn nine hairpin and up underneath the flag Andretti boomed off into a clear lead from Redman with Morton pushing across ahead of Brise. Curving lightly to the left, rushing over the brow of the hill beyond the pits they sprinted down into the second turn, but as Mario darted into the corner something shot into the air behind him. Benny Scott, trying to hold the inside line into the corner had lost it, spun around into the back of Bob Earl's Lola, then bounced across the road into Randy Lewis' car. As these three knocked each other across the road others from behind ran into them. John Benton's Lola was squeezed between one of them and the guardrail, Bill Baker's hit Benton's, bounced into the air and rolled over on its back. A couple more cars were also involved but they escaped with minor damage. Benton's car was effectively written-off, Baker's damaged extensively as was Scott's. Earl's had a buckled tub while Lewis' was repairable for possible entry in the final. Needless to say all of this brought out a red flag as the leaders, all seven of them that got through safely, came around to the pits.

Of those rendered non-starters the most unfortunate was Earl who only the day before had been looking ahead enthusiastically at the race, saying that he was just beginning to learn how to drive his T330 (he has only Formula Ford experience) and then after hoping to do well at this his 'home' circuit he suddenly found himself with a shunted car and no money to rebuild it. Such a familiar, frustrating story!

After half an hour or so the field formed up again, only eleven cars taking up places this time. Again it was Andretti who jumped off into the lead while Brise this time kept Morton outside him and tacked on to Redman's tail. Slowly, easily, Mario pulled away, sometimes by as much as second a lap while Brian held his place just ahead of Brise's eager nose. By the end Andretti's Viceroy Lola had drawn out nearly fourteen seconds of space to Redman and Brise. It was another easy qualifying heat win for Mario and the car too had again shown perfect manners.

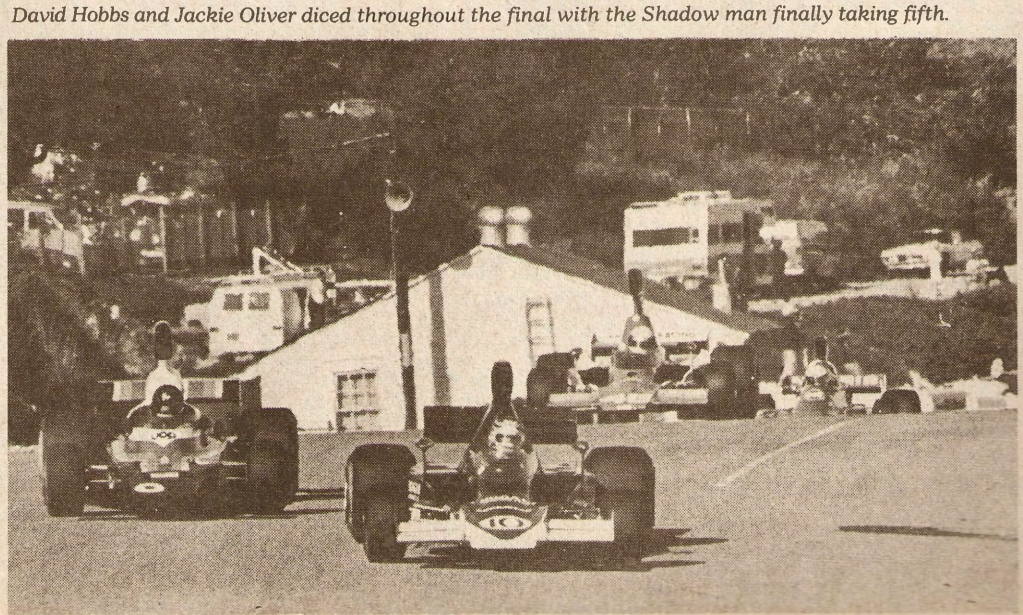
Brise chased Redman all the way, making a big effort right at the end but never getting close enough to try going by. The Theodore Lola was visibly losing time through the succession of fast left-handers and Tony was trying to discern how much of his problems were horsepower (the car was using the same engine it had used for practice, heat and race at Long Beach) and how much were insufficient traction (Hewland diff as fitted to his car as opposed to Wiseman as used by most American F5000 teams). Redman on the other hand was very happy, "It really is very, very good," he said of the Chaparral Lola, "it's just short of track time."

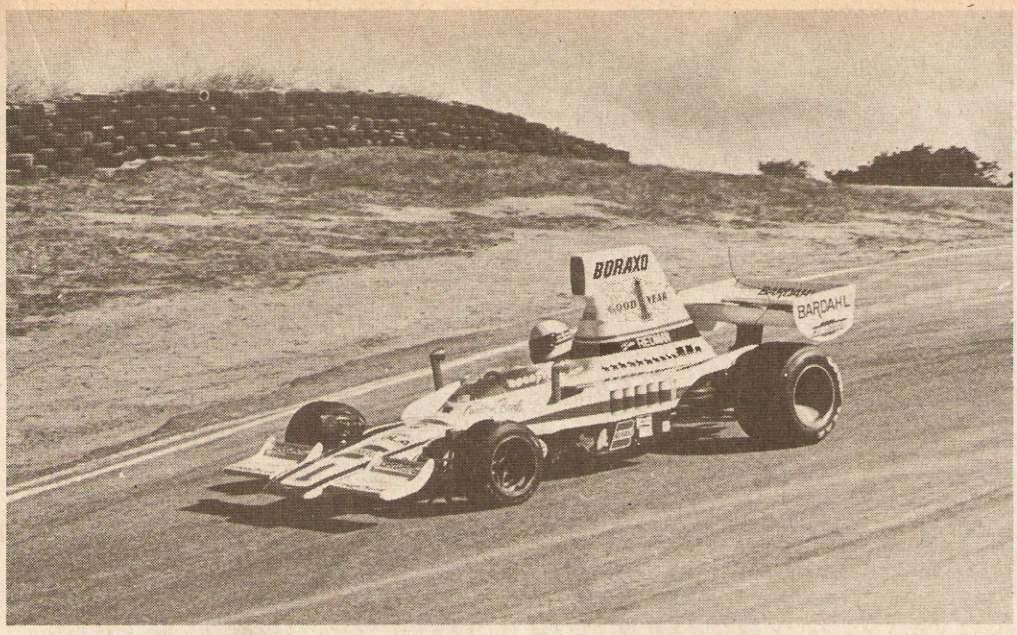
Unable to hang onto the leaders John Morton was chased hard by Eppie Wietzes but the latter, like Brise, was unable to challenge the car ahead of him and remained behind to the finish. Not far behind these came the black Talon of Jon Woodner which dropped away toward the end when a damper collapsed. Teammate Danny Ongais kept Woodner in sight for much of the race but then gearbox problems and "some funny air" when he was lapped by Brise just as he himself was about to lap a slower car contrived to give him a nose-cracking spin. Despite this he hung on for seventh.

Much as Andretti ran off with the first heat, Unser took command of the second qualifier. He broke away immediately and, driving flawlessly and comfortably he won by more than 17s over a space of time that was only five seconds slower than his teammate's.

From the outside of the front row Graham McRae consolidated second place despite twitchy handling because different width wheels had been fitted to either side at the back. For most of the 27 laps McRae was shadowed by David Hobbs, the gap between the two being determined by their respective fortunes with backmarkers. Warwick Brown chased Hobbs hard

David Hobbs and Jackie Oliver diced throughout the final with the Shadow man finally taking fifth.





New champion Brian Redman had a heavy crash in practice but drove well to take third place.

initially but he spun through the Corkscrew and flat-spotted his Talon's tyres. Nevertheless he retained fourth place despite some aggressive attacks from Jackie Oliver. The Shadow pushed past Elliott Forbes-Robinson when the latter ran wide at the Corkscrew but Oliver found the car understeering badly enough through the slower corners for it to ruin all his efforts at outbraking the Talon. EFR remained in hard pursuit of Talon and Shadow to the end while Vern Schuppan kept the Eagle a similar distance behind him after losing contact on the first lap when John Gunn and Gus Hutchison touched each other. Gunn carried on to finish tenth behind Evan Noyes and John Cannon while Hutchison's race ended there on the first lap, against the guardrail.

FINAL

Hutchison was able to start the final after Chris Oates' mechanics had repaired the Lola so that he and Randy Lewis, whose Lola had been repaired with parts from the crashed cars of Scott and Baker, were the most notable of the five added starters to the 23 officially qualified cars.

For the first time since they began their two car F5000 team Vel's Parnelli had both their machines on the front row for the final. It was a proud moment as they fired up their Falconer engines and rolled off side by side into the pace laps.

The twenty-eight cars pressed their way into a fine, tight order as they came down the hill towards the pits and Mario and Al placed them all carefully in dead level order up to the starter. For at least a couple of hundred yards the two red and white machines accelerated in tandem until Unser, on the outside, found himself beginning to lose ground so that as soon as his nose faded to Andretti's gearbox tail, he snapped over to the left and filled the gap behind Mario before anyone else might have a chance to do so. Behind them the field narrowed into a long, reluctant line that bellowed away from us up the hill and out of sight toward the Corkscrew.

Just as the tailenders disappeared Andretti reappeared on the descent from the Corkscrew and already he had pinched clear of his teammate and the leading trail of a dozen cars. The gap was as much as a full second when he shot past the pits and into his second lap with Unser, Redman and Brise locked together and leading the chase. Slowly but clearly Mario built up his margin to his teammate and as he did so Al broke free of Redman and Brise.

It took only five laps before the leaders began to run into the earliest backmarkers and as they threaded and forced their way by the slower cars Unser began to diminish the rate of Andretti's escape and at the same time pull well clear of Redman. As they bore into the early part of the 100 miles each of the four leaders settled into much the same hard, neat style to that you could almost feel the pressure fore and aft that each was exerting on the other.

Meanwhile the rest of the field was sorting itself out into a series of little tussles. McRae, again driving well, established himself in fifth place with a small cushion to Hobbs and Oliver who found themselves leading a train which included Morton, Forbes-Robinson and Brown. Further back Wietzes lead Woodner and Schuppan while Cannon worked hard in an effort to remain in contact with them. For a long while the race held itself in a tenuous balance just like that, virtually every car remaining untroubled, unfaltering in their pace.

At the front the exhaust notes from the two Viceroy cars echoed out sharp and clean enough so that the air almost rang with their resonance — for lap after lap, only seconds apart they sang on that way. Soon the margin between the two leaders was being determined more by slower cars than anything else, shrinking to as little as two seconds sometimes and stretching itself to as much as five seconds other times.

By the tenth lap Unser seemed safely free of Redman and the race became a question of whether Al could muster a pressing challenge to Mario. At the same time Redman and Brise, running a little closer together, engaged in their own fight.

Holding itself in a kind of tense stasis the race worked it's way to the finish with hardly a hesitation from among the first dozen cars. Over the last ten laps Unser nibbled slowly into Andretti's lead but he knew just as much as Mario that there was nothing that would change the balance save a mechanical failure. But that never came and Mario drove home as flawlessly as ever to his third F5000 win of the year and Al pushed his way with equal finesse to his fourth second place of the season. A clean triumph for the Viceroy/Hilton team.

Some ten seconds behind Unser came Redman into third place, finally pulling clear of Brise over the last half dozen laps when Tony began to nurse his rear tyres which had shown signs of going off whenever he pushed hard after the Haas/Hall Lola. Brian's biggest problems came when one of his earplugs suddenly fell out of place and all of a sudden things became hard and noisy. "I thought I was having a heart attack!" he exclaimed. "Then I realised what had happened, but then somehow, the earplug fell back *in!*"

On the very last lap Brise who had dropped as much as five seconds behind Redman felt the engine begin to hesitate, then cough, so he dropped right off the throttle and cruised carefully to the flag, the Lola's fuel tanks dry. He climbed from the car thinking hard about Riverside and what the Taylor/Yip team might do for their final fling against the experience of the F5000 establishment.

For almost half the race Graham McRae held doggedly to fifth place but then with the differential playing up (he thought it might have broken because of using mismatched wheels in the heat) McRae spun and dropped a handful of places. This elevated David Hobbs and Jackie Oliver into fifth and sixth places with Hobbs holding on steadfastly ahead of the Shadow despite fuel spraying out from a broken gauge and thereby contriving to soften his visor so that a thousand tiny stress cracks formed across David's vision. Even with his vision so hindered Hobbs hung on but then only five laps from the end he misjudged things while lapping Jon Woodner and Oliver pulled inside the Hogan Lola and held the place to the end.

After John Morton spun, Elliott Forbes-Robinson took over eighth place which later became seventh when McRae spun. EFR kept Hobbs and Oliver well within range for most of the race and was once catching them until a backmarker held him up badly. He finished some five seconds behind Hobbs and well clear of McRae who came back to eighth place ahead of Warwick Brown. The Talon driver remained in contact with these directly ahead of him for quite some time but over the last dozen laps he faded back alone.

Eppie Wietzes and Vern Schuppan ran around together until just past half distance when Schuppan pullled off with the Eagle's front suspension broken and then Wietzes stopped with no oil pressure. This let Jon Woodner who had been chasing hard after the Eagle up into tenth place. Woodner held the place well for some time despite a hard attack from John Cannon but then Cannon got by in traffic and, driving his March well, went away on his own. Morton recovered to finish twelfth while Danny Ongais slipped back into the ruck with a recurrence of the gear selection problems which had afflicted his Lola during his heat.

Such was the ferocity of competition at Laguna Seca that one might never have guessed that the F5000 championship had already been decided. If that is anything to judge by, and in most racing series the nature of the championship battle does seem to bear heavily and directly on the quality of competition, then it may be that F5000 in America really *has* grown up.

Monterey Grand Prix
Laguna Seca USA — October 12
50 laps — 95.00 miles
USCA/SCCA F5000 championship — round 8

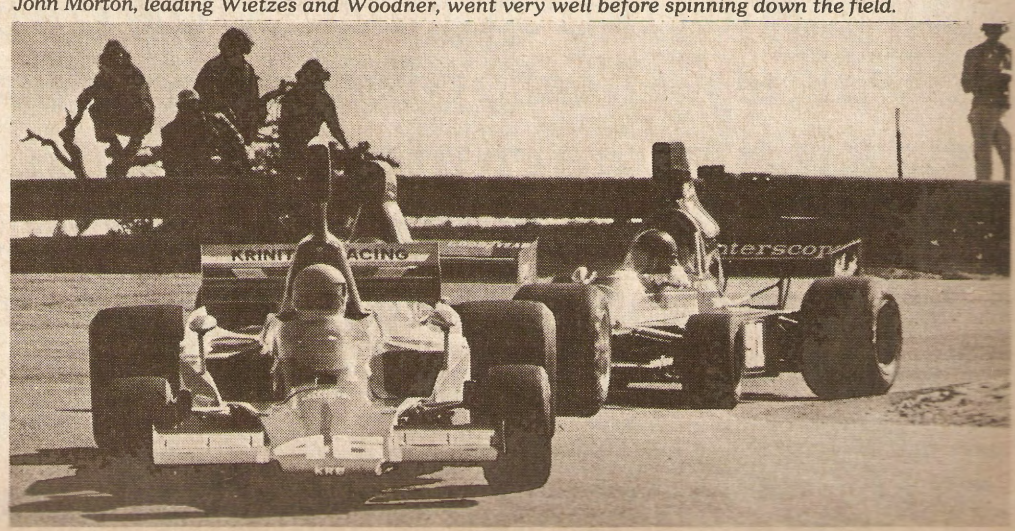
1, Mario Andretti (Lola-Falconer Chevrolet T332), 49m 55.61s, 114.16 mph;
2, Al Unser (Lola-Falconer Chevrolet T332), 49m 57.59s;
3, Brian Redman (Lola-Chaparral Chevrolet T332);
4, Tony Brise (Lola-Smith Chevrolet T332);
5, Jackie Oliver (Shadow-Shadow Dodge DN6);
6, David Hobbs (Lola-Bartz Chevrolet T332);
7, Elliott Forbes-Robinson (Lola-Mir Chevrolet T332); 8, Graham McRae (Lola-McRae Chevrolet T332); 9, Warwick Brown (Talon-Molloy Chevrolet MR1A); 10, John Cannon (March-Bartz Chevrolet 73A/751), 49 laps.

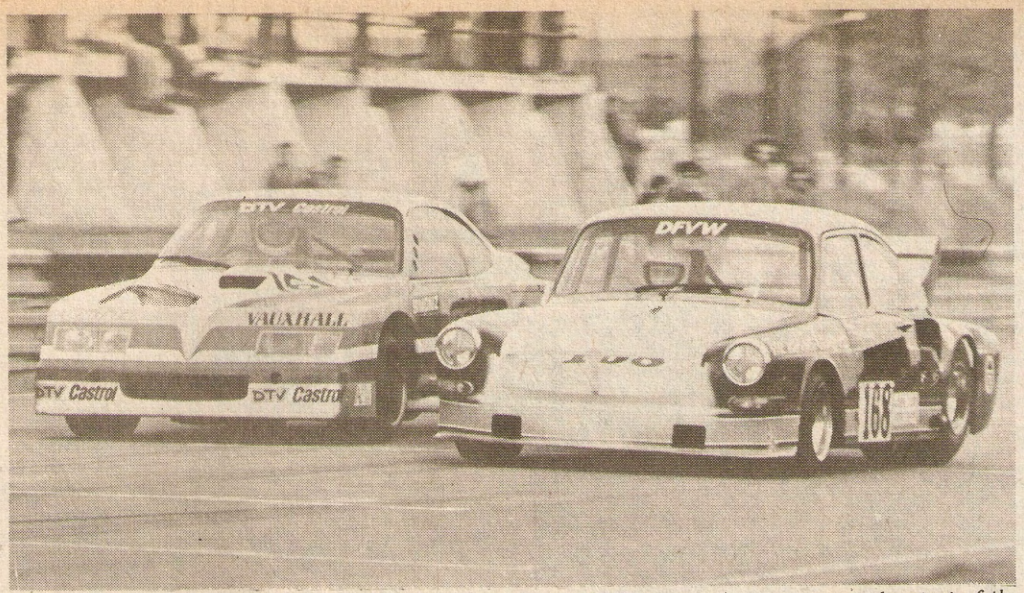
Fastest lap: Andretti, 58.23s, 117.46 mph.

Heat 1 — 45.30 miles: 1, Andretti, 26m 41.5s, 115.31 mph; 2, Redman; 3, Brise; 4, John Morton (Lola-Falconer Chevrolet T332); 5, Eppie Wietzes (Lola-McLaren Chevrolet T400/332); 6, Jon Woodner (Talon-McLaren Chevrolet MR1A), 26 laps. **Fastest lap:** Andretti, 58.34s, 117.24 mph.

Heat 2 — 45.30 miles: 1, Unser, 26m 46.92s, 114.92 mph; 2, McRae; 3, Hobbs; 4, Brown; 5, Oliver; 6, Forbes-Robinson. **Fastest lap:** Unser, 58.77s, 116.38 mph.

John Morton, leading Wietzes and Woodner, went very well before spinning down the field.





Gerry Marshall (left) watches Colin Hawker powering the DFV engined VW away at the start of the Special Saloon event, but Marshall was the easy winner.

SNETTERTON

Now Gray edges ahead

The Thames Estuary Automobile Club organised what was without doubt the best Snetterton race meeting of the year last Sunday; the ambitious eight-race programme running with the minimum of delay. With full grids, exciting racing and the sun shining everyone was happy, but happiest of all was Kenny Gray, who won a thrilling final with his Van Dieman RF75, to take a slender two point lead in the FF 1600 National Organs series. Geoff Friswell, Mallock U2, was another convincing winner of the LEC Clubman's race while Brian Rice, Camaro, Gerry Marshall, Triumph Dolomite Sprint, Jock Robinson, Mazda RX3 and Neville Knight, Simca Rally, were Radio 1 class winners.

The ten lap heats of the MCD-based National Organs series opened the meeting ironically with competitors from other races taping over anything involving their cars with National Organs, Southern Organs etc., after the embarrassing disappearance of a certain Mr. Miller while the Formula Fordsters were busy plastering N.O. stickers on their mounts, so as to qualify for points in this the most prestigeous of their Championships. Geoff Lees and Kenny Gray, the two contenders for the title, arrived with just three points separating them for the penultimate round.

For Geoff the day started badly when after just a few laps of practice he was involved in someone else's accident eliminating the yellow Rob Roy Racing with D. J. Bond Royale RP21 and its works engine for the rest of the day. A quick switch to the white car, winner the previous week at Thruxton, with Geoff's own, more tired, engine allowed him to qualify second fastest. Poleman, David McPherson, appeared to have this heat sewn up at half distance as he had opened up a distinct gap with the ITT Dulon MP17, on Rad Dougall, Kismet Royale RP21, Derek Warwick, Warwick Trailers Ltd Hawke DL12, and Lees. Lees showed his undoubted class on the penultimate lap exiting Russell faster than his rivals, he annexed second spot entering Riches, slipstreaming Dougall down the long back straight to leapfrog into the lead at the Esses, holding on around Coram to take the chequered flag from Dougall, McPherson and Warwick. Rod Bremner, Crossle, came through from the very back of the grid to head the next bunch from Glenn Eagling's Circuit Travel entered Van Diemen.

In the second heat Kenny Gray matched the performance of Lees in the first. Although headed briefly by Mike Blanchet, Crossle 30F, the South African took the flag first showing he too has the ability to be in the right place at the right time. Blanchet and Phil Dowsett, Crossle, followed him at 0.2s intervals. Airline pilot, Peter White, had been right with them but on the last lap tasted the tactics of one of the present front runners in FF and was pushed off on the straight. He recovered to finish fourth, the new Royale RP21 he is running for the rest of the season having the floor pan crumpled on a large stone. A splendid dice for fifth between Miki Dee, Hiwatt Amplification sponsored Van Dieman and Eric Horsfield's Alexis 23B was resolved in the former's favour — just.

The Clerk of the Course called the FF drivers together, threatening them that the kerb cutting which had been particularly rife in the second qualifier would mean disqualification if repeated in the Final.

Gray, Blanchet, Dowsett formed the front row, their heat having been run at a faster pace — a pointer for the eagerly awaited confrontation? The opening laps were one frantic swarm of weaving cars but by lap four one could discern a 10 car bunch breaking away. Already Gray had led the first lap, Lees the second, Dougall the third then Gray again but the order was changing several times a lap as all sorts of heart stopping manoeuvres were performed. Lap 7 Gray led from Lees — were they going to break away? No, next time round Dougall was in front! On the last lap of this tremendous race Gray outbraked Dougall into the Esses held on and won, a well earned victory. Dougall, who had proved a consistent front runner all day finished an equally deserved second, Lees "perhaps if I had the other car" a despondent third with Rod Bremner again showing well in the later stages of a race snatching fourth from Dowsett, White, giving as good as he received, sixth from Warwick, an unwell McPherson and Eagling. Blenchett, the only driver to ignore the Clerk of the Course's warning, was black flagged after losing his nose section as he crossed the Russell apex. After the superb race the crowd buzzed with excitement and the deivers were high from the exhilaration of close racing. No-one can afford to miss the FF Festival in three week's time.

Having secured the National Mini 7 title Graham Wenham put himself at the head of the table for the TEAC Mini 7 title, by winning this penultimate round easily with his Micktuned Mini. The four-car battle for second between Bob Addison, Alan Seekings, Andy Devine and Martin Moorhead broke up after an incident out in the country but then reformed, with Moorhead getting the verdict from Addison and Devine, poor Seekings returning with a blown engine.

The gravel voice of Emperor Rosko emitting his own brand of enthusiasm for Production Saloon racing heralded the Radio 1 rounds. Brian Rice was victorious for the second successuve weekend, having changed a bad rear tyre on the grid. The start had been held a few minutes to allow Derrick Brunt to finish repairs to the clutch on his Camaro and he expressed his gratitude and demonstrated that his mechanics had got it right by dragging off into an early lead, only to be demoted to second on lap 3 and be almost caught by John Brindley's Camaro, at the close. Gerry Marshall, having a one off drive in Bob Saunder's Dolomite finished fourth and won his class convincingly from Ivan Dutton, 3.0 Capri. Gerry being very impressed with the Dolomite reckoned it could be very competitive if it was sorted further.

Jock Robertson added one more to his impressive tally of successes with the Marshall Wingfield with Grand Prix Models' Mazda RX3 comfortably winning the cheaper race. Ivan Dutton, after vainly trying to stay with Robertson, in a Mazda he has just built up himself, dropped back to play with Wendy Markey, in Cozy Powell's car and Eric Cook also Mazda mounted; the final order being Dutton, Cook and Markey. Neville Knight, Simca Rally, won the cheapest class easily but his nearest challenger Peter Jopp crashed his Mini out of contention.

Geoff Friswell with the words Langtonian Finance Ltd masked with tape on his Mallock U2 won the LEC Refrigeration Clubman's round. Quickly establishing a lead another polished performance by Geoff saw him motor just quick enough to keep his nearest challenger Peter Cooke, Harrison 7, a suitable sized speck in his mirrors. Andy Diamond once again started the Peter Evans' car from pole but was soon in the pits with a blown head gasket. Alex Ferrada moved the Team Ace Plant Mallock U2 ahead of Nick Adams' similar car on the second lap and was not headed again for class B honours, Adams being further demoted by Chris Greville-Smith's Phantom P45. Friswell and Adams both remain at the head of their class championship positions.

A well subscribed Special Saloon race closed the day's proceedings; the spectators being treated to the sight of Gerry Marshall knocking 4.8s off the outright saloon record as he forced the 5.0 Vauxhall Firenza to the chequered flag. Colin Hawker, DFV engined Volkswagen, had Nick Whiting's All Car Equipe/Team Kent Messenger, 2.0 Escort as a shadow throughout but eventually finished second with 0.6s advantage. These three being the only ones to complete the distance. John Homewood outpacing many a larger car to win the 851-1000 cc class with the 1.0 Imp. Also class winners were Tony Allies, 1.3 Mini Clubman and David Enderby, 850 cc Mini.

ANDY LEEDER

National Organs Formula Ford Championship Round. Heat 1 (10 laps): 1, Geoff Lees (Royale RP 21-Minister), 12m 40.0s, 90.81 mph; 2, Rad Dougal (Royale RP 21-Scholar), 12m 40.4s; 3, David McPherson (ITT Dulon-Minister MP17), 12m 40.8s; 4, Derek Warwick (Hawke-Minister DL12), 12m 41.6s; 5, Rod Bremner (Crossle-Rowland 30F), 12m 52.0s; 6, Glenn Eagling (Van Diemen-Scholar RF75), 12m 52.4s. **Fastest lap:** Dougal and Warwick, 1m 14.4s, 92.76 mph.

National Organs Formula Ford Championship Round. Heat 2 (10 laps): 1, Kenny Gray (Van Diemen-Scholar RF75), 12m 37.4s, 91.12 mph; 2, Mike Blanchet (Crossle-Minister 30F), 12m 37.6s; 3, Phil Dowsett (Crossle-Minister 25F), 12m 37.8s; 4, Peter White (Royale-Minister RP21), 12m 41.6s; 5, Miki Dee (Van Diemen-Rowland) 12m 58.2s; 6, Eric Horsfield (Alexis 23B-Scholar), 12m 58.4s. **Fastest lap:** Gray and Blanchet, 1m 14.0s, 93.26 mph.

TEAC Mini 7 Championship Round (10 laps): 1, Graham Wenham, 15m 10.8s, 75.77 mph; 2, Martin Moorhead, 15m 23.6s; 3, Robert Addison, 15m 23.8s; 4, Andy Devine, 15m 25.4s; 5, Richard Hamlyn, 15m 35.6s; 6, Robert Rowley, 15m 36.0s. **Fastest lap:** Wenham, 1m 29.4s, 77.19 mph.

BBC Radio 1 Production Saloon Car Championship Round (10 laps): 1, Brian Rice (5.7 Chevrolet Camaro), 13m 55.4s, 82.61; 2, Derrick Brunt (5.7 Chevrolet Camaro), 13m 59.0s; 3, John Brindley (5.7 Chevrolet Camaro), 14m 00.4s; 14, Gerry Marshall (Triumph Dolomite Sprint), 14m 40.6s.

Over £2,300 class: 1, Rice, 82.61 mph; 2, Brunt; 3, Brindley. **Fastest lap:** Rice, 1m 22.0s, 84.16 mph **(record).**

£1,700-£2,299 class: 1, Marshall, 78.37 mph; 2, Ivan Dutton (3.0 Ford Capri), 14m 49.2s; 3, Marc Smith (3.0 Ford Capri), 14m 52.2s. **Fastest lap:** Marshall, 1m 26.6s, 79.69 mph **(Record).**

LEC Refrigeration Clubman's Sports Car Championship Round (10 laps). Overall and fully modified: 1, Geoff Friswell (Mallock U2), 11m 28.2s, 100.28 mph; 2, Peter Cooke (Harrison 7), 11m 31.8s; 3, Martin Mansell (Mallock Mk 16), 11m 41.8s; 4, Vernon Davies (Hustler SS4), 11m 49.0s. **Fastest lap:** Friswell, 1m 07.2s, 102.70 mph. **Formula Ford-engined class:** 1, Alex Ferrada (Mallock U2-Davron), 12m 33.8s, 91.55 mph; 2, Chris Greville-Smith (Phantom Ford P45), 12m 41.4s; 3, Nick Adams (Mallock U2-Holbay 14), 11m 39.6s (9 laps). **Fastest lap:** Ferrada, 1m 14.0s, 93.26 mph.

BBC Radio 1 Production Saloon Car Championship Round (10 laps): Overall and £1,300-£1,699 class: 1, Jock Robertson (2.0 Mazda RX 3), 15m 16.4s, 75.31 mph; 2, Ivan Dutton (2.0 Mazda RX3), 15m 28.6s; 3, Eric Cook (2.0 Mazda), 15m 29.2s; 4, Wendy Markey (2.0 Mazda RX3), 15m 29.4s. **Fastest lap:** Robertson, 1m 29.4s, 77.19 mph.

Up to £1,299 class: 1, Neville Knight (Simca Rally), 16m 06.2s, 71.43 mph; 2, Rodney Posner (Simca Rally), 16m 15.4s; 3, Simon Watson (Sunbeam Imp), 16m 21.0s; 4, Tim Rodwell (Mini), 16m 58.2s. **Fastest lap:** Knight, 1m 34.6s, 72.95 mph.

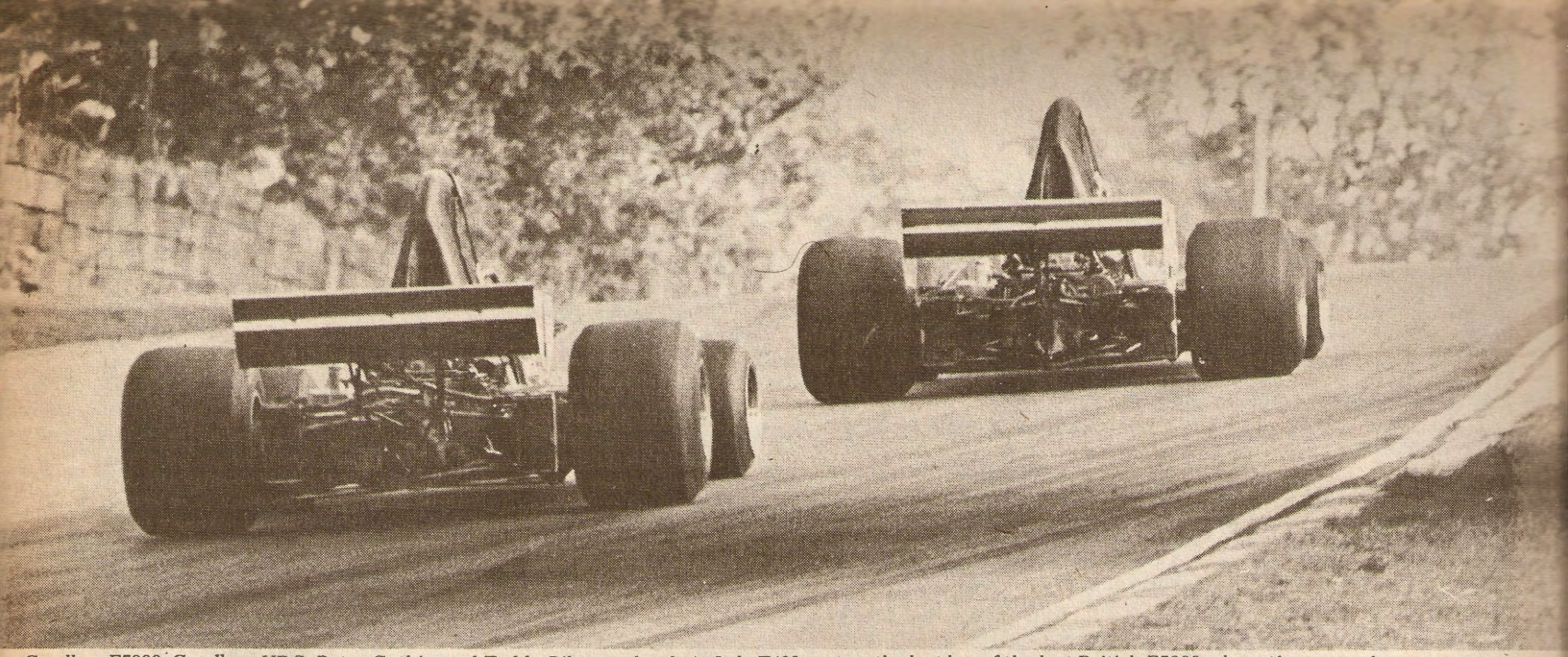
National Organs Formula Ford Championship Round Final (10 laps): 1, Kenny Gray (Van Diemen-Scholar RF75), 12m 36.0s, 91.29 mph; 2, Rad Dougal (Royale RP21-Scholar), 12m 36.8s; 3, Geoff Lees (Royale RP21-Minister), 12m 37.0s; 4, Rod Bremner (Crossle-Rowland 30F), 12m 37.2s; 5, Phil Dowsett (Crossle-Minister 25F), 12m 37.2s; 6, Peter White (Royale-Minister RP21), 12m 38.8s. **Fastest lap:** Bremner, 1m 13.8s, 93.51 mph.

Special Saloon Car Race (10 laps): Overall and Over 1300 cc class: 1, Gerry Marshall (5.0 Vauxhall Firenza), 11m 49.0s, 97.34 mph; 2, Colin Hawker (3.0 Volkswagen Variant), 12m 20.0s; 3, Nick Whiting (2.0 Ford Escort), 12m 20.6s; 4, Brian Thackray (1.8 Ford Escort), 11m 53.0s (9 laps). **Fastest lap:** Marshall, 1m 08.2, 101.19 mph **(record).**

1001-1300 cc class: 1, Tony Allies (1.3 Carlow Mini), 12m 15.4s, 84.46 mph (9 laps); 2, Gordon Line (1.3 Wesley Mini), 12m 43.8s; 3, Brian Leeks (1.3 Mini Cooper S), 13m 01.2s. **Fastest lap:** Allies, 1m 20.4s, 85.84 mph.

851-1000 cc class: 1, John Homewood (1.0 Sunbeam Imp), 11m 53.2s, 87.09 mph; 2, Ginger Marshall (1.0 Mini Countryman) 12m 32.4s; 3, Duncan Kirk (Mini), 12m 24.6s. **Fastest lap:** Homewood, 1m 16.8s, 89.86 mph **(record).**

Up to 850 cc class: 1, David Enderby (Mini), 13m 00.0s, 79.63 mph; 2, Terry Payce (Mini), 13m 15.6s; 3, Bernard Tester (Tester Mini), 12m 04.0s. **Fastest lap:** Enderby, 1m 24.2s, 81.96 mph.



Goodbye F5000, Goodbye VDS. Peter Gethin and Teddy Pilette take their Lola T400s out on the last lap of the last British F5000 where they scored an easy 1-2.

BRANDS HATCH F5000

Gethin completes the circle

By IAN PHILLIPS **Photographs by DAVID WINTER**

After six turbulent years Formula 5000 has, for the time being at least, given its last show in Britain. After last Sunday's race the sigh of relief was enormous. The last race was pretty much like the first. It was dominated virtually throughout by Peter Gethin, who at least has the 'honour' of winning the first and last British F5000 races, and in doing so took second place in the championship. His team mate Teddy Pilette made it a great day for the Belgian VDS team by clinching his second F5000 championship and finishing a close second when Gethin allowed him to catch up at the end.

A sign of progress: the first F5000 race at Brands (the second ever) only had two finishers on the same lap, this time we had three — Bob Evans putting up another good show in the Durex Lola. But, as on Easter Monday 1969, the rest of the statistics are very similar: seven cars were classified as finishers which was the same, but 16 started which was an increase of one.

This final round of the Shellsport championship at the generally excellent BARC meeting developed into an enormous bore, but like the history of the Formula it had its highlights. There were a couple of dices and while they were in full swing it looked good. Of those that didn't feature in the results Alan Jones, Guy Edwards and David Purley all helped to create interest. Basically it wasn't a V6 weekend although Jones lowered the lap record considerably in the Thursdays/RAM March-Ford.

ENTRY and PRACTICE

There was a strange feeling around Brands Hatch on Saturday's practice day. It was a thank-goodness-it's-the-end-of-the-season type atmosphere really. It has been a difficult year for most, financially and otherwise. There was a superficial relaxed feeling born out by the parties, impromptu and planned, that took place throughout the weekend. There was much talk about "what are you doing next year?', and a general burying of the idea of F5000 cars. One thing the Formula has always had is a cheerful outlook on life, but behind much of the lightheartedness was a feeling of 'we'll never have it so easy again, anything else will be a bit more professional'. Yes, despite the quality of racing, it's sad that F5000 won't be with us next year.

There was ample practice time on Saturday with two long sessions. The first was held on a damp Grand Prix circuit. (The meeting was originally scheduled for the short circuit but following the disasters of the August Bank Holiday meeting when the circuit broke up, MCD gave the competitors this chance to use 'a proper circuit'.) A great deal of work had been carried out on getting the corners out in the country properly surfaced and this was the big test. Luckily there were no problems at all and nobody had much in the way of comment except that they were very slippery.

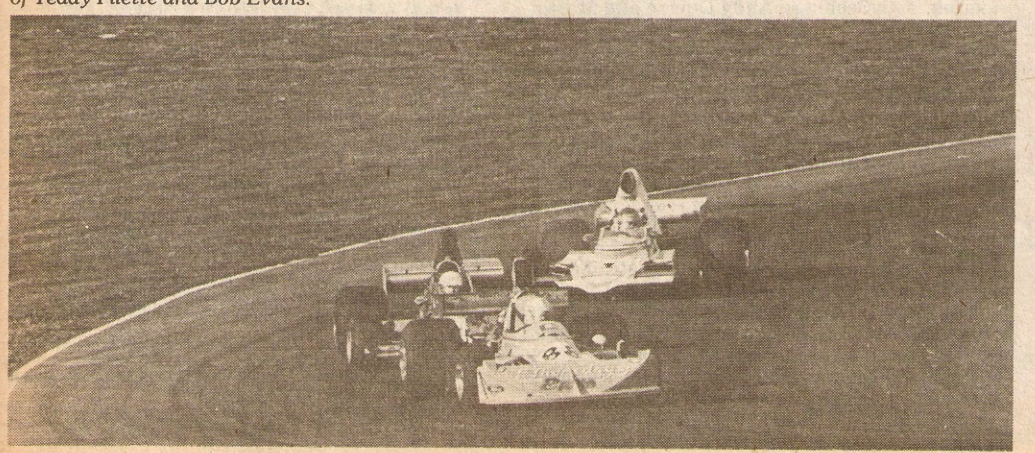
One man who, for many reasons, wanted to win this race was Peter Gethin. It's not been all that great a year for the former champion and having lost the chance of racing on what must be his favourite circuit in August he was determined to really have a go this time. 'It's really nice to be racing on a proper circuit again.' Also, by winning the race, he had the chance of taking second place in the championship because of the double points scoring. For sentimental reasons too, Peter wanted to do well in this one. He's been with F5000 for nearly all its British history and has won more races and championships than anyone else + a final win would put the wrapping on the package. The first session of practice wasn't really worth a great deal because of the dampness on the track, but the afternoon thrash was run in near perfect conditions. The two-year-old lap record, standing to Guy Edwards at 1m 24.2s, was bound to take a beating. Gethin put everything into his driving of the red VDS Lola T400 and looked most impressive in whittling his time down to 1m 23.4s. The engine wasn't showing much more than about 30 psi oil pressure, but he was really flying. After 'fiddling around' the pressure was restored and he felt good for the race.

Alongside on the 2-2 grid was Teddy Pilette who has also been with the Formula for some years, and was poised to take his second championship title. He took his identical VDS Lola round in 1m 24.0s and was, as always, very cheerful. The situation was that all he needed to do to clinch the championship was finish in the points. He didn't really seem to consider the possibility of winning too seriously. "If it is possible it is better that Peter should win and me come second, then VDS will have first and second in the championship which will be very good for them.' For most of this year the Lola T400 was a car that nobody wanted, it didn't, and won't ever, work, they said. How things have changed. Bob Evans was third quickest in the Durex/McKechnie model on the same time as Pilette. Last year's champion was obviously enjoying being in a competitive car again and was easily fastest in the wet session. He put in more laps than anyone in the dry session and felt that with 'a few tweaks' he could be right with Gethin. The major change he wanted was a new third gear ratio which would keep the engine on the cam round corners such as Druids.

The first of the Ford V6 engined cars was sharing the second row with Evans, the Thursdays/RAM March 751 driven by Alan Jones. He didn't bother with the wet session other than four exploratory laps. In the dry session he was pushing the immaculate car round in great style but couldn't better 1m 24.6s. He had big problems with the brakes which occasionally would disappear completely but an overnight caliper service virtually eliminated the problem for Sunday. There was a bit of worry over the engine, which had done all of Mallory Park, but so far wasn't giving any trouble.

A second slower was David Purley in the smart LEC Chevron-Ford B30. Because of early morning fog Purley was unable to land the LEC plane at the circuit and by the time he'd flown back and driven to the circuit the first session was all over. He then found the gearing too low for anything much quicker than 1m 25.6s but was fairly confident for

Alan Jones completes the overtaking manoeuvre which took him momentarily into second place in front of Teddy Pilette and Bob Evans.



race day. Just .2s slower was Mike Wilds, back in his old March which is now owned and usually driven by Mick Hill. Second fastest in the first session and sixth in the second was a really fine performance, especially considering he has done less than half a dozen races this year. In fact Mike only did a dozen laps in each session to save the engine, which was the only one that Hill had.

Guy Edwards was the only person who had a chance of overhauling Pilette in the championship but, unlike previous years when this event has gone well for him, this did not. The Encyclopaedia Britannica Lola T332 just wasn't handling at all well in the official sessions. Basically the problem was tyre temperatures which, even using the soft G50 compound, couldn't be raised to a decent working rate. A switch to 19in rear wheels for Sunday went a long way to curing the problem, but a 1m 26.2s, seventh grid position was a disadvantage in a race that he had to win to have any chance of the title. Brian McGuire was next up in his similar car recording a 1m 27.8s, although he was a little disturbed by the handling.

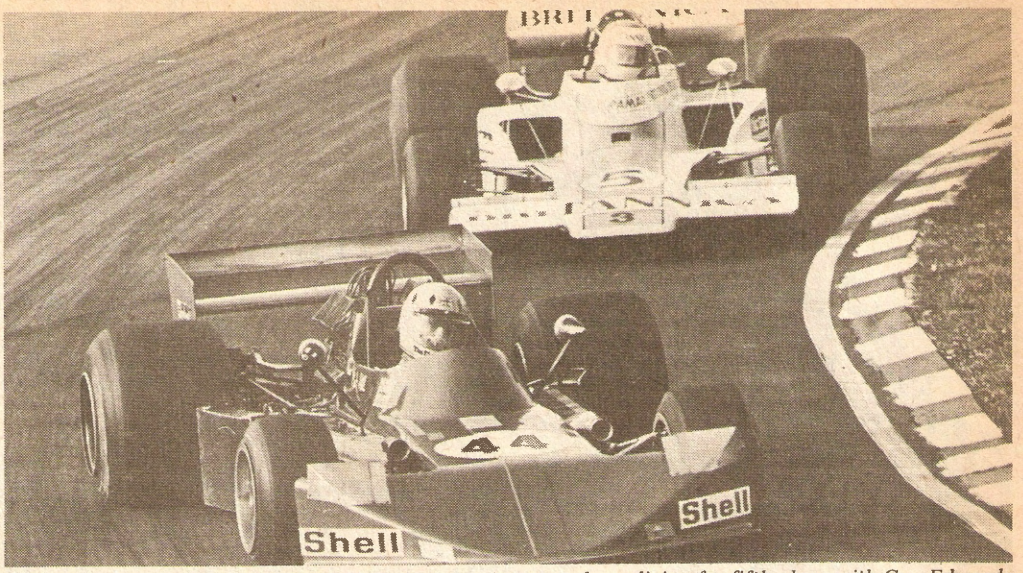
Tom Walkinshaw was out of luck with the Hermetite March-Ford V6. In the two sessions he only managed 20 laps and 1m 28.6s. In the first a belt came off the engine and in the second the exhaust manifold broke. Poor Damien Magee did even less lappery, 15 being his total in the Jim Kelly Trojan. Engine trouble was the problem this weekend. A cylinder head stud broke and found its way into prohibited areas as did much oil and water. The result was a badly burned piston. The ever ingenious Keith Tilbrook whipped the piston out and much filing was done to smooth off all the edges and it went back in so that Big D would get a start. Once again a big E for effort all round. Bill Gubelmann was next up in the immaculate Reed Racing Lola which was in gear selection trouble. John Turner was again putting in a lot of effort in his T330 although nobody expected the engine to last long. He was .2s slower on 1m 31.2s. Brian Robinson was soldiering on without any problems in his McLaren M19 to do 1m 31.8s while Chris Featherstone was out of the ball park in his McRae on 1m 35.2.

Two extra runners were added to the back of the grid after missing practice on Saturday. Dutchman Boy Hayje was without an engine for the Hezemans Racing March-V6 731, while Ingo Hoffman wasn't able to get out in Tony Dean's Chevron B28 because of engine problems. Dean himself had worked an all nighter to get the rebuilt Whitehurst mill installed but a loose union and lack of timing made it a non-runner initially. Hoffman wasn't too keen to run after the brief unofficial qualifying run as he'd never seen the circuit before and didn't fancy learning it in the race.

A notable absentee was Ian Ashley, the official reason being 'lack of engines', although it was generally thought that it was a deep political rift between driver and sponsor, Richard Oaten.

RACE

Sunday was warm and sunny and the attitude reflected the weather after a morning warm up session. The three warming up laps before the start though indicated engine trouble for Edwards, although a change of plugs cured it temporarily; Magee had a slight oil leak, which upset a scrutineer but after a quick barney he was allowed to start; Hayje had a steering problem but after the final warm up lap a drive shaft broke so he was out.



Mike Wilds drove very well in Mick Hill's March – he's seen here dicing for fifth place with Guy Edwards

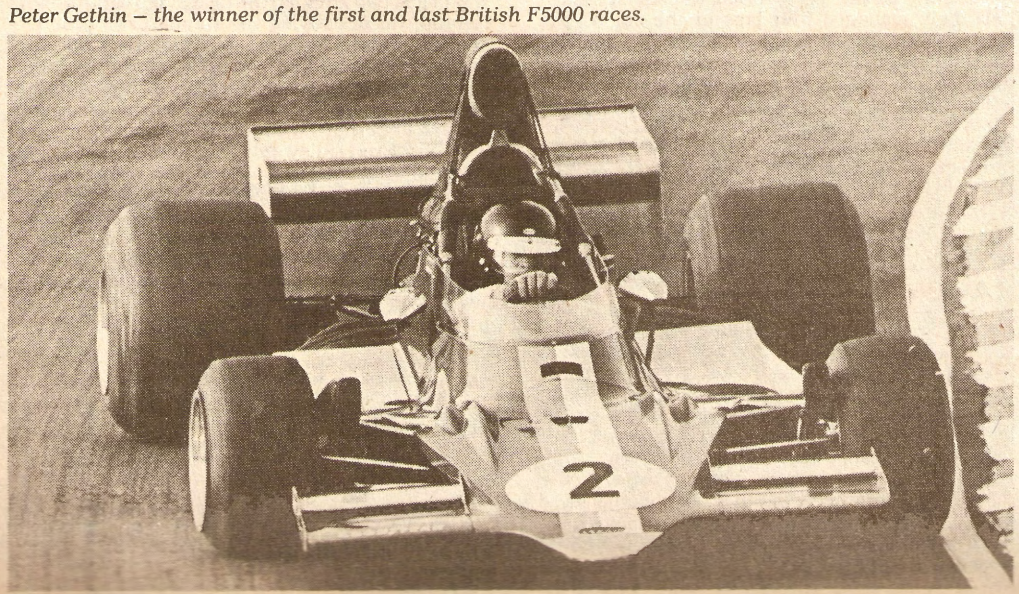
At the flag Pilette got his smoking tyres to grip first and Jones was just as quick right behind him; as they went along the top straight they appeared to be edging ahead. Gethin, though, was able to come sneaking up the inside before Jones was able to block his line; thus out of Paddock first time it was Pilette from Gethin, Jones, Evans, Wilds and Purley.

For the first three laps these six ran in an impressive nose to tail formation with Edwards moving up strongly from the second bunch which consisted of Walkinshaw, Turner, Magee, Gubelmann, Robinson, Hoffman and Featherstone. McGuire had already quit with impossible handling.

Hoffman spun at Druids when he missed a gear and dinged the nose but carried on; Purley did the same on lap three and dropped well behind Edwards, while Magee inevitably started to blow oil smoke out as the crankcase became pressurised and he was black flagged out of the race.

By lap four Gethin was really pushing Pilette and after just two more laps his team mate let him go by on the bottom straight, to the immense approval of the packed grandstand. Peter then proceeded to disappear into the distance. Jones and Evans then closed right up on the Belgian, while the impressive Wilds was locked in combat with Edwards. Purley was making up ground fast and on the sixth lap was the first driver to break the lap record with a 1m 23.8s. Evans made a mistake on lap eight and lost touch briefly with Pilette and Jones, the V6 car looking very threatening in third place. Edwards finally found a way past Wilds on lap 10 to take fifth, while Purley was virtually back in contention by this time. Walkinshaw was next, a long way back, followed by Hoffman, Turner and Robinson. Gubelmann was out with a suspected severe engine failure, while the very slow Featherstone was in the pits with a burst water hose.

Peter Gethin – the winner of the first and last British F5000 races.



The trio fighting for second place provided some stirring stuff for the next five laps with first Jones attacking Pilette and then Evans attacking Jones, but it was the V6 March which finally scored. Alan slipped up the inside of the VDS Lola on the bottom straight and nipped through quickly and neatly as they went into Southbank — this after a similar attempt at Paddock on the same lap had just failed. At the end of that lap the Australian seemed to be stretching his legs and pulling away as Pilette fell to the mercy of Evans. But it was not to be Jones' day. Going into the corner where he'd taken the place on the previous lap, he went for third gear, didn't quite get it and quick as a flash it went round about four times. It appeared to be driver error but later events probably vindicated him. The engine stalled as he couldn't disengage the gear and it was nearly a lap later that it was finally pushed back into life in a very distant fifth place.

A lap later Evans took second from Pilette but it was short lived as he too made a mistake and went off at Stirlings, hitting the barrier, but nevertheless carrying on at unabated speed behind Wilds who was now third. Edwards by this time was in the pits with a misfire and although he rejoined briefly he finally went out with a damaged piston. Purley's great efforts to climb back up the field ended with a badly bent Chevron at Dingle Dell. He'd tried to go round the outside of Turner as he was lapping him, got on the grass and slid into the barrier.

So at twenty laps the situation was that Gethin had a very large lead from Pilette, who was well clear of Wilds, Evans and Jones. Hoffman was next up, lapped, with Turner and Robinson completing the runners.

There wasn't too much action during the final 15 laps. A couple of laps from the end Gethin slowed considerably and allowed Pilette to catch him and the two red Lolas crossed the line almost side by side to finish their Formula 5000 involvement in great style and take first and second in the championship.

Evans took third to make it a T400 1-2-3 having passed Wilds on lap 25. Poor Mike crossed the line pushing the car as three laps from the end it ran out of petrol. He managed to coast to the pits where he pushed it to the line to be classified seventh — poor reward for a good drive. Jones should have been next but that earlier missed gear had been indicative of further gearbox trouble and he tried to class himself as a finisher by running stuck in fourth but after a stop he only managed 30 laps which wasn't enough. His consolation was a new lap record which presumably will stand forever.

Completing the finishers behind Evans was Hoffman who'd slowed to a crawl with overheating caused by the deranged nose, Turner whose V8 was only working on one bank and Robinson.

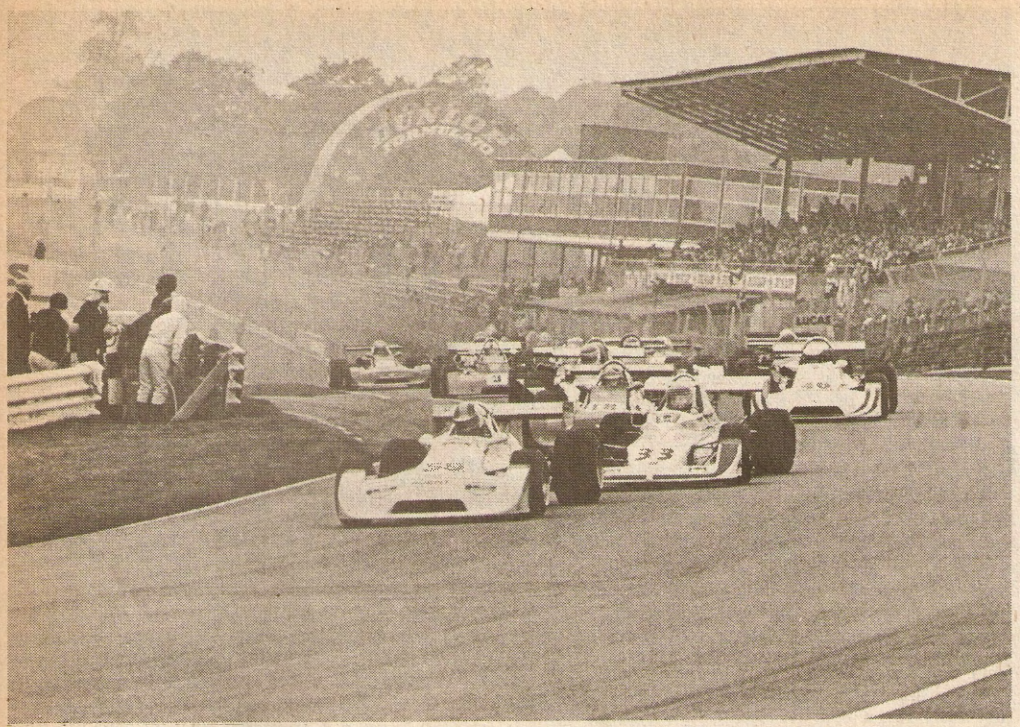
Shellsport European 5000 Championship, final round
Brands Hatch, October 19. 35 laps, 92.75 miles

1, Peter Gethin (5.0 Lola-Morand Chevrolet T400 V8), 49m 38.2s, 112.11 mph.
2, Teddy Pilette (5.0 ola-Morand Chevrolet T400 V8), 49m 38.4s.
3, Bob Evans (5.0 Lola-Whitehurst Chevrolet T400 V8), 49m 51.0s.
4, Ingo Hoffman (5.0 Chevron-Whitehurst Chevrolet B28 V8), 34 laps.
5, John Turner (5.0 Lola-Chevron T330 V8), 33 laps.
6, Brian Robinson (5.0 McLaren-Close Chevrolet M19 V8), 32 laps.

Classified but not running at the finish: Mike Wilds (5.0 March-Smith Chevrolet 74A V8), 31 laps.

Still running but not classified: Jones, 30 laps; Chris Featherstone (5.0 McRae Chevrolet GM1), 22 laps.

Fastest lap: Alan Jones (3.4 March-Swindon Ford 751 V8), 1m 22.8s, 115.21 mph.



The deciding moment: Nilsson slots into the lead at Paddock, Henton, Morgan and Riley follow.

FORMULA ATLANTIC

Nilsson's five in a row

Formula Atlantic may have had a hard time early this year but it's ended on a very high note. Last Sunday's final round of the MCD championship wasn't the needle match we'd all hoped it would be, but nevertheless for the most part it was a thriller. It's not really news anymore that Gunnar Nilsson won again for Ted Moore's Rapid Movements team, but the combination is a joy to watch at any time. Not for one moment did he lose the lead of the race, starting from the middle of the front row, but unfortunately almost all of his rivals were sidelined within the first two laps. Richard Morgan though started from pole position in his hired Chevron and he wasn't going to give this one up. He clung to the yellow car for 12 of the 15 laps, never more than a second behind, and really made the calm and unflustered Swede, whose gear lever had broken on the second lap, work hard for his spoils in this Astor Club sponsored race. Unfortunately Mogan spun down to sixth three laps from home, but he'd made his point too.

ENTRY and PRACTICE

This was going to be *the* race. Players champion Tony Brise was back from America to avenge his recent defeat by Gunnar Nilsson, the man who had won the last four Atlantic races. Brian Henton wanted to make a strong point, so did Richard Morgan and Nick May, while new champion Ted Wentz wanted to rub it in. This was going to be a tough one.

Practice was held in two sessions on Saturday, one wet and one dry. For these men every lap counted.

It was Morgan who set the pace throughout. In wet and dry conditions he showed real style — he also showed a mood of determination which has been lacking in the past. His reward was pole position at 1m 26.8s. Nilsson and Henton, in the Cook BDA powered Wheatcroft, were both given a doubtful 27.2s although it is doubtful that either actually did them. Morgan it seemed had a huge advantage. "For once," he said, "all the others have got the problems." Problems indeed. Neither Nilsson or Henton had raced on the long circuit before to start off with. Nilsson spent the first session, bar three exploratory laps on slicks, in the pits while AP carried out a full brake service on the Chevron. Henton learned the track with a misfire, thought originally to be caused by a split float chamber but later traced to water in the petrol. Still, he posted second fastest in the wet. In the dry session both men were keyed up. Henton still had a trace of misfire; Nilsson couldn't quite get the car set up right — Southbank was a problem especially for him. Sometimes the entry was right, sometimes the exit but rarely was it all okay. Seconds before the flag came out he rushed in and had maximum flipper put on the rear wing. He did two more untimed laps and it was right. He knew it. He hadn't done the time given to him, but he knew he could do it now. Quiet confidence was written on his face. "I'm going to win tomorrow," he said and he meant it. Henton looked nervous but the old Derbyshire fire was stoked — he wasn't going to lose this one either.

And what of Tony Brise — the man who was everyone's target at the beginning of the year? He was fourth quickest just 0.6s behind and handily placed on the second row. He had not bothered too much with the first session. Initially he was easily fastest. He climbed out and watched. In the second session, he was first out and looked quick, very quick. The Modus, with revised rear suspension, looked good. The engine, they thought, was down on power and a fresh Nicholson was borrowed and installed from the Wheatcroft team. Nobody said much but there appeared to be a halo of confidence around the whole team. They knew their man could do it.

These four were really the only ones in contention as the other two had problems. Lola withdrew Wentz' experimental T360 as it was in severe handling difficulties in getting down to 1m 30.0s. May, in the Dave Price Racing standard Lola, only managed four laps in the car as the master switch was giving heaps of aggro. He was starting from the back but was confident enough to wager a five that he'd finish at least third.

The rest of the times were: Brett Riley (Chevron/1:28.4), John Nicholson (Modus/1:29.6), Val Musetti (March/1:29.8), Wentz, Peter Wardle (Surtees/1:31.0), Ray Mallock (March/1:32.4), Derek Cook (Chevron/1:32.8), Mike Franey (Chevron/1:33.0), Phil Sharp (Lyncar/1:34.2), Roy Baker (March/1:38.2), (Steve Prior (McLaren/1:38.8) and May (1:41.8).

RACE

Nobody said very much immediately prior to the start. Cold looks were exchanged through visors — there was no time to be friendly, this was going to be war. Morgan seemed surprisingly cool on pole. Nilsson, everyone's target, was under pressure — his eyes looked straight ahead into that all important first corner. He daren't look across at Henton on his left — he was thinking the same way. A quick glance by either would have destroyed the mental build up. Brise, his experience and intelligence showing, appeared to have it weighed up — after all he'd been in their position earlier this year.

After the final warm-up lap the 10 second board went up, the scream of the engines reached a nervous peak. Sid Offord unfurled the union jack, as always it went straight up and straight down. Nilsson and Henton must have studied it so carefully; they left the grid in unison, using the absolute limit of anticipation. Morgan made a good start but the other two were perfect. Side by side the Chevron and Wheatcroft went for Paddock. Over the slight rise, still together, Nilsson moving slightly to the inside, Henton staying on the faster outside line hoping to gain that extra couple of feet and chop inside. Both men turned into that corner as late as they could. It was Nilsson in front. Henton decided that discretion at this point was the best way. They rocketed up to Druids, Nilsson just in charge. The Chevron took a wider line; the Wheatcroft was tucked in tight and got a nose alongside as they came out of the corner. Nilsson booted it; Henton booted it. Tied together they went down the hill, the Swede with the advantage of the line, just.

That first time into Southbank Nilsson probably went through harder than he'd ever done. If he could be quicker onto the straight he'd be all right for that lap. He did it perfectly; so did Henton and Morgan *and* Brise. They were all there. Out of Hawthorns' still altogether then suddenly, Morgan and Brise slipped past Henton — he was in trouble. As they burst into sight at Clearways it was Nilsson by four lengths from Morgan with Brise and then Henton, the latter diving for the pits. Riley was there too, looking good. Nicholson was next on his own and then May, who was already up to sixth — he was going to take Henton's place at the front at this rate.

Morgan was determined that Nilsson wasn't going to pull away and chucked his Chevron at every possible angle to close that gap and Brise was looking for a way past as well. But he never found it. As Morgan succeeded in his aim, his car chucked up a rock that went through the Modus' nose and the radiator by lap three Brise was out.

In a way it was an anticlimax. But Morgan wasn't finished. He was the sole challenger now. On lap four the gap was 0.9s, then 0.4s, then 0.7s, then nothing — he was drawing alongside up the Top Straight. Gunnar protected the inside line into Paddock just in time — a few yards later and it might have been too late. The Swede's line through Paddock and Southbank was quicker — round the back he was slower. But he was dictating the pace now. The gap was 0.8s next time, then it was 0.6s, then 0.3s, then 0.7s, Morgan was still right there. Three laps to go, had Morgan got a move planned? Unfortunately we shall never know. He dropped it at Southbank in a vicious front-end-first spin. It was all over. Ted Moore stamped out his 13th cigarette of the race and stood still for all of ten seconds. Another one was sown up. Gunnar's lap times didn't vary, nor his line. He'd got a job to do and there were two more laps to go. He strolled it. It was another supreme drive. It wasn't until he got out of the car that his biggest handicap was discovered — the gear lever had broken halfway down on the second lap. That was some drive.

There were other noteworthy performances though. Henton, after his stop to fix a loose fuel union, probably drove harder and faster than at any time in his life. The Wheatcroft responded perfectly. That car was *right*, and Brian's mood was black. Lap after lap the fastest lap came down; Henton was destroying the standards of practice and ultimately Brise's amazing 1974 set on supersoft Firestone B47 tyres lap record by all of 0.3s. It was a great performance, but nothing would make up for his disappointment at not leading, or perhaps winning, that race.

Young Brett Riley put in another consistent drive and took a good second. He never looked like staying with the leaders but he was never in danger from the others, led by the race long duelling duo of John Nicolson and Val Musetti. May's initial challenge was spoilt by a spin at Druids and later another which damaged the nose and precipated retirement.

It was an anticlimax, but a bloody good one.

Astor Club Formula Atlantic Race
MCD Formula Atlantic Championship final round
Brands Hatch October 19. 15 laps, 39.75 miles

1. Gunnar Nilsson (Chevron-Swindon B29 BDA), 22m 6.0s, 107.92 mph.
2. Brett Riley (Chevron-Nicholson B29 BDA), 22 m 23.8s
3. John Nicholson (Modus-Nicholson M1 BDA), 22m 41.2s
4. Val Musetti (March-Wood 74B BDA), 22m 42.0s.
5. Ray Mallock (March-Swindon 75B), 22m 59.4s
6. Richard Morgan (Chevron-Swindon B29 BDA), 23m 5.0s
7. Mike Franey (Chevron-Grey B29), 23m 16.6s. 8. Derek Cook (Chevron-Cook B29 BDA) 23m 16.8s. 9. Brian Henton (Wheatcroft-Cook 001 BDA), 14 laps. 10. Steve Prior (McLaren-Nicholson M21A) 14.

Fastest lap: Henton, 1m 26.8s, 111.18 mph **(record)**.

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That Dolomite dice: Andy Rouse follows Brian Muir as he did for 19 laps. Here they begin to catch Vince Woodman's Camaro.

RAC BRITISH TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

The games people play

By BOB CONSTANDUROS

Who will be champion? was the question at the start of the RAC National Touring Car final round over 20 laps of Brands on Sunday, and the answer at the end of 20 fraught laps was Andy Rouse. It wasn't as fraught as last year, but both the contending Win Percy and Stuart Graham had their classes tied up during the 20 laps of racing. But not Rouse. For the entire 20 laps he had to look at the boot lid of Brian Muir's similar Dolomite Sprint. It would seem likely that if Bill Shaw wanted to talk to Leyland again, he'd instruct his man to let Ralph Broad's Andy Rouse driven car through, and sure enough, that's what happened. But no one reckoned for the appearance of a yellow flag at Clearways, cancelled out by a green flag a yard or so before the finish line. And no one wants to pass under a yellow and be disqualified. Rouse, with some help from Muir, got by but he did pass under the yellow. The stewards discussed the matter and deemed that as he was so close to the green flag, he should not be excluded but reprimanded. Anyway, we had a deserving champion who has been a frequent class winner, rarely beaten and it's heartening to see our major car manufacturer win this important championship even though it wasn't the best piece of organisation. It may be rough on Win Percy, who has done much to deserve the title in his first year of this type of racing, and to Stuart Graham whose effort is so much that of a privateer in a competitive class but then there can only be one champion.

ENTRY AND PRACTICE

"The ubiquitous generosity and enthusiasm of Southern Organs has been harnessed with the organisation of the RAC . . ." said the introductory programme remarks for the final G1 race of the season. With the missing men of Southern Organs, there was still some excitement left in the series, for Stuart Graham, Andy Rouse and Win Percy were all in with a chance at this final round, and it was quite a cliffhanger. If Andy Rouse didn't win his class, Percy was champion, and if neither of those two won their class, Graham was champion.

Practice took place on the Sunday morning in the slightly damp, dewy conditions which could make the track slippery on the new surface, but others found the new corners much quicker, with better camber, and, towards the end of practice, better grip. But the start of autumn meant that not everyone was happy with the weather which was to turn out fine. Stuart Graham had caught 'flu at the Motor Show and was feeling decidedly below par, and Brian Pepper was confined to his bed and didn't turn up at all. But the saga of his car is another story.

But despite his 'flu, and feeling awful, it was Graham who put the Brut sponsored 7.4 Camaro on pole position. Apart from feeling bad in himself, he felt the car was feeling a bit long in the tooth and despite being equal in the championship, had little enthusiasm for racing. His time of 1m 42.2s was 2.8s under his own lap record set earlier this year, but as with all the lap records, this was to be well beaten.

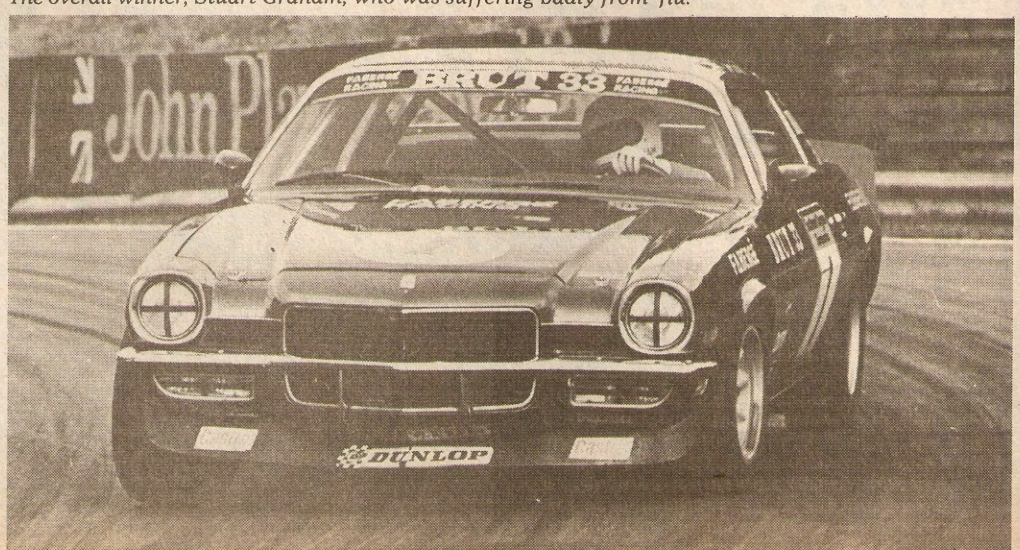
Beside him on the grid was that hard trier Vince Woodman with his 7.4 Camaro, who'd had three wins in a row up until this race. His 1m 43.2s was also under the lap record, but later the oil light came on alarmingly and Woodman had to have a rather worrying stip for oil. The car was also bottoming and the tyres rubbing the wheel arches, so a certain amount of ride height sorting was needed.

Completing the front row of the published grid, disputedly, was Brian Muir in Bill Shaw's Shellsport Dolomite Sprint. The position was disputed because Richard Lloyd set a quicker time in Pepper's car than in his own. However, we'll talk about that later when we reach Lloyd on the grid. Muir's 1m 46s could have been worrying to Leyland ST as Andy Rouse's similar class leading car was 0.6s slower. Muir was also quite happy with his time, while on the second row, Rouse's fellow Broadspeed men had had to cure a slipping overdrive.

Beside Rouse, and a further 0.8s down, was his Dolomite team-mate Roger Bell. Having set his time, *Motor's* editor found that the engine wouldn't pick up and the Opus ignition was changed.

Heading the third row, eventually, was Richard Lloyd in his normal Simoniz Chevrolet Camaro. Following the Tourist Trophy, Lloyd had a new engine built up and after this was run in during the historic car practice on the Saturday, the oil pump drive sheared early in practice on Sunday so his car was a doubtful starter, which is why he tried Pepper's General Relays 5.7 Camaro. In this he set a 1m 44.8s as opposed to a 1m 47.6s in his normal car, but he kept his options open to race either car, even though it caused internal

The overall winner, Stuart Graham, who was suffering badly from 'flu.



Rouse leads 2501cc to 4000cc class contenders John Hine and John Handley (Opel Commodore) and extreme right, Roger Bell.

problems. Pepper's car is a "Graham" car and his own is run by Rob Potter, of Think Automotive. But the published grid put Lloyd on the third row, and that's where he ended up — but read on.

In the middle of the third row was the first of the 2501cc to 4000cc cars, the Opel Commodore of John Handley, this the AC Delco/DOT version. Handley was only troubled with a cracked exhaust and ended up with a time of 1m 47.6s, 2.2s quicker than Tom Walkinshaw's class lap record, set in the Capri last year. Completing this row was Allan Wilkinson's Allens of Romford RS2000, now up for sale. Possibly cracked plugs caused a misfire, but Wilkinson was still on 1m 47.8s.

John Hine, in Jeremy Nightingale's Adlards 3.0 Capri GT, was the second 2500cc to 4000cc car, and the first on the fourth row. The Capri needed a new rear wheel bearing but set a 1m 48s. Sharing this row was the South African car seat manufacturer, Bob Ridgard, in his 5.7 Chevrolet Camaro. Ridgard was still having problems with the power steering but has happier now that he had at least had it fitted.

Row five held Roger Payne and John Olding (5.7 Chevrolet Camaros) and Bob Saunders (2.0 Triumph Dolomite Sprint). Payne had problems losing a wheel attached to the driveshaft, while the other two were relatively problem free.

The first of the up to 1600cc cars headed row six, this the Samuri Toyota Celica GT of Win Percy, a championship contender of course. Samuri have been largely untroubled throughout the year with the Celica and this occasion was no exception, Percy setting a time 2.9s inside Stan Clark's lap record set last year. He was sharing the row with Stuart Rolt's 3.0 Ford Capri GT, another to run problem free.

But on the seventh row were Shaun Jackson (Hammonds Sauce Opel Commodore), Alan Foster driving his own London Sports Car Centre Ford RS2000, normally driven by Tom Walkinshaw, and Martin Thomas in his Dolomite Sprint. Jackson had oil on the clutch after a breather pipe came off so his practice was limited, as was Foster's as the transporter broke down frequently on the way to Brands and Tivvy Shenton, who prepares the car, arrived late. Thomas was running in a new Broadspeed engine and taking things easy.

Brian Cutting headed the next row, the second of a Toyota 1-2, again without problems, and Stan Clark was a second slower on 1m 54.6s with the *Penthouse* Alfa Romeo 1600GT. A further row back was Peter Slade, the production car club racer in Barrie Williams' normal Mazda RX3, with David Vizard's Chrysler Avenger GT and Maggie Anderson in the Elf Racing Renault 17TS. Vizard had a battery which wouldn't charge, while the former balloonist was quite happy with her Renault. Stuart Patterson has bought the Marshall Wingfield Opel Commodore normally pedalled by Peter Hanson and was having his first outing from row ten with Patrick Cobb alongside, who ultimately non-started. Jody Carr was the last man on the grid in his Wisharts Ford Capri 3000GT, although he had the throttle cable jamming, and the other Wisharts Capri II for Bill Gubelmann had a whirl in the hands of Barrie Williams who promptly blew it up. But Barrie was then nominated to drive the Pepper Camaro, even though he didn't practice it.

When the cars came to the grid, Richard Lloyd was in Pepper's Camaro, and Williams was now in the Simoniz 7.4 Camaro, even though he hadn't practised it and didn't even do a warm up lap in it. He drove from the pit road to the back of the grid and that's all. Meanwhile, Lloyd was looking for his front row position which was occupied by Muir, this being the way the grid sheet had been issued at noon. He'd had lots of time to decide which car to drive, and so he was obliged, in the end, to take up his third row position, and that's where he started from.

RACE

In fact it seemed to be Muir who got the best start over the Camaros at the start. But as usual Graham slipped by on the inside line through Paddock followed by Woodman and Muir was in his rightful position behind them. Then came Lloyd, who powered through from the third row passed both ST Dolomites, then Rouse, Hine and Handley. Lloyd pulled by Muir on the straight to Westfield, so that there it was Woodman right with Graham, then Lloyd, Muir, Rouse and Hine.

By lap two the groups had begun to formulate. Graham already had a tidy lead on Woodman, then a gap to Lloyd who'd pulled away from the Muir/Rouse battle. Behind them came another group comprising Hine's Capri leading Handley's Opel and Bell's Dolomite Sprint. There was a gap then to Wilkinson, soon to be overhauled by Ridgard. Down in the small class, Percy was already ahead, dicing with Thomas' Sprint while further back Cutting was just leading Vizard and Clark in a splendid little dice.

At the front, as Graham slowly drew away, so Lloyd caught Woodman. Woodman, in fact, was suffering handling problems — not surprising as the shock absorber had completely ripped out before he even got the line, probably over the bumps in the paddock. Anyway, by lap eight, Lloyd was by and in a secure second. Woodman kept up third, but behind him, the battle royal of Dolomites was being raged. Rouse would catch up, try and pass, no dice, fall back again, try again, another demon manoeuvre thwarted by the wily Muir and so it continued. Behind them Handley was now in charge of the 2501 cc to 4000 cc class, slowly but surely drawing away from Hine who still had Roger Bell trying all he knew to get past. Williams, from the back of the grid, and the car that he'd never driven before smoking quietly, was now next up for Ridgard had pitted with the exhaust hanging off and Wilkinson was quietly belting round without too much drama.

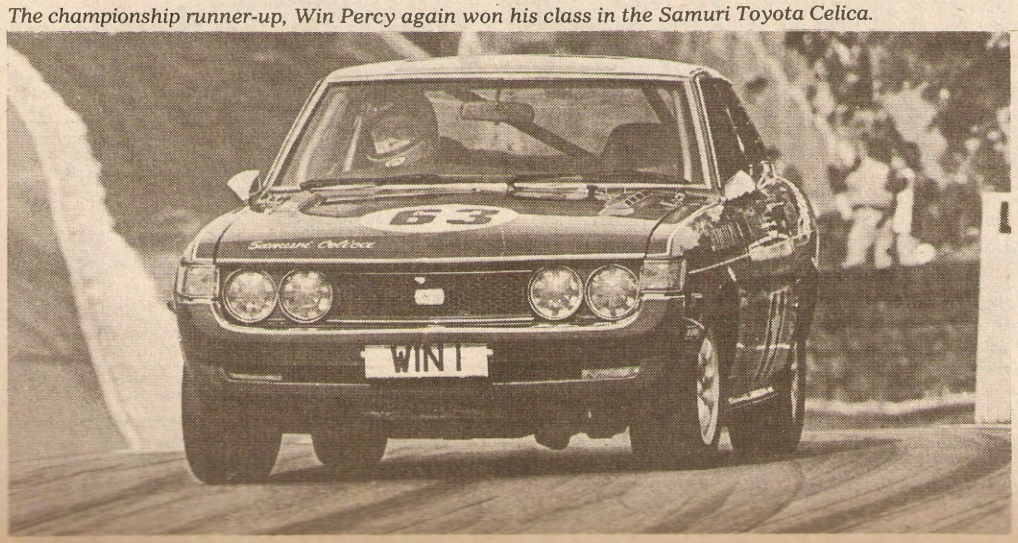
This was roughly the way it finished. Graham came home an easy winner, exhausted and nearly silent from having lost his voice but happy that it was all over and he'd finished. Lloyd cruised home, next, quite easily in front of the brave Woodman whose Camaro, apart from having the shock absorber off picked up a slow puncture towards the end which allowed the Dolomites to catch up, but not quite pass.

And then there were, of course the Dolomites. Rouse never let up his struggle, kept trying to find some way round, until that final lap. Bob Ridgard had gone into the bank when his Camaro understeered off at Clearways, and although Ridgard was unhurt, the car was being tended to when the Dolomite battle appeared. Both eased up, both held position but with the crowd on its feet, Rouse floored his car at the finish, pipping the not so quick Muir. Was it on purpose, was it under the yellow flag? Well we had a deserving champion anyway because, despite a near protest from Toyota, it was adjudged that Rouse would not be excluded for passing under the yellow flag although he was reprimanded. He'd won his class, he'd won the championship, and Brian Muir just thought it was a bit of a laugh in his own pleasant sort of way.

Williams, in all the excitement, was next up, a superb drive from the back of the grid to sixth position and using 500 less revs than he was allowed. He took both Handley and Hine, class leaders, five laps from the end, but Bell didn't last longer than half distance when, after finding the gear stick waving around in his hand a few times, the engine blew and that was that. The rest, led by Roger Payne's Camaro, were all lapped.

The man most affected by the decision about the yellow flag was Win Percy, who once again won his class and would be champion if the judgement went against Rouse. A Toyota one-two was foiled by Vizard towards the end. He blew up while leading Clark and Cutting and the latter got oil on the screen. A few laps later, coming up to Druids, Cutting missed his braking point and went off at Druids, lightly denting the car, and also causing a slow puncture, so Stan Clark easily got second in class. Cutting limped home and gave Samuri and Toyota only a class win to celebrate. The yellow flag incident left a sour taste in some mouths. After all, rules is rules, although the BARC maintain that a not too dangerous manoeuvre does not warrant exclusion.

The championship runner-up, Win Percy again won his class in the Samuri Toyota Celica.



RAC British Touring Car Championship, final round
Brands Hatch, 20 laps.

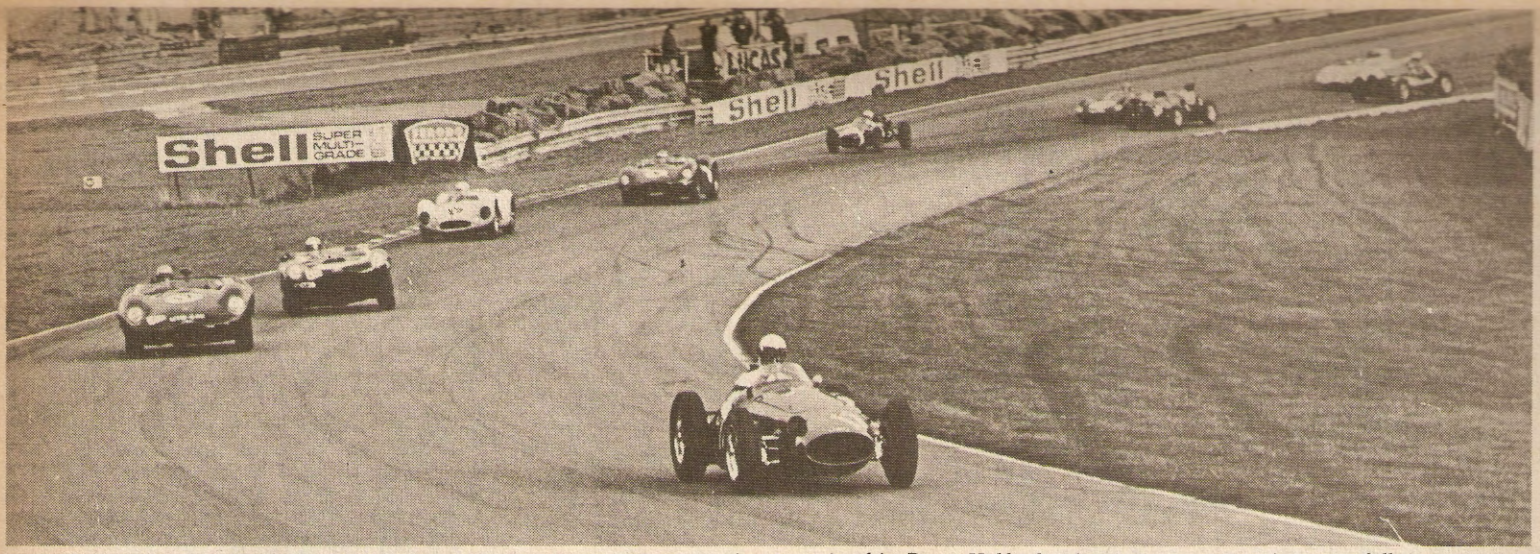
1, Stuart Graham (7.4 Chevrolet Camaro Z28), 34m 56.8s, 91 mph; 2, Richard Lloyd (5.7 Chevrolet Camaro Z28), 35m 19s; 3, Vince Woodman (7.4 Chevrolet Camaro Z28), 35m 45s; 4, Andy Rouse (2.0 Triumph Dolomite Sprint), 35m 47s; 5, Brian Muir (2.0 Triumph Dolomite Sprint), 35m 47.4s; 6, Barrie Williams (7.4 Chevrolet Camaro Z28), 35m 57s; 7, John Handley (3.0 Opel Commodore GSE), 36m 3.8s; 8, John Hine (3.0 Ford Capri GT), 36m 11.8s; 9, Roger Payne (5.7 Chevrolet Camaro Z28), 19 laps; 10, Allan Wilkinson (2.0 Ford Escort RS2000), 19 laps.

Over 4000cc: 1, Graham, 91 mph; 2, Lloyd; 3, Woodman; 4, Williams; 5, Payne; no other finishers. **Fastest lap:** Graham, 1m 41.8s, 93.71 mph **(Record).**

2501cc to 4000cc: 1, Handley, 88.18 mph; 2, Hine; 3, Stuart Rolt (3.0 Ford Capri GT); 4, Shaun Jackson (3.0 Opel Commodore GSE); 5, Stuart Patterson (3.0 Opel Commodore GSE); no other finishers. **Fastest lap:** Handley, 1m 47s, 89.15 mph **(Record).**

1601 cc to 2500cc: 1, Rouse, 88.87 mph; 2, Muir; 3, Wilkinson; 4, Alan Foster (2.0 Ford Escort RS2000); 5, Martin Thomas (2.0 Triumph Dolomite Sprint); no other finishers. **Fastest lap:** Rouse, 1m 46s, 90 mph **(Record).**

Up to 1600cc: 1, Win Percy (1.6 Toyota Celica GT), 84.88 mph; 2, Stan Clark (1.6 Alfa Romeo Junior GT); 3, Brian Cutting (1.6 Toyota Celica GT); 4, Maggie Anderson (1.6 Renault 17TS); no other finishers. **Fastest lap:** Percy, 1m 50.8s, 86.10 mph **(Record).**



Willie Green takes his JCB sponsored Maserati 250F to the overall win in the championship. Bruce Halford, John Harper and Frank Sytner follow.

SUPPORTING RACES

Green goes for JCB

Willie Green, as rather expected, took the final JCB Hostoric car championship in JCB's own Maserati 250F in the first of the two supporting races of the day. But this time even the Jersey domiciled Green couldn't find anyone to play with in the race and it was rather a walkaway victory. But the real tussle was down in the up to 2000cc class, where Simon Phillips was waiting for Green to retire, which would give him the championship if Green didn't finish. Phillips' Cooper Bristol was consistently challenged by Ted Rollason's very pretty Lola Mk 1, who once got past him, but had to give best in the end to Phillips, who was thus placed second in the series, despite having the same number of points as Green. The second supporting race was a 15 lapper for the APG FF2000 championship, and once again it was Tiff Needell who ran away and hid from his pursuers. Derek Lawrence was his closest challenger, but the APG champion couldn't come close enough to Needell, and it can't really be called a challenge.

The Historic cars practised late on Saturday afternoon and were awarded a generous 45 minutes which most of them felt was too long. Many of the cars had returned to the paddock before the session had finished, not wanting to wear them out, and at the end, there were only about four cars on the track. Perhaps most amusing in the session were the hand signals to their pits from drivers. There were people pointing at the sky, giving V signs to pit crews and marshals and all sorts of strange digital signals. But most amusing of all was the gentleman who was going sufficiently slowly to actually speak to his crew as he drove by.

But to the serious stuff. Willie Green was easily quickest of the cars in practice, and sat on pole position with a 1m 45.2s which while being quicker than everyone else, was some way off Neil Corner's lap record of last year in the BRM. Tony Walker was beside Green on 1m 48.4s, finally making an appearance in a very pretty long tailed Birdcage Maserati entered by Speed Promotions Ltd, and sharing his time to complete the front row was Bruce Halford in Barry Simpson's 3.8 Lister Jaguar.

On the second row were Frank Sytner in JCB's Birdcage Maserati and John Harper in another 3.8 Lister Jaguar, promising a close race by being 0.2s apart. David Ham and John Beasley brought along two more Listers, the former a Jaguar engined example and the latter his Corvette beast, while completing that third row was Ted Rollason in his Lola Mk I who in fact set the same time as Simon Phillips' Cooper Bristol, although the Cooper was another row back. Chris Stewart and Kirk Rylands were surprisingly far back in their HWMs, but Peter van Rossem was even further back on the third to last row in his Lister Jaguar after practice problems.

Unfortunately, when the cars came to the grid, Walker's universal joint broke on the Maserati on the warming up lap, and immediately the grid was one less. And Willie Green wasn't his usual exuberant self for there was only the vaguest trail of smoke from his tyres at the start, which allowed Halford to lead briefly before Willie took over at Paddock and that was the story of that part of the race. Green led throughout Halford was second throughout, even though Green slowed at one time hoping that Halford might come along and play, but he didn't and JCB's driver won the race and championship. The car was visibly faster than any other on the track, so Halford followed him home faithfully, then John Harper's Lister was third throughout, followed by Martin Morris' pleasant Jaguar D-type once he's disposed of Frank Sytner on the first lap. Sytner lasted another three before pulling off with an oil leak, but certainly wasn't his usual self.

Seventh and eighth was the tussle between Phillips and Rollason, with Rollason coming up after a leisurely start to challenge Phillips for five laps before getting by on the sixth. But that was his moment of glory for Phillips was back in front again on the next lap, and that's the way they stayed, despite a superb last lap effort which eventually lost Rollason time. Peter van Rossem came up the field well in his Lister and got involved in a dice for the next place with Frank Lockhart's Rover Special, Arthur Curnow's Cooper T41, and Tony Goodwin and Bill Friend in their Lotus XIs, but then van Rossem spun. But the whole lot were taken by Beasley who had a tigerish drive up through the field to eighth position having been well down at the start.

The Formula Ford 2000 drivers weren't too pleased with the BARC. They were asked to practice at 9.30 am on Saturday, and didn't race until 4.30 pm on Sunday, which meant a long wait for nothing. As befits a new champion, Derek Lawrence was on pole position for the 15 lap event, perfectly happy with his Crossle which, he says, "is the most troublefree car I've ever driven." It was virtually untouched since he became champion at Silverstone, and he was one of ten drivers to better the lap record of 1m 39.4s set at the beginning of the year. Lawrence's 1m 34.8s was just 0.2s faster than the man of the moment in FF2000, Tiff Needell in Bob McKinstry's Hawke. Needell was running out of revs a bit so got some new ratios for raceday. Completing the front row was Bernard Vermilio in his Merlyn, a little unhappy on 1m 35.8s but going well even though there were a number of little things that he wasn't happy about.

Ian Taylor was another not too happy, despite being on the second row in the Ken Hensley Dulon. It was the old problem of understeer but he set a 1m 36.2s, joined by Jeremy Rossiter in the Spax Reynard who had handling problems too but set a 1m 36.8s. Barry Maskell (Van Diemen), Frank Bradley (Elden), and Adrian Reynard (Reynard) were on the next row, Maskell happy with his first new engine of the season and Reynard having handling problems which he reckoned to have cured. Syd Fox and Richard Lloyd were another row back, Fox having the swirl pot break and Lloyd losing top gear, and they completed the ten inside the lap record.

Vermilio seemed to get the better start when the flag dropped for the last race of the day, but out of Paddock it was Needell, then Vermilio, and Lawrence. At Westfield, Lawrence nipped inside Vermilio and was followed through by Reynard, so that at the end of lap one, Needell already had a small lead over Lawrence and then Reynard, Vermilio, Maskell and Rossiter, all in a bunch. While Needell and Lawrence pulled away from the rest Reynard kept up his lead on the bunch while his teamate dropped off the back of them and was replaced by Frank Bradley. Vermilio repeatedly challenged Reynard, and after five laps got by so that Reynard then had Maskell to deal with who in turn had Bradley and Rissiter on his heels. Fox and Lloyd followed this lot and Ian Taylor, whose engine wouldn't start on the grid, was next having climbed up through the rest.

Then Maskell pulled out of the dice for third with his throttle jamming so that the dice comprised Reynard, Bradley and Rossiter and at the same time, Taylor departed the scene with the car bottoming. By half distance, Bradley got by too and immediately opened a small gap to Rossiter who also got by the constructor. Up front, there were no dramas; Needell easily led home to the flag with Lawrence consistently a couple of seconds behind in the Crossle with Vermilio another 1.2s behind, but none in a challenging position. Bradley had fourth sewn up but was being challenged by Rossiter which sent him into a spin at Clearways so he dropped back and let Reynard pass Rossiter. The team mates carried on like this until the finish, with Reynard pulling out just a little until the last lap — and he spun at Pilgrims, just his the bank but continued, finishing behind both Fox and Bradley in seventh.

Final drama took place in the scrutineering bay where Rossiter's car was found to be underweight and was duly excluded so everyone moved up a place.

BOB CONSTANDUROS

JCB/Speed Merchants Historic Car championship final round, over 3000cc, 2001 cc to 3000cc and up to 2000cc (10 laps): 1, Willie Green (2.5 Maserati 250F), 18m 9.6s, 87.56 mph; 2, Bruce Halford (3.8 Lister-Jaguar), 18m 18.6s; 3, John Harper (3.8 Lister-Jaguar), 18m 20.4s; 4, David Ham (3.8 Lister-Jaguar), 18m 37s. **Over 3000cc:** 1, Halford, 86.54 mph; 2, Harper; 3, Ham. **Fastest lap:** Harper and Halford, 1m 49s, 87.52 mph. **2001 cc to 3000cc:** 1, Green, 87.56 mph; 2, Frank Lockhart (3.0 Rover Special); no other finishers. **Fastest lap:** Green, 1m 45.6s, 90.34 mph. **Up to 2000cc:** 1, Simon Phillips (2.0 Cooper Bristol Mk2), 84.10 mph; 2, Ted Rollason (1.2 Lola Mk1); 3, Arthur Curnow (1.5 Cooper-Climax T41). **Fastest lap:** Tony Goodwin (1.1 Lotus XI Le Mans), Phillips and Rollason, 1m 47.2s, 85.79 mph.

Allied Polymer Formula Ford 2000 championship round (15 laps): 1, Tiff Needell (Hawke-Holbay DL14), 23m 54.8s, 99.74 mph; 2, Derek Lawrence (Crossle-Titan 31F), 23m 56.8s; 3, Bernard Vermilio (Merlyn-Scholar Mk28), 23m 58s; 4, Syd Fod (Palliser-Rowland P742), 24m 17.4s; 5, Frank Bradley (Elden-Neil Brown Mk 18), 24m 22s; 6, Adrian Reynard (Reynard-Oselli 75S), 24m 28.2s. **Fastest lap:** Lawrence, Vermilio, 1m 34, 101.48 mph **.Record).**

CENTRE SPREAD CAPTION

This week's colour centre spread shows Britain's most spectacular saloon car driver Gerry Marshall in typical pose in the Sanyo Hamilton Motors/LBC 261 Vauxhall Magnum Coupe. Although it is classed against much more powerful opposition Marshall's enthusiastic driving has resulted in considerable success with the car this year in both the national production Saloon Car championships.
Photo: David Winter

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DTV rally crew – Gerry Marshall/John Davenport grappled with severe brake problems to finish the '74 Manx 19th overall, and 3rd in class.

INTERVIEW

Gerry Marshall—on the loose...

Racing personality Gerry Marshall's penchant for rallying is no secret. IAN SADLER recently uncovered some of his thoughts on the subject.

When did you first decide to tackle a rally?
The first event I entered properly was in 1973 — the Gearbox Rally in Derby. I did it with my own group one DTV race car which Chris Coburn had prepared for rallying. Rodney Spokes navigated for me and we were doing quite well, treating it as a run-down for the Avon/*Motor* Tour of Britain; then we tried our notes. It was a wet and nasty night, there was a misunderstanding between Rodney and myself and we finished up with the car very severely mauled on the top of a bank. A fast left had turned out to be a fast right, and I was probably trying too hard anyway.

It has possibly had quite an effect on my rallying ever since. Everybody always reminds me of that accident, and it's a bad thing to remind a driver about, because you either intimidate him into not trying at all or into proving that it was a mistake – just one of those things. It must have had quite an effect on my rallying subsequently . . . bearing in mind that since then, and that includes this year's Manx, I haven't had an accident. I wasn't competing on the Manx with the camera car . . .

"It staggers me that rally cars survive anything at all. The average man in the street would never appreciate just how hard rallying is on a car."

Yes, I suppose technically that doesn't count.

I like to think it doesn't — but Chris Coburn and Blydenstein et al don't agree at all! Anyway to go back, I didn't do the Tour that year after all, as it clashed with a Vauxhall promotion at Oulton Park.

So you did nothing more until the '74 Tour of Britain?
Nothing at all, apart from half a day down at Bagshot with Ford — probably five laps — which I must say was fascinating for me. Apart from being the world's worst passenger, two or three laps with Roger Clark was quite an illuminating experience . . .

What were your first impressions?

I thought how time wasting rally drivers were, I must admit, but I realised that at Bagshot — which rally drivers tell me isn't a very good judge of these things anyway — the way to do it was just the way Roger was driving it and after two or three laps on the circuit myself, I was driving in a similar manner. I was also surprised just how hard rally drivers are on a car, particularly as rally cars tend to break on events. I was amazed how fierce drivers are — not Roger Clark in particular — on clutches, gearboxes and so on. I've subsequently been with one or two other rally drivers and it still amazes me.

Their driving seems too violent?

Yes, it staggers me that cars survive anything at all. The average man in the street would never appreciate just how hard rallying is on a car. The other first impression was of the noise, but you soon get used to that.

Soon after the Tour you tackled the Manx . .

The Tour of Britain gave me second overall and second in class with theRS2000 — then Vauxhall thought it would be a good idea, a change of heart for them, if I were to do the Manx; it being a tarmac event. I thought it was a great idea. I was under quite considerable pressure on that event

Gerry climbs into his DTV "camera car" on this year's Manx – shortly before the spectacular second-stage roll.

for I was going as a man who had come second to Roger on the Tour and everybody was expecting great things . . . and half hoping that I would have an enormous shunt. Also, I had John Davenport with me who, let's face it, is a no-nonsense man and one has to be careful what one does with a journalist cum ace-navigator in the passenger's seat.

Do you reckon he exerted some extra control over you?

I don't know whether I like to think that or not. We got on very well, John being an old drinking mate of mine anyway, and finished third in class and 19th overall. We suffered brake troubles all the way and if we hadn't I think we could have been in the first ten. The car I drove was the one Will Sparrow drove on the Tour and it unfortunately had a history of brake troubles. I found the experience thoroughly enjoyable but a racing driver like myself would probably have gone a lot quicker with more power than group one. I tended to go too neatly round corners possibly. It was a

fascinating time. I think the majority of rally people are much more friendly and socially minded — though there are some very friendly people in racing — but are probably less professional in their approach. Some people will turn out with a rally car not nearly as well prepared as the equivalent racing man.

A thing that always amazes me is the degree of risk that a rally driver will take with the vehicle. For instance, I have been out with certain rally orientated drivers on the road who would think nothing of driving up kerbs and things; whereas I'm sure that if I did that, and any other racing driver would agree, we would want to have a look at the tyres and the tracking. Maybe we're too soft or they are too sloppy on preparation — I don't know.

What would be your reaction if somebody said go and drive the RAC Rally?

I'd like to do the RAC because it's an event — don't laugh — I think I could do fairly well in. I find I'm able to drive competitively over long periods, even though I do get bored on the road. I can drive a long distance race and, I think, still be as quick at the end as at the beginning. In '74, on the Avon Tour for instance, I did f.t.d. on the last stage at Loton Park when I had got the hang of the thing a little better by then. I wish that event had gone on a lot longer because racing drivers tend to preserve the car better, and my car was absolutely perfect at the finish. I could have gone out and tackled the event again without any trouble. Maybe I should have driven harder at the beginning — then again maybe I'd have had the big off everyone wanted.

"I could have gone out and tackled the event again without any trouble. Maybe I should have driven harder at the beginning — then again maybe I'd have had the big off everyone wanted."

Why would people wish that . . . because you are a racing driver dabbling in rallying?

No, I don't think it's that at all. Part of my style is that I'm a bit too flash by half and people would like to see me make a big mistake. The accident I had on the Gearbox Rally was a very salutary experience for me. It was the first time I had ever been injured on a competitive event. I found it quite frightening to be honest. I was knocked unconscious and for the first few hours afterwards I was thoroughly concussed and I said and did some very silly things which I don't remember. For someone who had never suffered an injury of any sort in motor sport — and that includes all sorts of rolls, wheels falling off, flames and heaven knows what — to tackle a little rally and hurt one's self certainly brings you back to reality. A few feet either way from where we crashed over the wall was a pond. One could quite easily have been drowned and not even known about it . . .

Eppynt has quite a history of accidents, what do you feel about those roads?

Going over Eppynt you could fall off the edge and not be found for a couple of days — but Eppynt has an enormous aura surrounding it, particularly to a racing driver like myself. On the Avon Tour they kept saying "just wait until you get to Eppynt," and it grew to great magnitude in our minds. It was out of all proportion. But, in fact, when it was all over I think we were about third fastest overall — mainly thanks to my excellent co-driver. Paul White. I thought "I'm glad that's over with" but it was nowhere near as bad as I'd feared. Tony Lanfranchi and I discussed it afterwards and we both came to the conclusion that we could do it once more quite quickly and on the third go, end-up having the biggest accident anybody has ever had. . .

Have you any more rallying on the cards for next year?

My commitment to DTV next year probably won't leave me much time and I suppose they have a certain investment in me, if you can call it that, and I don't think they really want me to sully the image or risk the bones in proper rallying — but personally I would like to do some loose stage events. Despite being a "racing" man, I think I could do better on the loose than rallying on tarmac. After all, driving on the loose is very akin to driving in the wet, which I tend to like, and it might suit my style. As I keep telling all these rally people — when I get old and uncompetitive in racing — then I'll go rallying!

On this year's Access TT – not quite abiding by the no kerbs rule . . .

Being conversant with both, how do you think the top drivers in both the racing and rally spheres compare — is the dedication and level of skill about even?

I suppose one could say this, but there is no man head and shoulders quicker in British racing; nobody you could put into a car and guarantee that he would win, whereas Roger Clark, without doubt, could beat everybody else in every respect at the moment.

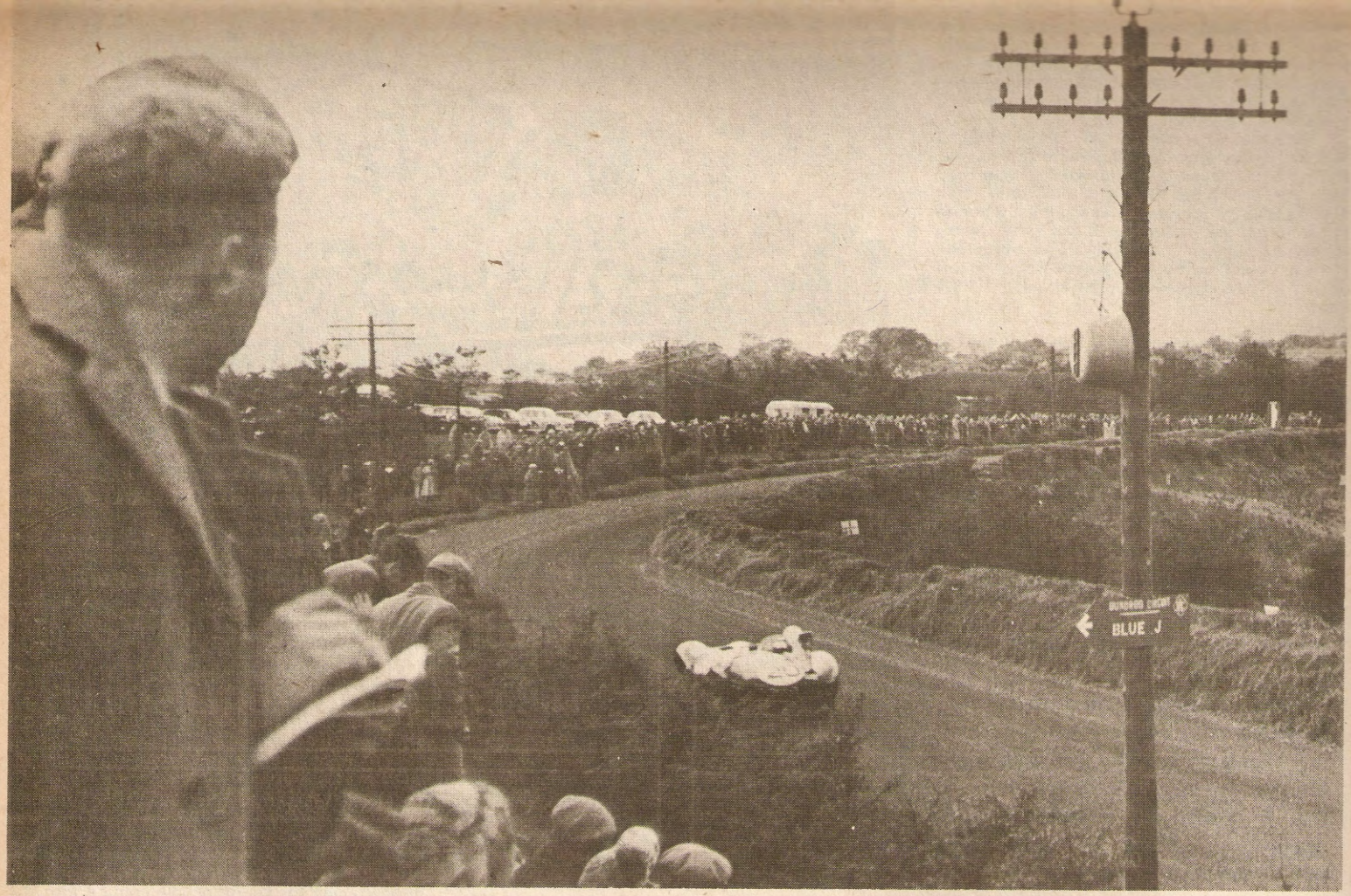
Why do you think he dominates to such an extent?

He has an incredible natural flair and he works at the job. By that I don't mean that he does press-ups, but when he sits behind the steering wheel of a car his is one-hundred-percent involved with the job in hand.

By all means play the fool, but only until you get behind the wheel, then you must be totally dedicated and switched-on. I think many other drivers are trying to be switched-on so much — all the time—that when they come to the event they can have blunted their concentration. Roger only works for the amount of hours he drives on stages which probably means he is fresher than anybody else. I remember the famous RAC Rally when Roger suffering from 'flu, didn't drive a single road-mile. Tony Mason drove every road and Roger came up magnificently even with a very bad case of influenza.

I'm no founder-member of the Roger Clark fan club, but he's a good mate — and I think it would be good for the sport if somebody could come up and give him a good thrashing. It must be very disheartening for young people coming into the sport now — doing their press-ups, going to bed early etcetera — when dear old Roger, who must be a couple of years over twenty-one I suppose, takes his sherbert, and can go out and do what he does . . .

Well and truly airborne over Eppynt. Gerry finished just 18s behind Clark's similar car.



Typical Dundrod scene (from '54 race) with the Walker/Moss 2.4 'D' Type in the Quarry Bends.

1955 ULSTER TT

Mercedes-Benz 1-2-3 triumph

Story and photographs by BRIAN FOLEY

A small group of people leaned against the rusty iron bars of a farm gate, huddling close together for shelter, with the tepid heat of their bodies providing little comfort in the wintery chill of a dull September afternoon. One body crouched low, back to the wind, endeavouring to light a cigarette, and finally a triumphant puff of smoke was the silent message to his companions that many matches later, he had finally won his personal battle with the elements. The conversation was not, as one might expect, about the recent harvest, the livestock or such like agricultural topics, and indeed there was little chat at all, only a slow pulsating beat of excited expectancy. Then from afar, faintly heard at first, the note of a racing engine in full song was delicately wafted across the rural setting by the wind, perhaps acting by way of compensation for its less pleasant chilly blows. As the noise increased in volume, the note of not one but two, perhaps more, racing engines could clearly be defined. But hark, this was a new sound, a distinctive high-pitched yowl not unlike the whine of supercharged engines, but somehow different to the roar of forced induction motors. This glorious music heralded the sudden revelation of three sleek, silver cars, that literally burst on the scene in formation flight almost, drifting out wide towards the gate on the outside of the fast right-hander, to within arms' reach of the awed onlookers, and disappearing just as rapidly into the distance; leaving a concentrated whirlwind in their wake that furiously whipped up the tall grass at the road verges in a demonic pattern, and stirred the minds of the beholders to a zenith of frenzied excitement, instantly transforming cold bodies to a tingle of hot heat.

The place was Dundrod, high in the Co. Antrim hills to the west of Belfast, and, as one of the onlookers at a place on the seven miles 732 yards circuit known as Jordan's Cross, during the Friday afternoon for the 22nd RAC International Tourist Trophy, the memory of my first fleeting sight of the three works Mercedes is still treasured 20 years later. And that spine-tingling music that dominated that magic moment was directly attributable to the unique desmodromic valve gear which gave such a glorious exhaust note to the fuel injected, straight eight, motors of the famous "Silver Arrows."

Although officially named the RAC Tourist Trophy, the race in those days was more popularly known simply as the "Ulster TT." The 1955 race marked the Golden Jubilee of the TT, first held in the Isle of Man in 1905. The entries were the best on record, both in quality and quantity, but regrettably this was the last ever TT to be held on a genuine road circuit and the last road race to be held in Northern Ireland.

The first-ever TT was a joint promotion by the Automobile Club of Great Britain and Ireland, a race for touring cars, which accounts for the name Tourist Trophy. Nearly every manufacturer of note in 1905 entered cars for the TT, and makes represented included Rolls-Royce, Rover and Napier; but an Arrol-Johnston driven by J. S. Napier won the laurels, at a speed of 33.90 mph over 205 miles. The last TT held in the Isle of Man was in 1922, won by Chassagne in a Sunbeam, but it was not an unbroken series, for there was no race in the years 1909 to 1913, simply through lack of support, and from 1915 to 1921 due to World War 1. In 1928 the TT was revived and held in Ulster, for the first time, over a 13.4 miles road circuit, taking in the towns of Newtownards, Comber and Dundonald. Those Ards TT's were truly a Golden Era in motor racing history, and the list of winners includes such immortals as Rudi Caracciola, Tazio Nuvolari and Freddie Dixon, the latter pair winning twice. Unfortunately tragedy struck in the 1936 race, when a Riley left the road at Newtownards and several spectators were killed.

Donington Park was the scene of the TT in 1937 and 1938, and after World War Two it was back to Ulster again, this time to the very demanding road circuit at Dundrod, where the young Stirling Moss raced to a windswept victory in a Jaguar XK120, in 1950. Moss and Jaguar were victorious again the following year, with "Mossie" at the wheel of a C-Type. There was no race in 1952, lack of support forcing its cancellation, as it had in its early pre-World War One years.

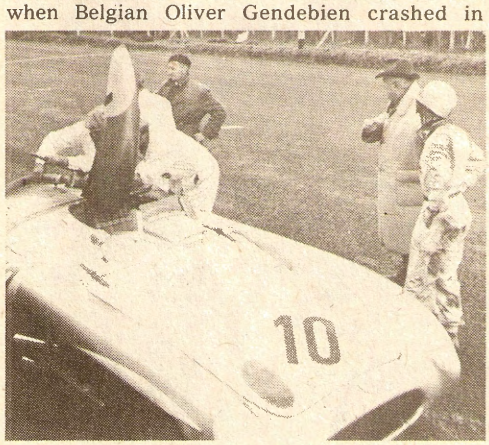
The 1953 race, of nine hours' duration and with two drivers nominated per car, was poorly supported with only 20 starters, and the race was delayed due to heavy fog. In atrocious conditions Peter Collins and Pat Griffith were the winners in an Aston Martin DB3. But the future of the TT at Dundrod was far from happy. The race had failed to attract the big Continental marques of Ferrari and Maserati, and a new road surface had played havoc with tyres, with the faster cars requiring up to six sets of tyres during the '53 race.

The Ulster Automobile Club, who had been entrusted with running the TT on behalf of the RAC, had performed the impossible miracle of getting the powers that be to lay a new and less abrasive road surface, and better starting money was offered to the Continental teams. But the Tourist Trophy of 1954 might never have lured all the big teams to Dundrod but for the cancellation of the Nurburgring 1000km. World Sports Car

Alfred Neubauer, Mercedes team manager, acknowledges victory.

Championship race to have been held only a fortnight previous to the Ulster classic. Suddenly everyone was interested, the quest for championship points proving a greater magnet than all the monies offered. Lancia entered four of the V6 cars, the driver line-up including Juan Manuel Fangio and Alberto Ascari; Scuderia Ferrari had two of the three-litre Monzas for Mike Hawthorn, Froilan Gonzales, Maurice Trintignant and Umberto Maglioli; and there were works cars from Jaguar, Aston Martin, HWM, Maserati, Porsche, OSCA, Cooper, Lotus, Frazer-Nash, Connaught, Kieft, and DB-Panhard. Gonzales crashed one of the Ferraris in practice and Hawthorn was paired with Trintignant, this pair finishing second behind the little 750 cc DB-Panhard of Laureau and Armagnac, while the Lancias proved disappointing, with the Fangio/Taruffi car finishing fourth after the two-litre Maserati of Musso/Mantovani, followed by the Wharton/Whitehead Jaguar D-Type. The diminutive French car had averaged 68.75 mph to win the TT with a handicap of 27 bonus laps, easily exceeding the target speed of 64.49 mph. The Hawthorn/Trintignant Ferrari had only six bonus laps, but thanks to the brilliance of Hawthorn it was the fastest car on the circuit, averaging 86.08 mph to beat the target of 84.70 mph. It was all rather complicated and generally unsatisfactory, especially for the Italians, who believe that the race should always go to the fastest.

So for 1955 the TT came in for a big change in that for the first time the handicap system was dropped, and the entry list for this scratch race reflected the wisdom of the UAC's bold break with tradition, reading like a motor racing "who's who" of the mid-fifties. At number one was a lone works Jaguar D-Type for Mike Hawthorn and Ulsterman Des Titterington, and Johnny Broadhead entered another D-Type for Bob Berry/Ninian Sanderson. The Whitehead Brothers, Peter and Graham, were paired in a Cooper-Jaguar. Ferrari's trio of three-litre Monza "fours" was reduced to two when Belgian Oliver Gendebien crashed in

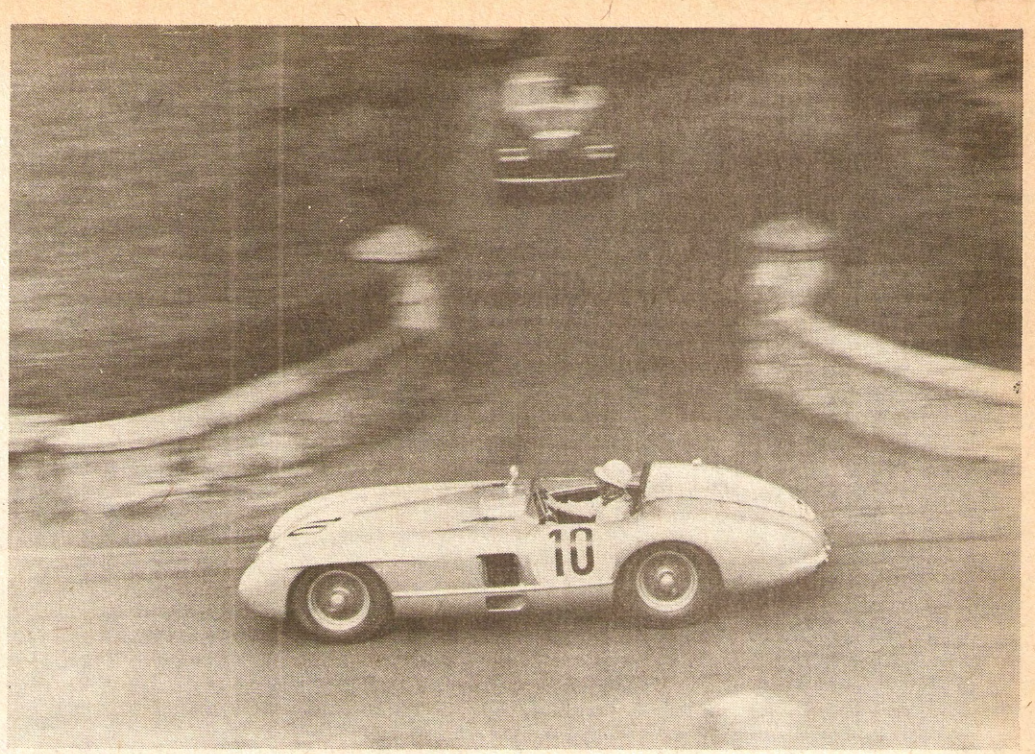


Neubauer and Moss supervise re-fuelling.

practice at Wheeler's Corner and the driver pairings were reshuffled in the order Eugenio Castellotti/Piero Taruffi and Maurice Trintignant/Umberto Maglioli. Equipe National Belge entered another Monza for Jacques Swaters/Johnny Claes. Daimler-Benz of Germany brought four of the fabulous 300SLR's to Ulster, obviously in search of a repeat of Caraciola's Mercedes win back in 1929. Driver pairings were Fangio/Karl Kling, Moss/André Simon and Wolfgang von Trips/John Fitch, but Fitch was teamed with Moss, Simon with von Trips and Kling also had a spell at the wheel of the von Trips/Simon car during the race. The fourth car was actually designer Rudolph Uhlenhaut's prototype coupé, based on the *Rennsportwagens*, and there was quite a flap during practice when Fangio took Kling around the circuit in the coupé, which was duly flagged in for having two people aboard! The other Mercedes was the road-going 300SL of the unknown Vicomte de Barry.

Officine Alfieri Maserati S.P.A. entered two three-litre cars for Jean Behra and Luigi Musso, with three Aston Martins entered by David Brown for Peter Collins/Tony Brooks, Reg Parnell/Roy Salvadori and Peter Walker/Dennis Poore. Two Austin Healey 100S's completed the three-litre category, Ernie McMillen and Lance Macklin being the most noted drivers.

The two-litre class included three Triumph TR2's, driver line-up including Ken Richardson and locals Brian McCaldin, Ian Titterington and Wilbert Todd; a works Maserati was driven by Luigi Bellucci and Frazer-Nash had a works car for Ken Wharton. The 1100 to 1500 cc class was headed by three Porsches, entered by Dr. Ferry



Stirling Moss in the winning 300 SLR sweeps through the Quarry Bends.

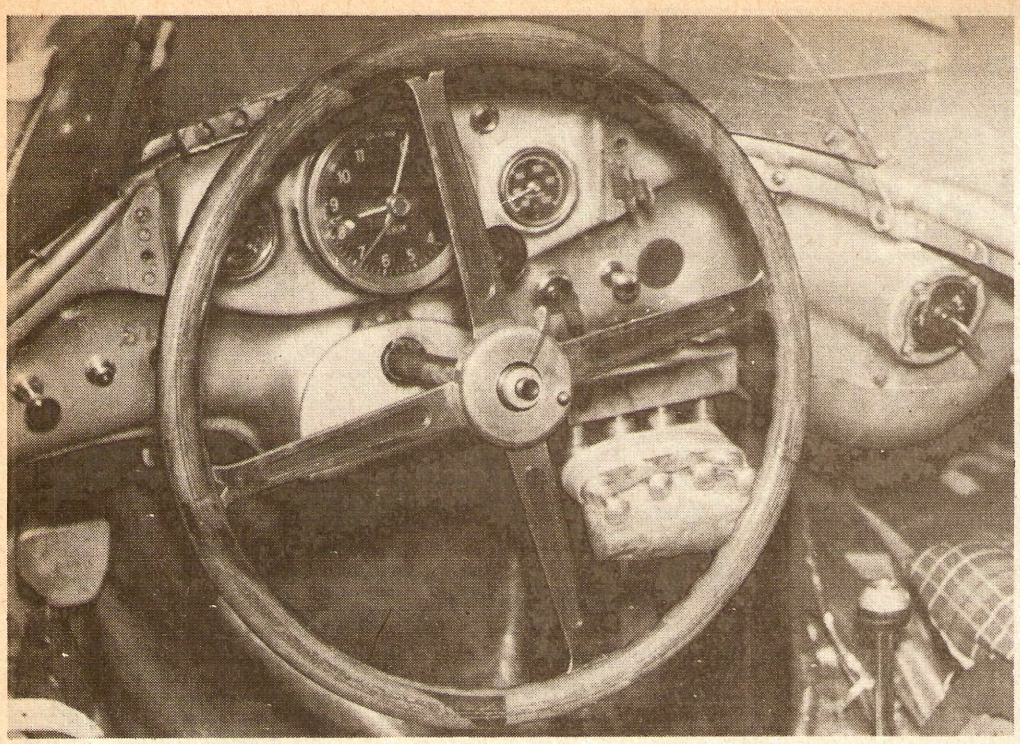
Porsche, drivers included Carroll Shelby, Masten Gregory and Richard von Frankenberg; with A. M. Mallock (Arthur of U2 fame, that is) in the Mercury Stable entry. The line-up of MG's, similar to the MG-A but designated EX182's on account of their "protype" twin cam engines, were driven by Ron Flockhart, Jack Fairman, Peter Wilson, Ted Lund, Jack Stoop and John Lockett. Cyril Kieft had a works car for Raymond (BBC) Baxter and Mike Trimble; Bill Smith was down as driver of Ken McAlpine's Connaught; and Lotus Engineering Co. Ltd. had two of their very low "streamliners," a Lotus-Connaught for John Coombs/Ian Burgess and an MG-powered one for Peter Jopp/Mike Anthony.

In the 750-1100 cc class, there were three Coopers, Coventry Climax powered, with Ivor Bueb, Mike McDowell and Jim Russell in works cars and Jim Mayers/Jack Brabham in the O'Shea Racing Organisation entry. The little Coopers attracted considerable attention as the mid-engined design configuration was very much a novelty in those days – but little did the motor racing world realise that within a few years this layout would be the accepted norm for all competitive formulae, from Formula One to sports-racers, and everything else as well! Colin Chapman was paired with Cliff Allison in a Lotus-Climax of his own design and construction; there was another works Kieft; a new lightweight Elva entered by the Elva Racing Team for Rob Mackenzie-Low/Dick Mainwaring; and Frazer-Nash Cars Ltd produced a curious DKW Spyder, powered by a Deek three-cylinder/two-stroke engine, for Cecil Vard/Ken Rudd.

Automobiles DB entered three of their little cars in the up to 750 cc class, powered by flat-twin-air-cooled Panhard engines, driving the front wheels, one of these with a central driving position. Drivers were last year's winners Paul Armagnac/Gerard Laureau and Rene Bonnet/Claude Storez, but this time their target was the Index of Performance and a class victory. Two similar cars were entered by Ecurie Franco-Britannique, and there was an attractive Italian Stanguellini driven by Faure/Duval. A two-litre Maserati for Jo Bonnier/Andre Loens was on the reserve list. To today's motor racing followers, many of these cars, and drivers too, have passed into history, others have gone on to greater things.

Writing in AUTOSPORT of September 23, 1955, the late Gregor Grant wrote, "Belfast was TT-mad. Round the entrances of the Grand Central and Royal Avenue hotels congregated hundreds of schoolboys. Fangio was pinned up against the wall, signing autograph books, pieces of paper, and programmes proffered by race-crazy youngsters. The World Chanpion reached over the heads of older boys to make sure that the smaller chaps behind would get their fair share – one of those simple little acts that endear the Argentinian to everyone. As other drivers arrived, crowds surged round them. Anyone who looked like a racing driver was mobbed. Stirling Moss disappeared in the centre of a swirling mob. Mike Hawthorn's corduroy cap bobbed up and down as he was hemmed in by another rush. Such was the press of hero-worshippers that traffic had to be halted, as small boys overflowed on to the road. Older race-goers were reminded of similar scenes on the eve of the the 1928 race on the Newtownards circuit. Most of the shops had adopted a motor-racing motif, and such is the reputation of

Desmond Titterington in the lone works Jaguar D-Type challenged the Mercedes efforts until the engine seized on the penultimate lap while Mike Hawthorn had the car in second place.



Complicated 300 SLR cockpit. The four push-button controls (to the right of the wheel) were to inject squirts of oil onto the brakes and prevent overheating/binding/grabbing. Le-Mans type air brakes were not considered necessary for Dundrod.

Irish-made cloth, that several of the Italians were seen to emerge from stores with large rolls of tweed. There is little doubt that the Tourist Trophy, run in its proper status as a full-scale International road-race, must bring many thousands of pounds of business to Belfast. Hotels and restaurants were packed to capacity, and all one could hear in the city's bars were fierce discussions on the chances of Mercedes-Benz, Jaguar, Ferrari, Maserati, Aston Martin and so on.

Belfast was certainly a happy place for motor racing enthusiasts in those days and while the younger fans chased for autographs, the technically minded spent hours literally drooling over the exotic machinery being prepared in their temporary homes in various garages throughout the city. So that everyone could know where the many teams had based their headquarters, *The Belfast Telegraph* printed a list of the garages that had opened their doors of hospitality to the visitors. Some of the transporters used by the Continental teams proved rather large for some of the back lane entrances to garage workshops, and I well remember a touch of real comic opera, Puccini style, as the enormous Maserati transporter proved unable to execute a right angle turn in a particularly narrow alley. The burly driver amused himself with verbal outbursts and occasional half-rendering of Italian song at full volume, in between plonking a huge clenched fist on the piercing (Maserati) air horns and spitting obnoxious chunks of cigar tobacco out of the window, the cigar end being so chewed as to almost resemble a caterpillar-attacked cabbage head. And at the rear of the vehicle, mechanics literally hurled vast piles of tyres out of doors to lighten the load so that rear end could be manhandled into position for the driver to complete his tricky manoeuvrings. Others just did not bother with transporters, electing to drive their racers through the city streets, with much blipping of throttles and slipping of clutches. The little blue DB-Panhards skipped lightly over Belfast's pave road surface, but one of the Ferraris almost spun in the wet, right in front of a big cinema queue!

We travelled up from the deep South in a Fiat 1100, only to find no room at the inn in a packed-to-capacity Belfast on the Friday night before the great day. After endless searching, overnight "lodgings" were eventually procured in a particularly dingy joint, where I choose to try to snatch a few winks in an armchair rather than in the much-used bed! However, sleep was out of the question, for following an engine re-build the Bonnier/Loens Maserati was fired up shortly after midnight, and where better for the mechanics to run in the engine but around the block where we were staying!

An early start saw us at Dundrod before the huge crowds had gathered, and it was straight to the paddock where everyone was busy making last-minute adjustments, that is everyone except Mercedes-Benz, whose three cars were parked in front of the pits and covered in waterproof sheets, while the mechanics calmly ate their sandwiches and drank their tea, and the impressive, portly, Teutonic figure of team manager Alfred Neubauer was seen chatting with former TT winner Rudolf Caracciola as he played with his traditional battery of stop watches. And that was really psyching the opposition in typical Daimler Benz manner – after all why shouldn't they too be screwing up suspensions, stuck under bonnets and making countless checks on their cars just like the rest!

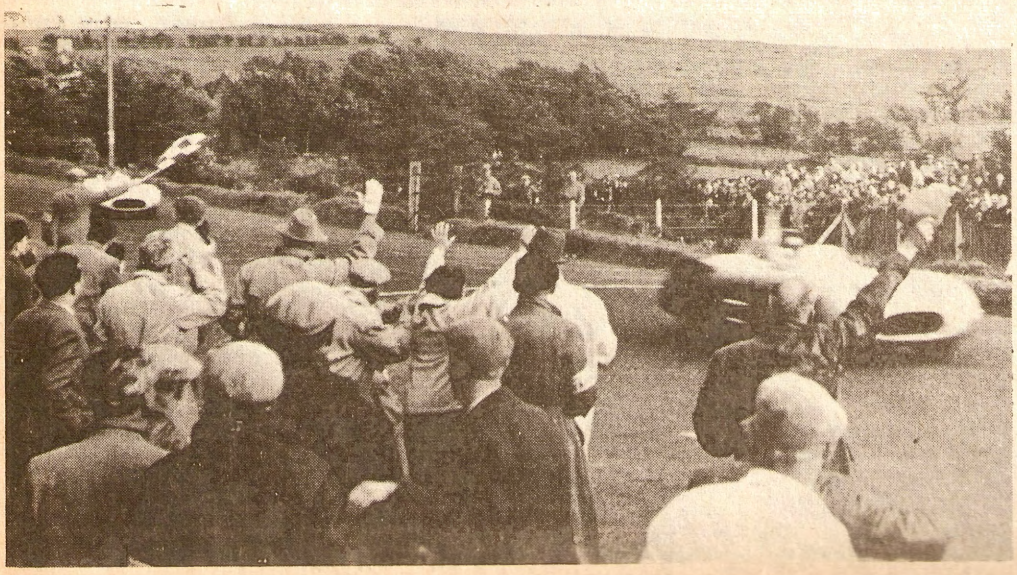
The terrible Le Mans tragedy of only a few months previously had cast a dark shadow over motor racing in general and the new quest for safety was reflected not only by the new non-skid road surface, but by the huge trench dug in front of the main stand, opposite the pits, and the relocation of the stand, set further back from the bank. Extensive barbed wire fencing had been laid to seal off prohibited areas, but the circuit nonetheless retained all the inherent hazards of a real road racing venue, with high banks, solid walls and gate pillars, hedges, fences and poles for overhead wires, etc, virtually lining the course. The road width was extremely narrow in places, with many blind corners and brows, and several bumpy sections. And to add to the dangers, there was the enormous speed (and braking power) differential between the ultra rapid Mercedes, Jags, Masers, Astons and Ferraris, and the tiddlers and production-type TRs and other slower machinery. It was a challenge too for the spectators, but viewing facilities were excellent even if one had to contend with barbed wire, thorny hedges and muddy drains, and travel for miles across country, in order to gain access to the prime vantage points. The few loos that could be found where most rudimentary, and the calls of nature were often postponed at the dire prospect

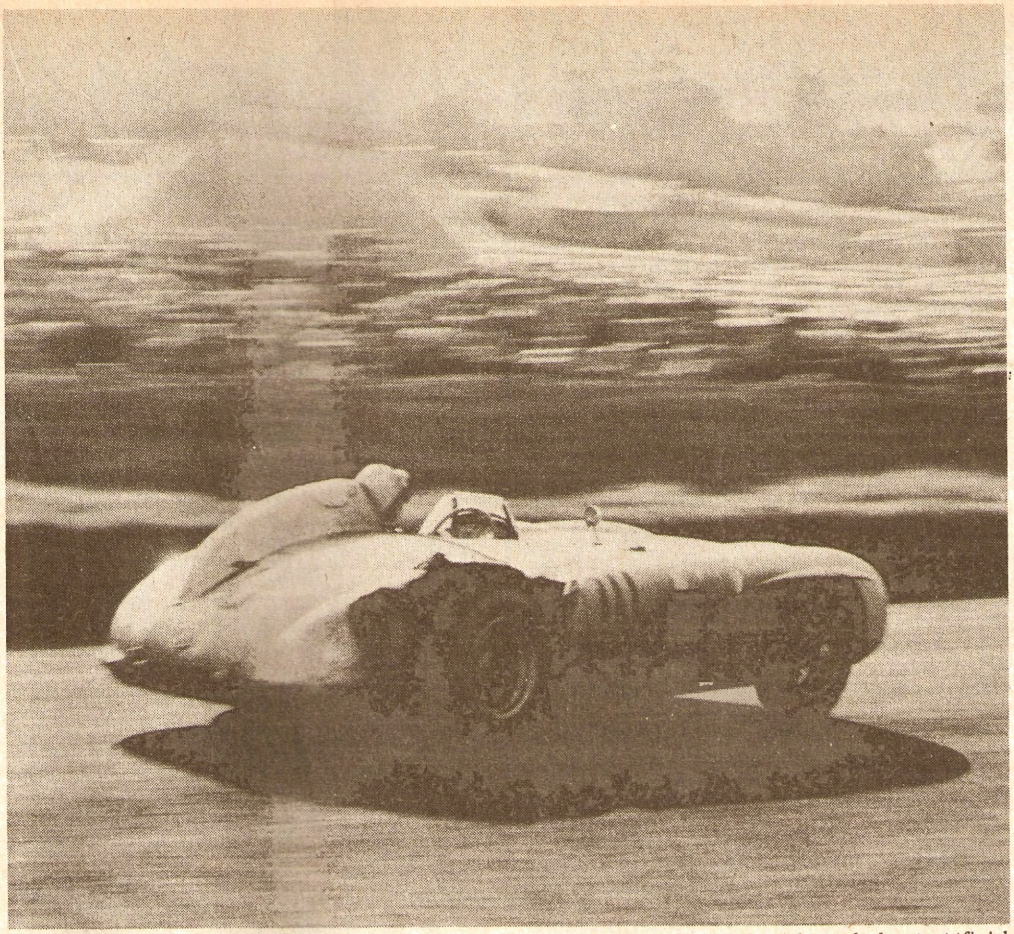
A relatively unknown (then) Wolfgang von Trips took third place.

of having to adopt a squatting position in primitive conditions! But it was all great crack, the lack of mod cons did not deter the enthusiasts – and no one dared write letters of complaint afterwards to AUTOSPORT. Yes indeed, times have changed and today's circuits must cater for race-goers rather than enthusiasts.

At 10.30 am, the eerie patter of running feet signalled the start of the Golden Jubilee TT, as drivers sprinted to their cars, Le Mans style. Cubic capacity rather than practice times determined the echelon line up order of the 49 cars, and first away was Bob Berry in the Broadhead D-Type from the similar car of Hawthorn; with super sprinter/starter Moss carving his way past the Ferraris and Hawthorn to grab second spot within a few hundred yards. By the second lap there was only one Jag, for Berry was out with a flat front tyre, and Moss led from Hawthorn, von Trips, Behra and Fangio. But tragedy had already struck, for on the second lap, at a place called the Deer's Leap, Jim Mayers in the little Cooper-Climax hit a concete gate pier at something over 100 mph. The car disintegrated in flames, scattering debris all over the road and blinding following drivers. The promising Bill Smith in a 1½-litre Connaught crashed into the wreckage, the car catching fire and the driver thrown out of the cockpit. Others involved in the crash itself or in taking avoiding action were Ken Wharton (Frazer-Nash), the German Kretschman (Porsche), Lance Macklin (Austin Healey), Jim Russell (Cooper-Climax) and Peter Jopp (Lotus-MG), while Vicomte de Barry, whose Mercedes had just been passed by Mayers, escaped the melee. Poor Meyers and Smith

Jubilation in the Mercedes camp as Moss leads Fangio across the line.





The winning Mercedes-Benz 300 SLR casts long September shadows as it flashes through the start/finish area in the closing laps. Rear bodywork was ripped off by Mercedes mechanics following a tyre blow-out.

received fatal injuries, which must have been instantaneous; and Wharton and the bearded Kretschman were treated for burns.

With the exception of the people in the immediate area of the crash, and those who could see the huge pall of smoke rising from the far side of the circuit, the majority of the spectators were unaware of the terrible catastrophe and the superhuman efforts of Mike Hawthorn against the might of Mercedes had everyone on a knife edge of tension. But Moss was the master, pulling steadily away from the Hawthorn-Fangio dice. The relatively unknown von Trips, who was later to come within an ace of winning the World Championship with Ferrari in 1961 but was tragically killed at Monza, was holding down a highly creditable fourth place, ahead of such experienced pilots as Behra (Maserati), Peter Walker (Aston Martin), Musso (Maserati) and Peter Collins (Aston Martin). The leading Ferrari was that of Castellotti, just in front of Reg Parnell in the third works Aston Martin.

On lap 14, Fangio took Hawthorn to make it first and second positions for Mercedes, but the Farnham Flyer was back in second spot on lap 17 – Hawthorn and Fangio commanding all the attention with their repeat performance of their Le Mans duel. Von Trips still held fourth place, with Collins up into fifth and leading the Maseratis of Behra and Musso. Castellotti crunched the wings of his Ferrari in an argument with the bank at the hairpin and lost considerable time during a hasty panel beating session in the pits.

At 25 laps, Hawthorn pitted and Fangio swept into second slot as Desmond Titterington took over the lone D-Type. Four laps later Fangio handed over to Karl Kling, and on lap 30 there was high drama as Moss limped into the pits with a rear tyre in ribbons. The tyre had blown as Moss swept through the Quarry Bends, just before the start/finish area; spectators in the adjoining field literally dived for the hunk of rubber that flew from the Mercedes right rear wheel, and a sporting spectator produced a penknife to distribute souvenir pieces of rubber to several others, a minute piece of which is still in my collection of motor racing mementos — not a goulish collection, I must hasten to add! Mechanics ripped away a huge section of the rear bodywork of the leading Mercedes, but as as the silver car was stationary at the pits, Titterington flashed by in the D-type to lead the Ulster TT, to the accompaniment of a huge roar from the naturally partisan crowd. After 30 laps, the order was Titternington by 15 seconds from American John Fitch in the Moss Mercedes, with Kling third and Collins now fourth, having passed von Trips. Titterington was driving with a skill and determination that was later to be rewarded by a works drive with Mercedes (in the Targa Florio), and pulling away from Fitch at the rate of about 12 seconds a lap; and Collins took Kling for third place, which only lasted for one lap as the Aston Martin was forced into the pits to have an oil-soaked distributor changed, and two laps later Tony Brooks retired the car with the same problem.

In the pouring rain Titterington was the hero of the day as he piled up a big lead over Fitch, and at 35 laps he led by 1m 24s. Some three hours after the start saw Moss back in the Mercedes and driving brilliantly in the wet, "Mossie" set out to reduce a lead that had grown to 2m 13s, the driver change relegating the car to third behind Titterington and Kling. At 40 laps, Titterington's lead over Kling was a staggering 3m 10s, but Moss was only 14s behind his German team mate, and a lap later he was into second place. At 45 laps the lead had been whittled down to 2m 55s, and at 50 laps the time gap was 2m 23s, and Titterington and Moss had lapped the entire field. Titterington stopped to hand over the Hawthorn and the dark green D-Type went back into the lead, almost a minute in front of Moss after a slick pit stop. But on that day Moss had no equal and despite the herculean effort of Hawthorn and Titterington, he went into the lead on lap 56 and increased his lead to 12s. As Gregor Grant wrote: "Truly Moss is a genius in the wet, a fact which was supported by Rudy Caracciola, who, pre-war, was second to none on soaking roads."

On lap 61, Moss again pitted, this time for new rear tyres and a quick refuel, and Hawthorn was back in front again, but on the next lap Moss took the lead as they raced past the pits. With the race drawing to a close there was a sudden awareness amongst the crowds that Fangio was, at last, demonstrating all the skills and determination that was to win him a record five World Championships. Not as much at home perhaps in sports car racing as in single seaters, this was the real Fangio driving in controlled anger, sliding the big 300SLR through every bend in tremendous four-wheel drifts as he set out to displace Hawthorn. At 75 laps, with just 14 to go, Fangio was a lap down on the leaders and the race had taken quite a heavy toll of machinery; including Jean Behra's Maserati, which the Frenchman had crashed at Leathemstown, losing part of an ear and receiving extensive arm injuries as the car rolled.

Fangio's Merc was timed at 148.9 mph over the flying kilometre, just past the pits on the narrow straight towards the aptly-named Rushyhill and the infamous Leathemstown bends. But the Argentinian was too far behind the D-Type to make any impression, and suddenly it was all over with Moss and Fangio coming round in close company to take the chequered flag, to the jubilation and surprise of the Mercedes camp. And surprise it was indeed, for what had happened to Mike Hawthorn on the eventful penultimate lap? Anxious eyes looked towards the Quarry Bends for the D-Type, but only Mike appeared, the Farnham Flyer arrived on foot, the Jaguar's engine had seized at the hairpin bend and the car revovled into retirement up the escape road. Karl Kling had taken over the von Trips/Simon Merc in the closing laps to make it a magnificent one-two-three for the famous "Silver Arrows" of Daimler Benz; Peter Walker/Dennis Poore in their Aston Martin DB3S were fourth, the first British car, two laps ahead of the Musso/Bordoni/Behra Maserati and the Castellotti/Taruffi Ferrari, with the Reg Parnell/Roy Salvadori DB3S and the Maglioli/Trintignant Ferrari the last of the "big guns" in the top placings.

The winning Mercedes-Benz 300SLR covered 84 laps in a time of 7 hours 3 minutes 11 seconds, averaging 88.32 mph; and Mike Hawthorn's only consolation was a new lap record of 4m 42s, 94.67 mph. On his 26th birthday, Stirling Moss had created motor racing history by winning his third Tourist Trophy, and the Moss/Fitch Merc was second in the Index of Performance to the DB of the Frenchmen Armagnac and Laureau. The Americans Shelby/Gregory won their class for Porsche, finishing ninth overall; followed on general classification by the class winning Cooper-Climax of Bueb and MacDowel. The two-litre class went to the Maserati of Bonnier / Loens. In all, 27 cars finished.

As the milling crowds gathered in the paddock to watch Moss cutting his birthday cake, the news filtered through of yet another tragedy. Dick Mainwaring had crashed the little Elva at Tornagrough, on the downhill run towards the hairpin at around the halfway mark, and he died in the blazing wreckage of the inverted car.

The year 1955 had been a bad one for motor racing, and the TT tragedies following the Le Mans catastrophe, spurred on the fanatical anti-racing elements to loudly condemn the sport in general and the TT in particular. In September 1955, the Ulster AC had already put forward plans to improve Dundrod, but the RAC refused to issue the necessary permit without extensive circuit alterations, which, regrettably, could not be carried out to the public roads that made up this great road circuit. The Golden Jubilee was the last TT to be held on a public road circuit, and when the RAC revived the Tourist Trophy at Goodwood in 1958 it was just not the same. No, the TT has died, just like that other great road race the Mille Miglia. Today, Dundrod is still used for motor cycle racing, and since 1955 several Ulster Grand Prix have been held there, contested by such greats of the two-wheeled world as Geoff Duke, John Surtees, Mike Hailwood and Giacomo Agostini. But when the John Coombs/Ian Burgess Lotus-Connaught was the last car to be flagged off in the 1955 TT, little did the Dundrod spectators realise that this would be the last car to race on a road circuit in Northern Ireland.

Motor racing today is fast becoming a stereotyped act, performed in Armco'd automotive arenas where the pros dictate the conditions. Regrettably, great races like the TT, Ulster style, belong to a byegone era. As I said, today's TT is just not the same!

Victor's laurels for American John Fitch and an oil-stained Stirling Moss.

"It must be said that the average present-day Formula car looks about as comfortable as a nun at a strip show over the humps and bumps of Phoenix."

RICHARD ST JOHN YOUNG

Natural habitat

"You head on down this road for about a mile, then turn right at the crossroads, by the speed limit signs. Follow that road for another mile or so, bearing to the right until you come to a fork, bear right there, and back under the trees to the Monument, where you go left . . .

"A little way down the wide bit of road, turn right by the signpost for the hospital, then right again at the "T" junction, up that road for a bit and left by the Embassy. That brings you back here again."

No, those weren't route instructions for a quick trip to nowhere. The man in the wellingtons was not a casual bystander, but a marshal, and the recipients of his information were a couple of racing drivers paying their first visit to Phoenix Park, who had asked where the circuit went, the night before practice.

The marshal was doing a fine job, along with scores of others, of turning a public park, albeit the largest in Europe, into a racing circuit. The drivers were just spellbound. A lap later, they were horrified, but two days later, with many laps of practice and racing under their belts, they were just plain pleased, and had joined the large band of racing men who appreciate the challenges that Phoenix Park has to offer.

In these days of armco and catch fencing, Phoenix Park is unique in providing only natural hazards for the unwary driver. The 2.7-mile lap has a surface which at best could be described as "indifferent", at worst as "bumpy", and is not helped by some rather strange cambers, which restrict the racing line more than somewhat.

As one might expect in a park, trees abound, as do lamp-posts, the old gas variety, and warning signs, which tell of the presence of cattle and deer, although they have the good sense to stay out of the way when racing is in progress.

Road widths vary. The main straight is wide, but its very considerable camber makes anywhere but the middle of the road a bit dodgy in the wet, while the back section of the circuit tends to be narrow. In shape it is very roughly hour-glass, with a spectacular "two way" corner in the middle, the traffic being separated by a row of very substantial rubbish skips. Straw bales, now a thing of the past on many circuits, abound in the Park, and there is a general air of the fifties about the various scaffolding structures and temporary spectator fences.

For all that, it is a marvellous place, and has the distinction of being the last surviving "real" road circuit in Europe where formula cars can be seen, once a year.

Barcelona and Monaco are, I suppose road circuits, but they undergo such a radical transformation before racing commences that they do tend to look just a bit like all the other "slot tracks".

As Phoenix Park is a collection of ordinary roads the day before racing, and is back in use half an hour after the last event, such radical mods just aren't possible. It must be said that the average present-day Formula car looks about as comfortable as a nun at a strip show over the humps and bumps of Phoenix. Compared with the billiard table surfaces of purpose-built tracks, Phoenix is a bit too rough and earthy for them, their sophisticated suspensions seemingly affronted by having to deal with such crude conditions.

This, however, does not deter them from going quite rapidly and some pretty impressive motoring takes place among the large Irish Formula Atlantic contingent once a year, while both John Watson and Damien Magee have pedalled F1 machinery round on occasion.

To side track for a moment, it was interesting to note that of the Atlantics playing in the Park this year, Chevrons seemed to be much happier on the surface than other chassis.

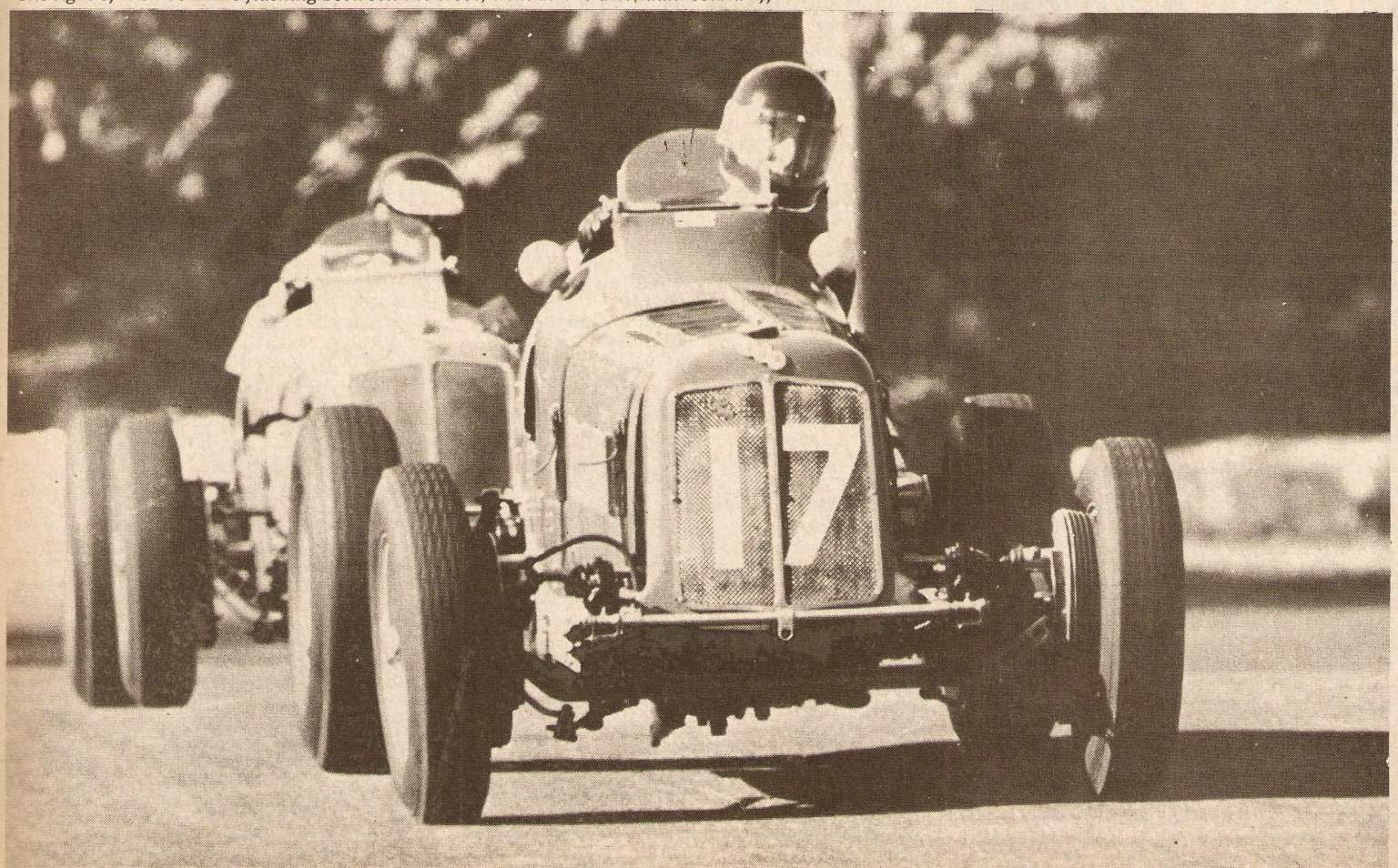
One major drawback to Dublin's annual feast of speed and thrills is the fact that with the Park being the property of the people of Dublin, it is impossible for the organisers, the Irish Motor Racing Club, to seal the place off and charge admission. All spectators have to get in for free, and this in turn means, that the organisers are dependent entirely on programme sales and sponsors for the finance to run the thing at all. This, of course, places a severe strain on everybody's pockets, and generous help from Players (at least the Irish government has not yet tried to ban tobacco company sponsorship of sporting events) and other sponsors does not quite cover the very considerable cost of turning a set of roads into a racing circuit, and then putting on a free show. This year, however, the IMRS may just have hit on an idea which could prove the salvation of the "Park", quite inadvertently.

For the first time, a race for historic machinery was included in the programme, and even though many of those entered failed to appear, there were enough to make the race one of the finest spectacles I have yet witnessed. Historic racing cars do not look right on modern circuits. At Phoenix Park they were in their element, and the sight of two ERAs flashing between the trees, with all the attendant sound effects, really demonstrated to me what motor racing should be all about.

Why not, therefore, hold a "Historic Grand Prix" at Phoenix Park? If an arrangement could be reached whereby the Park included rounds for all the current Historic and Classic car championships, and if competitors were willing to let their steeds loose "in their natural habitat" so to speak, what a fine spectacle it would make.

In this day and age, where nostalgia is a major industry, surely the publicity value of such an event would be very great. Parts of the current Phoenix Park circuit are virtually the same as they were in the thirties. Many of the cars remain unchanged too, but interest in such an event could, I believe, be many times greater. How about it lads?

"The sight of the two ERAs flashing between the trees, with all the attendant sound affects . . ."



by John Davenport

". . . it was discovered that the front cross member had sheared and was only held in by one bolt which was allowing well over an inch of movement each side. No wonder Tholt-y-Will felt a bit narrower than usual."

UDT 1974 by P76

One of the most hackneyed phrases about books is the one about not being able to put it down, but I confess that I have been having late nights recently with a volume called "A boot full of right arms." Written by Evan Green and published by Cassell in Australia, it is a short history of Evan's adventures on events like the London to Sydney of 1968 and the World Cup Rally of 1970, a much longer history of his participation in the UDT World Cup Rally of 1974 at the wheel of a V8 engined Leyland P76, and a revealing insight into what went on with the competitors and organisers of that amazing rally.

Evan Green is one of Australia's most gifted motorists; whether writing about the sport, telling you a story about Gelignite Jack Murray, helping you out of a tough spot or sitting behind the wheel winning rallies, he excels and this book is compulsive reading about all those things. He started his career as a motoring journalist with the Sydney Morning Herald back in 1953, when he could not afford a car and used to go into work on an old motor bike. He got interested in the Redex Trials that used to go the whole way round Australia and started competing in rallies. He left the Herald to become the organiser of the Ampol Trials that had replaced the old Redex ones. When Mobil started to run similar events in competition, the situation grew impossible and before long the petroleum industry pulled out from the Round Australia events and they died. Green stayed on with Ampol and in the PR industry with car manufacturers until 1971 when he once again took up journalism to become motoring editor of the Sun-Herald and a commentator on Australian television.

One of his companions on those early Australian events was the legendary Jack Murray but it was not until the London-Sydney of 1968 that they got together to do one of the big ones. Much of Jack's outback humour is recorded on the book though the sequence where he suffers from exhaust poisoning on the London-Mexico is far from funny. However, it is evident that excess doses of carbon monoxide cannot keep a good Australian down and with many an oath, the rally does go on. The stories about South American policemen and the infamous Anglo-Russian battle for a service point are all there — and that is before any mention of the UDT World Cup.

The road to Tamanrasset.

For the Trans-Sahara event, Green managed to persuade Leyland Australia to supply him with an example of their V8 engined P76 but he had to find all the sponsorship money himself. Several companies including his own employers gave help and even one man he set out to interview for the newspaper turned up trumps and put some money into the car. Once the great rally started, things went well for the enormous Australian car adorned not with roo-bars but "camel-filters" and after the horrible night south of In Salah, they were actually leading though they had no way of knowing it at the time. Then a broken strut brought them to a halt in the desert and Green was left with six days' supply of water while his co-driver, John Bryce, hitched a lift south with a passing Jeep belonging to another competitor. His description of being left alone in the desert is enough to make your lips parch and the later chapter where he describes the dilemma of Jim Gavin, deputy clerk of the course, who is left in Tamanrasset with the problem of not knowing what has happened to many of the competitors is totally gripping.

This book is far more than just a record of what Bryce got up to between Wembly and Munich and even their enforced stay in Tamanrasset makes interesting reading. They, like many others, rejoined the rally when it re-passed the desert town on the way north and went all the way to the finish via Greece, Turkey and Yugoslavia. All that they saw, heard and photographed is there in the book and Green's clear, uncomplicated style plus lots of reported speech makes for good impact.

A Special Noise

Anyone walking round York racecourse before the start of the RAC Rally and listening to the 200 odd rally cars manoeuvring through scrutineering will be aware that few of them would win prizes for quietest car in the city. We have arrived at a point in our rallying at the moment which is somewhat crazy; in order to make road rallying more acceptable we have started to impose noise limits on the cars that are allowed to compete; but special stage rallying, though ostensibly under the same laws, has been allowed considerable freedom in this respect. The reason is quite simple as you cannot start enforcing such regulations at club level if you are not prepared to make even the largest rallies toe the line as well. In other words it would be unreasonable to expect a competitor who drove the other weekend on the Wyedean Stages to have to use a different exhaust to stay competitive if he is entering the RAC next month.

Fortunately, this situation will change in the New Year for after a period of some seven months during which the competitors and organisers can get used to the idea of having noise checks on special stage rallies, the present decibel limit for road rallies will be enforced universally. This was one of the things to come out at the Open Day held by the Rallies Committee two months ago when several examples were quoted of stage rallies causing complaints due to noise being carried from a stage location to a nearby village by the wind. It sounds ridiculous but you should try being at Castle Combe during a race meeting or in Wroughton during a drag meeting and you would concede that they have a point.

What we must never forget is that special stage rallying is desirable only inasmuch as it gets the competitive motoring off the public road and on to private roads, where normal circulation of traffic can be suspended for the period of the rally. If while doing this, stage rallies cause as much disruption of traffic on the public road as we know they can, and also make a lot of noise, we have gained nothing by running the event as a stage rally. The disruption of traffic lies in the hands of the organiser who can do much to make sure that service crews don't get into narrow lanes and that spectators use another entrance from the rally crews. The problem of noise can only be tackled by putting in a clear, simple regulation and enforcing it. This is where the trouble is likely to come for noise is rather subjective and a high-pitched alternator whine, though not disturbing to humans, may well register on a noise meter and cause the exclusion of a car that is actually perfectly acceptable. Just what to set as a noise measuring standard has prevented the police from implementing the current laws on noise for ordinary road users and noise meters have led to acrimony on those road rallies where they have been used.

It is therefore comforting to be able to report that Castle Associates of Scarborough have released details of a new noise meter which they are supplying in large numbers to the French Gendarmerie for this very purpose. It is called the CS193 and the demon tweak is that it has a memory in which it is possible to store the maximum signal and this can then be triggered to provide a proper comparison with other sounds heard subsequently. To someone whose technical education ended some 15 years ago, this would seem to indicate that a lot of uncertainty that comes of trying to use conventional sound meters is eliminated, for they depend a great deal on the background, against which the reading is taken. Such a precision instrument does not come cheap and this one retails at £403 complete with all accessories for calibration and measuring different sounds. Organisations like the Department of the Environment and the Noise Abatement Society are already in the business of lending out sound meters to individuals or clubs that may need them and one hopes that they will be getting their hands on some of these new instruments in the near future — or at least by July when the deadline arrived for all rally cars to be quiet.

If there are a lot of drivers who have read the foregoing with distaste and can only think of power loss that will come with proper noise suppression, I am told that a quiet engine is not necessarily a weak one. The Lancia Beta coupe which Simo Lampinen and I used in Canada last year had to be fitted with a silencer to pass the noise meters used on those rallies and Mike Parkes was getting very keen about it as he felt that with a longer exhaust pipe, we should be able to improve the torque from the engine quite considerably. Far too many rally cars are rorty just to try and make them more of a rally car than they really are. In many other countries such as Sweden, strict noise regulations have been applied to rally cars and, as with their speeding regulations, no exceptions have been made no matter how eminent the driver or the factory preparing the car. That is the situation we must have here if the sport is to continue to grow. We may lose some of the fantastic sounds that have thrilled spectators over the years but the visual spectacle will rest unchanged.

Porsche problems

One does not like to dwell too much on accidents but you can probably recall that Brian Evans and I tipped the Express TV Services Porsche up on its side on the Manx Trophy. That occured at the end of the ninth stage when we were lying fifth overall and after that we dropped down the classification a bit. One would have been forgiven for thinking that we were just taking it easy after a nasty shock and that is what we both thought at the time, but Brian confessed towards the end of the rally that he didn't think the car was handling too well. He didn't like to say it in case I thought he was making excuses. Anyway, when they stripped the car down before going off to the Cork 20, it was discovered that the front cross member had sheared and only held in by one bolt which was allowing well over an inch of movement each side. No wonder Tholt-y-Will felt a bit narrower than usual. A new one was fitted and the car went to the Irish rally where Brian might well have won but for a puncture.

On the last part of the Manx Trophy, we were using Dunlop slicks thoughtfully supplied by John Horton and Brian was very impressed with them though somewhat nervous of their potential for good or evil. John is now working away within Dunlop to try and get a new range of tyres for the many Porsche users within the British Isles especially those who have moved on to wider tyre sizes in the three-litre Carreras. He hopes to be able to run some kind of Porsche-owner test day early next year when customers will be able to come to a test track and try Dunlop's wares so that they can assure themselves of which is the best tyre for each condition for their particular car. Don't ring or write, wait until he has the tyres and then if you rally a Porsche, you will get the invitation.

The Montlhery test day

JOHN BOLSTER tests the new French models

Though the Montlhery circuit is no longer used for racing, it is maintained by the French motor industry for continuous intensive testing and is now in excellent condition. As a test circuit, it's the world's best, and there's so much more space and variety than at the present generation of mickey mouse race-tracks. I therefore arrived early for the annual test day of French cars, knowing that I would have every opportunity to carry out some serious work.

My first car was the new, big Peugeot 604, with the 2664 cc V6 engine that Renault and Volvo share. Surprisingly, I was a bit short of leg room, but I was soon entranced by the smooth surge of power and excellent torque — one can cruise at 100 mph with the throttle almost closed. Swooping off the banking, I saw an indicated 112 mph which felt reasonably accurate. Though the car is well-balanced and holds the road well, the steering is unfortunately no better than that of the 504, being rather vague and unnecessarily low-geared, in spite of power-assistance. This is a fine car, quiet, fast, and with exceptional acceleration in the upper ranges, but perhaps a bit ponderous for the sporting driver.

One of the new Simcas — or are they Chryslers — the 1308 GT came next, with a nicely tuned version of the 1442 cc engine. This power unit is fairly noisy when pressed, exciting some body boom, with definite valve crash at 6,500 rpm. The car handles pleasantly, with fairly strong understeer and some roll on corners. It rides the bumps very well, though some kick-back can be felt on the steering. The maximum speed is satisfactory, an indicated 102 mph coming up, but the low-speed acceleration is not brilliant, partly because there is a gap between second and third gears, though the box handles nicely.

The Matra Simca Bagheera followed, in "S" form, but though a bit more power has been found, this is still one of those mid-engined cars that scarcely justify the inconveniences of this location. Mid-engined racing cars are effective when tuned for a particular circuit, but for everyday road work the principle has few advantages, though some inexperienced test-drivers have grossly over-rated such cars.

Unfortunately, the Bagheera runs true to form and its cornering power is disappointing. The steering is delightfully quick but the mediocre roadholding does not allow this to be exploited. Both the accelerator pedal and the gearlever suffer from excessively long travel and second gear is too low, but the transmission is quiet and the engine is not at all noisy by mid-engined standards. The three-abreast seating and low build are rather fun, while the indicated maximum of 107 mph is satisfactory, but this is the sort of pretty little car that a Frenchman would buy for his *petite amie*. It's not really a man's car, however, and as the windows don't open, you can't offer advice to the errant pedestrian or the crazy driver.

I thoroughly enjoyed the next car, which was the Peugeot 104 Coupé ZS. The baby Peugeot lacked performance when it had only 954 cc but now, with 1124 cc its a gay little thing. It handles beautifully, with quick steering that self-centres after bends, and it corners remarkably fast with little roll. The acceleration away from corners is surprisingly rapid, the engine producing a lot of torque for its size. The maximum speed, on the other hand, is limited by the gear ratio, 6,000 rpm coming up at an indicated 96 mph. The little car is remarkably quiet, which is rare among such small machines, and the pedals are well placed for heel-and-toe, though the gearbox is rather far forward. If this model can be sold in England for a reasonable price, it must add greatly to Peugeot sales, for it suits our road conditions so well.

I had already driven a prototype of the Renault 30TS, but at Montlhéry I was able to handle a production car. Let me say, straight away, that the improvement in refinement is spectacular and the problem with noisy brakes has been totally overcome.

The Renault has the same V6 engine as the Peugeot 604 but, due to lower weight and less aerodynamic drag, the performance is considerably better, both in acceleration and maximum speed. There was supposed to be a speed limit of 112 mph, no doubt due to the unfair strain on road tyres when subjected to the centrifugal force of the steep banking. However, I was so busy choosing my line on the banking — don't you believe that story about cars finding their own position — that I couldn't spare an eye for the instruments until I was shocked to see 122 mph on the clock.

There is plenty of torque and lots of acceleration, but the 30 TS is remarkably quiet. The cornering power is tremendous, indeed this is a front-drive car that could out-corner the Alfasud. It's a very fast car but incredibly easy to drive, and even when flung into corners with all four wheels sliding, there is still plenty of controllability in reserve. The brakes stood up well to very hard driving, though they smelt extremely hot when I parked the car. This is a comfortable 4-door saloon that could out-perform many a GT car and must be the best Renault yet.

Finally, I tried the Citroën CX 2200, which has half a litre less than the big Peugeot and the Renault 30 TS, with only four cylinders. Really, it's surprising how well it compares with them, considering this handicap. I reached an indicated 112 mph and the machine handled extremely well on the corners with the fairly high-geared, power-assisted steering. It says very flat during fast cornering and there is no excessive understeer. My sole handling criticism concerns the tendency of the rear wheels to lock when the brakes are applied hard downhill. The ride is outstandingly comfortably but I think that the Citroën leapt higher than the Renault over a very sharp hilltop. I was, of course, driving harder than one would dare to do on public roads.

I enjoyed driving the cars of France on this superb test circuit, even though some temporary chicanes reduced the speed here and there. In general, the ride and roadholding of the cars I drove was impressive, and the French now excel in making front-drive cars that handle in a really sporting manner. If there was one cause for concern, it was the rather large number of cars that suffered engine breakages. Montlhéry is a hard circuit on engines, but in one or two cases a higher gear ratio might keep the revs below the danger mark.

The Peugeot 104 Coupe ZS proved to be surprisingly quick and to handle beautifully.

New Colt engine

A four-cylinder engine with a single-plane crankshaft cannot be completely balanced, largely because of the angularity of the connecting rods, which causes the pistons going up to travel at a different speed from those going down. This is tolerable with very small engines but causes objectionable secondary vibrations with bigger pistons. At the motor show, Colt unveiled their new Celeste on the press day, and it was exciting to discover that its engine contained two chain-driven balancer shafts to counteract this effect. This engine is also to be fitted to the G70, which I tested with an ordinary engine in France recently.

There is nothing new under the sun, even the Rising Sun, and this is a cunning Japanese adaptation of the once-famous Lanchester harmonic balancer. The late and great Dr Fred Lanchester reasoned that if you had a couple of small out-of-balance flywheels, timed to shake the engine in the opposition direction to the existing imbalance, the two forces would cancel out. In other words, two wrongs do make a right in this instance. The Colt design is highly sophisticated, using computers that our immortal genius didn't have, and the chain-driven shafts run down each side of the engine, turning at twice engine speed and one of them having a pair of pinions to give reversed rotation. Among many previous applications of the principle have been the 23-60hp Vauxhall of 1923 and the recent Taunus V-4.

J.V.B.

Attracting plenty of interest at Earls Court last week was the "power bulge" on the new TVR Turbo.

Mixed rally X reaction

Although they got a good reaction from the 30 or so rallycross drivers present for their British rallycross championship, TEAC got fairly poor reaction to the regulations when they announced the series at a rallycross meeting held in Wimbledon last Saturday. The drivers were present to support their fraternity in the rallycross/hot rod challenge at Wimbledon stadium. Present from the promoters side were Tony Tomassi and Ken Kaye from TEAC and John Foden from Motostage.

Tomassi and Kaye naturally felt that this was a good time to announce their championship which is to be sponsored by Wills. But first they told drivers about the Group 5 based FIA regs for the European championship next year, and the fourteen or so drivers originally interested were immediately reduced to four. The next bombshell that hit was that TEAC intend to have a slightly more relaxed version, for their championship, the conformation currently awaiting ratification by the RAC. This naturally wasn't popular. It means that many cars about currently are declared ineligible, and that with less than three months to go to the moment that regulations come into being.

A quite reasonable feeling was that regs should stay as they are this year for next, and if the regs do have to change, then competitors should be given a year's notice. Drivers generally felt that the safety restrictions such as dual braking systems and FIA roll cages were fair enough, but to change over to the stock block type formula would just be too drastic a move at this stage, and now everyone waits with baited breath to see what happens.

At the meeting, the British Rallycross Drivers Association was reborn and Nick Jesty voted in as acting chairman with David Potter as secretary. In the next few months they'll be mailing 90 or so drivers to go to the next meeting, probably to be held after the next event at Snetterton. At this time, the other members of the committee will be voted on. It's also felt that rallycross drivers should do more to promote themselves and their sport, and ideas of personal promotion at tracks were forthcoming. Following last Saturday's rallycross/hot rod challenge, a return match is envisaged in the spring at Long Marston. It will take place almost entirely on tarmac with Barry Lee leading the Spedeworth team and Rod Chapman the Motostage team.

Henderson's series after second

Fred Henderson and Trudi Binks duly clinched the ANECCC Rally Championship last weekend when they finished second on the Shaw Trophy Rally, run by Whickham & District MC for the eleventh time. The Durham pair, in their Escort 1600, finished 36 marks down on the winners Rick Mawson and Dave Nicholson, the winners being paired together for the first time.

The penultimate round of the championship, the Shaw Trophy again mainly consisted of short sections and the two selectives were used mainly as tie deciders. Sponsored by Tyneside Accessories Ltd the rally attracted 72 entries and was again based on some of the best territory in Northumbria.

Mawson and Nicholson (Mexico) held the lead for most of the night. At petrol they were 16 marks up on Henderson/Binks while third was disputed between Len Dodds and Alan Pearson (RS 2000) and Chris Dobson/Gordon Bradford (Escort TC), but the latter retired when the differential succumbed near half way.

Dodds and Pearson then had to withstand strong pressure from John Saint and Alan Graham who finished only 20 marks adrift in their RS 2000 and they in turn were only seven marks ahead of Graham Jennings and G. Brodie in an RS 1600. Completing the leaderboard were Gil Graham and John Millington (Mexico), on 549 marks.

Best novices were J. Pye and S. Simpkins (Cooper) on 781 marks who finished fifteenth.

● Lancs and Cheshire Club are running an autocross this weekend at their usual site at Cleworth Hall, Tyldesley, sponsored by Car Protection. The meeting is the final round of the Association of North Western Car Clubs championship and also a round of the Longton and District Autocross championship. The first timed run is at 1.30 pm.

Chris Meek (right) receives the Colin Chapman Trophy from the Lotus chairman himself at the Motor Show. Meek has broken every track record in his 14 consecutive wins in the production Lotus Europa.

Semperit trialling support

Sporting Trials are continuing to gain support from Semperit for the 1976 season. The BTRDA championship will again be sponsored by the tyre company who supply many of the cars with their wares.

One new procedure in entering these BTRDA championship rounds is that the entries official must receive an entry form from a competitor before the first qualifying event in which she or he intends to compete. This is for legal indemnity reasons and without an entry form in the hands of the organiser at least seven days before the event, the BTRDA say that the entry is not valid and no marks in that event may be scored. The entry form should, of course, be complete with fee, etc.

The first of the two rounds this year is Leicester CC's John Bull on November 23, followed by the Gloucester run by London CC on December 7.

Next year's events are: January: Warco (Peterborough MC); Kitching (N Midlands MC); February: Geoff Taylor (Hagley and D L CC), Charles Pollard (Peterborough MC), Wilshire (Mid Cheshire MRC); March: Colmore (SUNBAC), 4/44 (Yorkshire SCC). Derbyshire (Lancs and Cheshire CC), Jacobean (London CC), Brian Lewis (Maidstone and Mid Kent MC). All these dates to be announced at a later date.

Mepham beats off three

Surviving strong second half pressure from Jack Barnard and Paul Beeson who pulled back two minutes in an exciting second half, Alan Mepham and Mick Town from Hastings won the Boro 18 MC Moonraker Rally for the second year in succession last Saturday night by the narrow margin of a minute.

In their Mexico the winners dropped 18 minutes on a tight 145 mile route of 49 time and passage controls in Kent in an event which had 50 crews. During the early part of the rally four crews were battling for the lead for in addition to the two already mentioned Chris Daisy and John Jensen (Avenger GT) were well placed until TC 16 when they dropped out of contention while Geoff Jackson and Richard Harris (Mexico) were only a minute down on the road until just before petrol when they succumbed.

Richard Foster and Alan Biggs finally took third in their Viva on 24 minutes with Keith Goodyear and Phil Giles bringing their Toyota Celica into fourth on 28 minutes. Daisy and Jensen dropped back to finish fifth on 29m, the same time as Stephen Jenner and Martin Williams (Anglia).

Best of the semi-experts were Ken Hayday and his wife Hazel who finished eighth in their RS2000 on 37m while the novice award went to Stirling Ernstzen and David Jones in an Escort on 63m for 13th place. The best Boro 18 crew were Roger Stround and Alan Askew.

Lotus in

Yes, it's in. The Lotus 7 will be in the modsports lists issued by the RAC and may be raced in modsports next year. The car must be run in 1600 cc pushrod form, with full width screen, the radiator at the front and the engine may not be moved back more than four inches. Finally, the mudguards must be at the normal angle and not tilted for any aerodynamic reason.

Having said that the Lotus 7 is in, one has to take into account the regulations that may be laid down by various clubs, and it's still possible that some clubs simply will run their modsports championships to their own regulations which may exclude the Lotus 7.

Peter Jopp exits stage right after slight contact with Neville Knight's Simca Rallye I. Jopp managed to continue for a lap with a punctured Denovo before going off properly.

Big upset for Hinde

Robert Carr from Surrey came within an ace of causing the biggest upset for many a long month in the national BT&RDA Production Car Trial Championship when the Owen Motoring Club ran their Ernest Owen trial at Tattenhill, near Burton on Trent last Sunday.

Not only was the youngster trouncing twice winner Mike Hinde in the Imp class but at half time he was very close, if not leading the trial outright.

As it turned out Mike Stephens turned on the screws after lunch in his Mexico and went on to collect another silver spoon in a season in which he is very much a dominant figure.

The event was won and lost in the morning when the sections were wet and slippery — by the end of the day they were bone dry and proving very little. Carr, who travelled up with his father, David, had dropped only 10 marks at lunch to lead master Mike Hinde by no less than 13 marks while Stephens, on 14 marks, was 22 to the good ahead of Peter Higgins (Mexico).

To the detriment of Carr, Hinde pulled back three marks after lunch while Stephens pulled away from Higgins and so the battle was over.

Geoff Spencer (Cooper) duly won his class but he really found Barry Parker a tough nut to crack and with Kevin Caley also staying fairly well in touch, Spencer never had a chance of outright victory.

Sports car men like Mike Harrison and Malcolm Brown duly produced another of their very tight battles with Harrison (Midget) the victor by six marks while Bill Moffatt re-emerged from the depths of the West Country to score another easy class win with his Ginetta though without a fight as usual which must make him very despondent.

Overall: M. Stephens (Mexico), 25 marks lost.
Class winners: G. Spencer (Cooper), 37 marks; P. Higgins (Mexico), 49 marks; M. Harrison (Midget), 37 marks; R. Carr (Imp), 25 marks; W. Moffatt (Ginetta), 33 marks.

Barnard's near defeat

Several of the top drivers in the BT&RDA Autocross Championship travelled down to the Weston-super-Mare sandocross last weekend for the annual thrash round a huge 1800yds course on the beach and Mike Turpin collected the major prize with a time of 2m 14.4s in his Turpin Special.

Double autocross champion Martin Barnard almost suffered his first defeat for ages when he allowed Terry Smith to have a go in the Datsun 240Z. Smith, however, blotted his copybook by failing to find the gears properly and finished just under a second down. Bruce Male and Frank Morris were the stars of the 1 litre Mini class, Male again stealing the class by the narrow margin of four tenths of a second while George Warren, fresh from the hot rod v autocross "battle" at Wimbledon the previous night, was second fastest in his battered and bashed Escort.

In the clash of the big Minis Dave Blaber easily put it across Dave Baskerville by some five seconds and among the small Minis Trevor Hawkins had 10s in hand over Alan Pow.

BTD: M. Turpin (Turpin), 2m 14.4s.
Class winners: M. Barnard (Datsun 240Z), 2m 29.6s; M. Bazley (Escort), 2m 35.0s; T. Hawkins (Mini), 2m 30.6s; C. Truman (Escort), 2m 35.6s; B. Male (Mini), 2m 28.0s; G. Warren (Escort), 2m 22.6s.

George Warren took his class and was second fastest in his Escort.

Simon Watson — Radio One small class winner and championship runner-up.

New faces

There were several new faces in Radio One production saloon cars at Snetterton on Sunday. Among them was the runner-up in the championship to Jock Robertson, Simon Watson who sealed his position by borrowing Daniel Pearce's Imp and coming third in class.

Watson's car was written off, with Danny Alderton's Honda, at Mallory Park recently and Watson was kindly loaned Pearce's car. But Watson was knocked off by Rodney Posner on the last lap but his subsequent protest about Posner's driving was thrown out after Posner had been reprimanded. Watson expects to be driving either an Opel or a BMW in next year's series and already has a tentative sponsorship agreement.

The other new cars/faces combinations came in the £1700 to £2299 class where Gerry Marshall was forsaking his Magnum for Bob Saunders' Dolomite Sprint and duly won his class, and journalist Jeremy Walton was in Mike Smith's Anchor Records Capri. Smith had agreed to commentate at Brands Hatch and principally needed someone to beat his Under 21 rival Marc Smith to keep him out of the points. But Walton wasn't sufficient match for Marc and finished a lowly fifth in class.

MGB tops varied field

Two selectives, both in the middle of the rally, sorted out the final positions of last Saturday's Kleber Southern CC Rally and five different makes finished in the top six.

Winners, in their MGB were Derek Skinner and Peter Rushforth who totalled 3m 10s on the 200 mile event which included selectives of five and 10 miles respectively. They had 1m 28s in hand over runners-up Ian Pettie and John Jones while Pettie's brother Tony navigated Ray Perry into third in their Avenger Tiger on 6m 51s.

Things might have been different up front but for the retirement late in the night of the ASCMC Champions Mike Harrington and John Dixon who thumped a post well and truly and bent the steering on their RS 2000. Perry and Pettie finished only three seconds up on fourth placed Paul Syrett and Geoff Willis (Cooper S), while Terry Arnold and Vic Clarke were fifth in their Mexico on 7m 38s. Sixth and best of the semi-experts were Robin Lacey and Chris Chivers (Lancia Fulvia) on 8m 19s.

Last year's winners Stuart Morgan and Nick Siggs (RS 2000) had a disastrous rally, Siggs being under the weather for much of the night and they retired at second petrol. Novice winners were M. H. Russell and A. Watson in a Mini on 34m 58s.

Brunt's roll

Roger Brunt survived his biggest accident ever last Sunday when he rolled his plastic bodied 1300 Mini into a complete wreck after going end over end and sideways to boot in the biggest possible way down at the Weston sandcross. A very shaken Brunt ended upside down in the safety straps of the wreck but revived later with the aid of medicinal spirits.

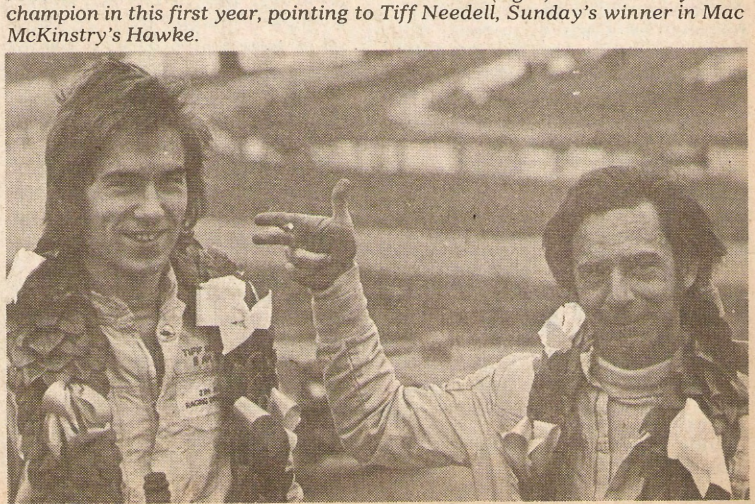
Palliser sell

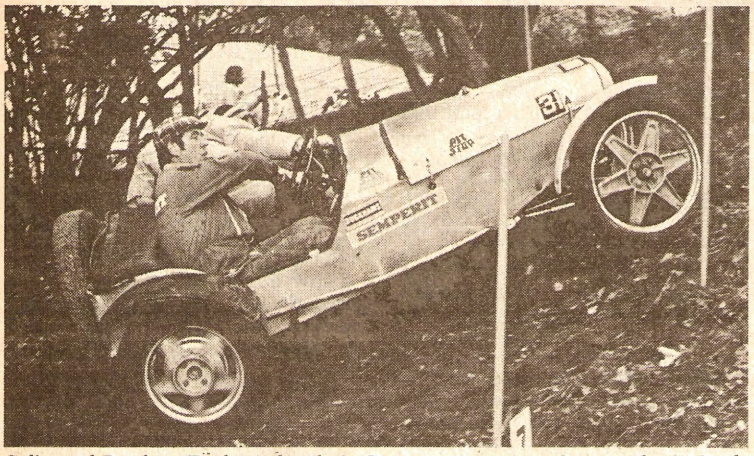
Palliser, who currently only make FF2000 cars, are quickly stepping into the FF2000 market. It's only been towards the latter part of this year that anyone has sold a car in the Formula apart from a few right at the beginning of the season, but of late, a number of drivers, both British and foreign, have tested the Palliser or driven one in races. Latest of the Palliser trialists was Kees van der Grint, a Dutchman who tried Chris Mudge's normal car at Brands Hatch on Sunday, finishing some way behind the ultracompetitive front runners.

Snett's rally X

This weekend sees another of the warmup rallycrosses at Snetterton and a good entry has been received by the Sporting CC of Norfolk/West Suffolk MC. Among those are rallyman Reg Mullenger in his 2.0 Escort, Nick Garner, Ian Thomson, John Wisbey (850 Minis), Dave Keeler, Tony Gover, and Terry Gover (1.3 and 1.4 Minis), Bob Merridale and Graham Hathaway (1.3 Escorts) and Dave Fuell (2.0 Escort), Rob Gibson (1.8 Sprite), Peter Harrold and Hugh Wheldon (VWs). Practice starts at 9.30 am and the first timed run is at 12.30 pm.

FF2000 men at Brands Hatch: Derek Lawrence (right) is Allied Polymer's champion in this first year, pointing to Tiff Needell, Sunday's winner in Mac McKinstry's Hawke.





Colin and Daphne Taylor take their Cannon to yet another good win in the Kent Border Pit Stop round.

Taylor's easy KB

Over thirty cars entered for the second round of the Pit Stop Southern trials championship last Sunday, and with two other sporting trials taking place further north at the same time this was a very healthy field. The Kentish Border Car Club were the hosts at a venue the other side of the Portabello, but still within earshot of the buzzing F5000s at Brands.

The day was perfect for trials with sun above and muck below, and an entertaining course of eight hills with four rounds giving a good hour of non stop action for the competitors — besides all the walking. Among the entry was Stirling Moss driving his newly purchased Cannon, and enjoying his new found sport as ever.

The course was a mixture of steep climbs, wooded sections with four of the starts on open grass, all of which made for a tricky time with scores ranging far and wide. The KB organisers started the cars in different groups, making the draw less of a bagatelle. Gordon Jackson's Ibex was soon out after an uncharacteristically poor start when the power house parted from the flywheel. This was a great pity and left the Jacksons on the sidelines to pass on expert advice to the other competitors.

Mike Cannon had managed to get his Renault engined mount out of mothballs to make a rare appearance, and had a reasonable round. However, it was the Cannon creation of Colin Taylor that lead the first round with a barn-storming 7, followed by Chris Highwood, 20, John Hopkins, 30, Alan Brunning, 34, Mike Cannon, 41 and Colin Walker, 44.

After a few adjustments the course was ready for seconds — Colin Taylor improved his lead by dropping only 3, with the Renault propelled Trialsmaster of Alan Brunning (14) followed closely by John Hopkins (Ibex) and Chris Highwood (Cannon) both on 15. Tony Mitchem had an encouraging 29, Robin Wren made 31 just ahead of Alan Gisby in his 950 on 33. This score planted him in second place in the class behind Dick Hansford.

During the lunch break the hills were altered by the hard working KB men, but still the pattern of form remaining much the same with Colin Taylor flying the Cannon round in 8. Alan Brunning was on 21, with Hopkins and Highwood again level on 22. Of the newer faces Pat Walters (Cannon) had a good 23, and Trevor Dyer (Mudsport) 25. Dick Hansford was still the one to beat in the 950 battle and in fact was beating the majority of NTF runners, although the permitted 950 Knobblies were helping on the greasy climbs.

The final round saw Colin Taylor run out an easy winner with a 9 touch, Chris Highwood made a final run in 17 to keep his second spot, although John Hopkins improved to 14 he was still short by 7 marks and remained a secure third ahead of Alan Brunning. Dick Hansford ran out a comfortable winner of the 950 lads, 24 points in front of Alan Gisby.

The next round of the Pit Stop Southern Championship will be the 750 Motor Clubs' Harold Biggs Memorial Trial at Yetner Farm, South Green near Sittingbourne, Kent. The event will also count towards the BTRDA/Semperit Championships on November 16.

1, C. Taylor (Cannon), 27; 2, C. Highwood (Cannon), 74; 3, J. Hopkins (Ibex), 81; 4, A. Brunning (Trialsmaster), 100; 5, M. Cannon (Cannon), 142; 6, P. Walters (Cannon), 147.

950 Class: 1, R. Hansford (Spl), 114; 2, A. Gisby (Trialsmaster), 138; 3, J. Higgins (Trialsmaster), 235.

BB reborn?

A rather large and unpleasant rebirth is in the process of taking place. What could be bigger than Big Bertha? One John Clark is currently putting together the Mike Costin designed, DTV constructed Super Saloon Ventora which Gerry Marshall raced last year before it was written off when a brake pad fell out at Silverstone.

Clark recently bought an 8.1 Chevrolet CanAm engine from Monkey Brown which is destined for the formerly Repco-powered car. Some time ago, we heard that Willie Green had been asked to drive Big Bertha, but Green's comment at the time was that he'd believe it when he saw it. Maybe things have changed — it would certainly be a worthwhile addition to Super Saloon racing, if it existed.

Rod challenges Lee's Rod

Top: The finish of Les Eaton's £100 challenge between Barry Lee and Rod Chapman at the rallycross/hot rod Wimbledon with Lee just in front after what was described as one of the best races ever. Right: Chapman donates a carnation to victor Lee. Above: The sad remains of Paul Northall's GT6 after a blow out sent it into the barrier. Below: Peter Vaughan urges on Paul Springett in one of the heats. In the main challenge, Rod Chapman led Lee and George Polley until they both got past, but a 'flu ridden Lee couldn't pass Polley at the end.

Hutchinson struggles home

Although without a handbrake for half the event and with only front brakes for the entire night, Mike Hutchinson and Eric Cowcill still managed to collect a narrow win last Saturday night on the Glossop & District MC's Burgess Bowl Rally.

On a good route in the Buxton area and making full use of the moors south of Huddersfield, the event produced a field of 75 of whom only 33 struggled home after a night which saw plenty of light fog punctuating the route until around midnight.

The rally started bringing out its surprises early for last year's winners Ron Shipp and Kevin Scott ripped the exhaust off their Firenza on the first selective which virtually started the competitive motoring and that was that.

Hutchinson and Cowcill were in trouble here, losing their handbrake on their borrowed Lloyds of Stafford RS 2000 and Mike Pattison and David Taylor (RS 2000), were thundering along at great speed in their wake. In fact at petrol the Pattison/Taylor equipe were leading while Geoff Birkett and Dave Orrick, down to try and clinch the northern championship, were handily placed in fourth in their Ascona, behind John Leyland/Neil Fairhurst.

Disaster struck quickly for them on the restart when they hit a dog, damaged the radiator and waterworks and were out. With their handbrake fixed Hutchison and Cowcill started to pull back their two minute deficit on Pattison and Taylor and by the end of the night they were home with a total of 28.58m, beating their rivals by just over a minute on 29.88m.

Leyland and Fairhurst (RS 2000) were a fair distance off the pace in third on 37.98m with R. Needham and Ian Mugglestone a further sizeable way behind on 39.24m. Fifth, on 48.04m were Bob Mansfield and Mike Roper in their Mexico and Mike Vann and John Edgington (Escort), were sixth on 51.64m.

The best of the semi-experts were Mike Williams and Peter Milburn in ninth in their Escort TC on 2F 46.44m and the leading novices David Crosland and Graham Overton were 20th in their Mini on 8F 71.94m.

Bennett's Scott by 3s

Using a new course at Oulton Park, starting at the usual start and ending at the Bailey Bridge over the main entrance, there were some fine class battles at last Saturday's Longton & District sprint which got under way a little late due to the fog.

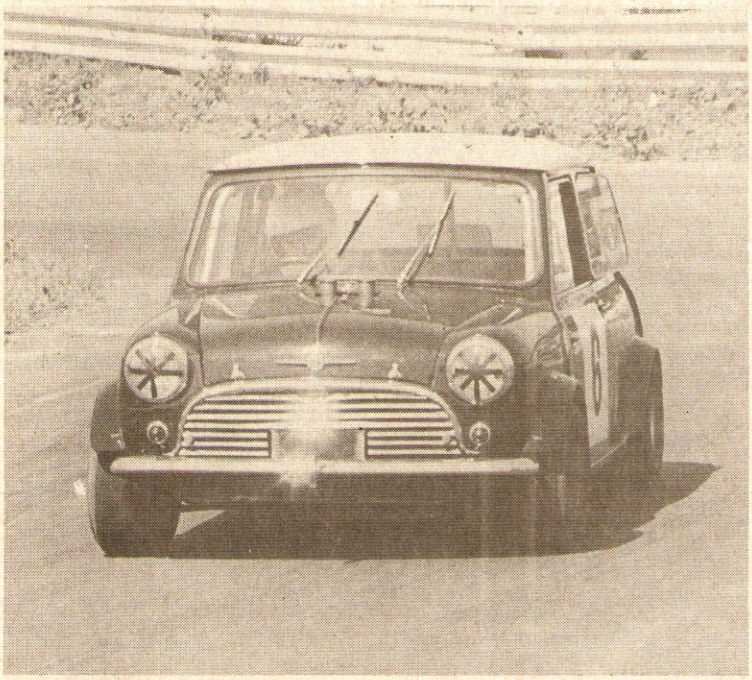
Eighty-seven competitors found their way to the venue and after three runs Phil Bennett emerged with BTD in his F2 Scott in 51.49s, a time set on his third run. He finished more than three seconds ahead of the field with Warren Booth's Lotus 69 just pipping Bob Prest's Mallock U2 for second best time.

In some incredibly close class battles Roy Greenwood (Mini) beat David Taylor's Datsun Cherry by 0.17s, Brian Sutcliffe and John Casey were only nine tenths apart in their Coopers, Brian Walker's Escort beat Vic Mills 3 litre Capri by 0.18s while Robin Askew (Midget) came from behind to pip David Gornall (Midget) by 0.13s.

Among the up to 1100 cc single seaters, Terrapin exponents John Buck and Keith Gowers finished just over half a second apart while Anthony Taylor (Lotus 69) had victory snatched from him by a third run time of 55.47s by David Ward's Lotus, a winning margin of 0.14s.

BTD: P. Bennett (F2 Scott), 51.49s.
Class winners: R. Greenwood (Mini), 64.38s; B. Sutcliffe (Cooper), 62.07s; B. Walker (Escort), 60.53s; T. Carthy (Mini), 62.01s; R. White (Escort), 59.21s; R. Askew (Midget), 70.57s; D. Liversidge (Elan), 59.00s; D. Abraham (Midget), 60.27s; B. Speak (Elan), 56.13s; B. Prest (Mallock U2), 54.95s; J. Marland (Marland Spec), 58.42s; T. Turnbull (Ginetta G12), 58.29s; J. Buck (Terrapin), 58.17s; D. Ward (Lotus), 55.47s; W. Booth (Lotus 69), 54.72s. **Novice:** R. Darlington (Kincraft), 57.43s.

Brian Sutcliffe first took his class by 0.9s from John Casey.



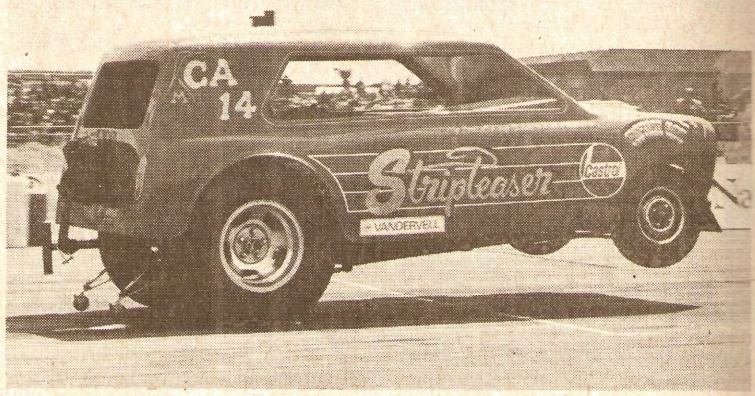
Strip teaser's title

At the October 5 drag meeting at Blackbushe, the NDRC brought their various championships to a conclusion. The title in the points championship went to the Stripteaser Team in a close finish with Brian Mondey from Fareham, finishing just three points apart. The new procomp class was enhanced by the establishment of the Radio Luxembourg 208 procomp trophy, won by Mike Hall with 41 points to Gerry Andrews' 37.

The NDRC's own trophy for the motor manufacturer whose products have won most points in the production class was won by Ford UK.

RAC National Drag Racing championship, final positions: 1, Brian Mondey, 74; 2, John Whitemore, 70; 3, Stripteaser team, 67; 4, Page Team, 54; 5, R. Oram, 50; 6, D. Edwards, 44.

Bob Messent's title winning Stripteaser in characteristic pose.



Abroad

David O'Keefe, who was the unchallenged winner of the 2CV 'Cross round at Clitheroe in September, was competing at the International finals held at Botterers, Switzerland last weekend. Over 120 cars were entered following events in Spain, Jugoslavia, Portugal and France. In his 1975 Citroen Dyane 6 entered and prepared by Graveley Motor Co of Stevenage, O'Keefe finished third in his heat and ninth in the final on Saturday and was doing just as well on Sunday when the gearbox packed up, having really impressed the French. Over 12,000 watched the muddy action.

Wendy Markey – three titles?

Wendy's sweep?

It looks as though Wendy Markey is in for a clean sweep in the British Women's Racing Drivers Club, for she's leading three out of their four championships, and can't really lead the fourth one as it's the Newcomers Award. However, her points standing is still sub-judice due to RAC tribunals so her points positions are provisional.

Sperex VHT championship: 1, Wendy Markey, 92; 2, Sue Tucker-Peake, 79; 3, Lorina Boughton, 78; 4, Divina Galica, 60; 5, Sylvia Rouse, 49; 6, Janet McPherson, 49.
Goodwin Trophy: 1, Wendy Markey, 56; 2, Lorina Boughton, 52; 3, Sue Tucker-Peake, 46; 4, Sylvia Rouse, 37; 5, Alison Davis, 36; 6, Divina Galica, 32.
Newcomers Award: 1, Divina Galica, 32; 2, Janet McPherson, 14.
Embassy Trophy: 1, Wendy Markey, 77½; 2, Sue Tucker-Peake, 65; 3, Lorina Boughton, 65; 4, Divina Galica, 47½; 5, Sylvia Rouse, 42; 6, Janet McPherson, 41.

● A motoring cavalcade is being planned for Wolverhampton this Saturday morning. Although there aren't many actual racing cars, there are a number of historic cars and rally machines. The whole event is being arranged by Rackhams of Wolverhampton.

Keith's first

Yorkshire SCC's Pennine Trial, clashing as it did with the RAC round in the Midlands, attracted only 12 cars to Cromwell Woods, Brighouse, last Sunday. But it was a very happy Keith Butterfield who collected victory — his first ever on a sporting trial — with a total of 57 marks lost in his Cannon.

He finished three up on Bob Dayson's Cougar with Eric Eadon's Ford Special third on 65 marks. In the early stages Butterfield lay only fourth for Ralph Needham (Cannon) and Lol Hurt (Ford Special) were well ahead. Disaster struck both, however, the Cannon man succumbing to a broken drive shaft while Hurt broke a hub.

Butterfield then had a real tussle with Dayson and came through to win in the latter stages. Next three places went to Ray Hatton (Harford) on 70 marks, Alan Bush (Ford) on 90 marks and Gordon Carr (Cannon) with a 134 mark total.

● There will be no changes in either the vehicle or championship regulations for the BRSCC Renault 5 challenge for next year.

Fisher retires, Roe's home

After a succession of second and third places, it all came right last Saturday night for the Whitchurch crew of Brian Roe and Peter Forrester who took their Escort Twin Cam to a comfortable win on the John Beech Trophy rally run jointly by Bromborough Pool and Mid Wirrall MCs. Using a 200 mile route on the old 117 map, Roe and Forrester had nearly five minutes in hand over a fifty strong entry with a total time of 29m 47s. Second in a similar car were Mike Jones and Paul Caswell on 34m 19s and then there was a long gap to the third crew of Roger Goodwin/Lawrence Willis (Avenger Tiger) who dropped 49m 35s.

In the first half, Roe and Jones were almost equal and at first petrol each had dropped eight minutes. They were strongly challenged by Bobby Fisher/Roger Powley (Imp) who were only two minutes down on the leaders and although they closed the gap early in the second half they disappeared when the Imp lost a driveshaft. Two selectives — one near Hiernant pass and the other on the South side of Lake Vyrnwy — sorted out many of the entries and fog midway through the second half also accounted for much lost time.

Best of the semi experts and fourth overall were Alun Owen/Michael Dennett (Escort Twin Cam) on 51m 45s with Brian Howardson/Kevin Jones bringing their Cooper S into fifth spot on 52m 16s. Second best semi-experts and having only their third event together were George Showne/Ken Robinson in their RS2000 on 66m 53s. The novice winners Stan Williams/David Owen were classified eighth in their Mexico on 68m 59s.

● In the RAC Sporting Trials Championship Jack Pearce has the series sewn up despite failing to score. He stays on 146 points, Julian Fack improved to 123 points, one ahead of brother John who has a round in hand and Tony Harrison, also scores in hand, is fourth on 101 points.

● More than 70 entries have been received for this Sunday's final of the Journal Trophy/ANECCC Autocross Championship which is being run by Tynemouth & District MC at Hagg House Farm, Ellington, near Morpeth.

Nymph's nimble Derngate

Robin Jaeger from Kendal scored a popular and deserved win on the RAC qualifying Derngate Trophy trial run by Northants & District MC in the Clipstone area last Sunday. Clashing as it did with the BT&RDA event run by the Yorkshire SCC, the entry of 23 was down somewhat on previous years, but all the leading championship contenders were present.

Jack Pearce proved he was really human by going up one section the wrong way, and this allied to trouble he was having with his carburettor, put him down to a very unaccustomed sixth in his previously all-conquering Kincraft.

Jaeger, in contrast, had a fine day having made the long journey down from Kendal and his Nymph held off the likes of Julian Fack, Laurie Brown and Tony Harrison who took the next three spots. Jaeger took the lead early in the day when the sections were nice and greasy and at the end of the first round of 10 sections, he was two ahead of Julian in his Impunity. Third, at this stage, was Harrison in his Kincraft but he was overtaken by Brown's Aberties on the second tour.

The Nymph man made his mark on the second tour when he pulled out a 10 mark lead which he subsequently held to the end of the day to finish on 38 marks.

1, R. Jaeger (Nymph), 38 marks; 2, Julian Fack (Impunity), 48 marks; 3, L. Brown (Aberties), 70 marks; 4, T. Harrison (Kincraft), 73 marks; 5, John Fack (Impunity), 86 marks; 6, J. Pearce (Kincraft), 93 marks.

Rally X at Knockhill

The 750 MC (Scotland) organise the second rallycross of the season this Sunday at Knockhill, Dunfermline. The first three place winners at the last meeting were all Escorts for Ian Smith, Donald Heggie and Robin Kinnear and once again they'll be entered. Bill Crawford still reckons on beating them in his 2.6 Viva and other cars include Bill Muirhead's Trirojag, Derek Mackie's Escort and Harry Rodgers BMW 2002 Tii. The meeting starts with practice at 11 am and racing at 2 pm.

East Anglian quiz series

Following an idea from Ford's Stuart Turner at a recent forum at the opening of the new premises in Norwich of the new Ford main dealers Spruce Howlett Ltd, the "Castrol" quiz format is to be revived in the Norfolk/Suffolk area. Roger Willis, who was also at the forum, offered to supply and update the Castrol questions and the series will start in the new year and run until the end of April. It is hoped that up to 16 local clubs will be involved.

Silverstone personalities somehow got involved in a pram race organised by Silverstone marshals outside FF driver Geoff Creber's pub at Akeley, near Buckingham. Pierre Aumonier (did you recognise the profile?), above, drops the flag for the start. Below: FF tactics at the chicane. Pit stops were obligatory for pints of frothing liquid and a number of racing motorists were seen to be strangely attired in (Nomex) nappies etc.

Londores almost certain

With best times coming from second runs on the stubble field at Grangemoor Farm, Ponteland, near Newcastle, John Lindores almost made certain of taking the Journal Trophy/ANECCC Autocross Championship by collecting BTD at last Sunday's penultimate round run by Hadrian and Cramlington MC's.

With his main challenger Trevor Olds suffering a rare defeat thanks to a variety of misfortunes, Lindores, in his BDA engined Escort, is all but home and dry with 88 points while Olds, in his big engined Mini, is seven points behind and needs almost a miracle to take the title at the final round this weekend.

Lindores' winning time was 2m 9.8s on a bitterly cold day and only Geoff Manners, in his 998 Mini, won his class of the championship contenders. Four different makes of car rolled, a Firenza, a Mini Marcos, an Imp and Willie Watson really rolled his big engined Mini into almost total scrap.

Harry Horne was the fly in the ointment ahead of Olds by two-tenths while Peter Richardson and Malcolm McConnachie had a fine duel in an Imp v Avenger GT struggle. Poor Dominic Buckley was down to third in his Escort behind Les and Edna Eagleton.

BTD: J. Lindores (Escort), 2m 9.8s.
Class winners: G. Manners (Mini), 2m 25.6s; H. Horne (Mini), 2m 20.4s; H. Currell (Anglia), 2m 33.0s; V. Hart (Escort), 2m 28.8s; P. Richardson (Imp), 2m 41.6s; L. Eagleton (Escort), 2m 19.4s.

Smith's appeal

A rather surprising decision greeted Marc Smith following his appeal after disqualification from a Radio One event at Brands Hatch on September 7. Smith went off mildly during the race and came back onto the track and proceeded to knock off Mike Smith and contact Rod Birley.

Marc Smith was excluded from the results, but at a recent hearing, an RAC tribunal reinstated him in the results with reservations. They said that with close racing in this class of events, it wasn't surprising to find incidents such as these, but deplored them. They reinstated Marc Smith in the results, but fined him £35 and also costs of £25.

Westley BTD

Workington and District MC had 45 entries at Calva farm near Workington last Sunday for their first ever closed joint autocross. Sponsored by Ontime Ltd, the event saw Midlander Terry Westley collect BTD in his 2.1 VW in 90.91s.

Eddie Farrell came from behind to win his class in an Avenger and in the big Escort/Anglia class, David Barnes and Mike Livingstone were only 0.8s apart in their Escort.

BTD: T. Westley (VW), 90.91s.
Class winners: J. McKenzie (Lancia Fulvia), 98.24s; J. Steele (Datsun 1600), 104.55s; E. Farrell (Avenger), 99.66s; P. Huntington (Cooper), 95.83s; D. Stott (Cooper S), 96.49s; D. Barnes (Escort), 102.15s; J. Clarkson (Escort), 92.18s.

BRIEFLY . . . .

● Stuart Patterson, who has been contesting club production saloon car events in a Capri, raced at Brands Hatch over the weekend in the Marshall Wingfield Opel Commodore which is normally driven by Peter Hanson. Patterson, who didn't have a particularly happy weekend with a misfire, intends to campaign the car in production saloon car racing next year and was just having a trial drive.

● With two rounds to go in the ANWCC rally championship Jim Corner and Brian Goff are respective leaders. Corner in his Mexico has 98 points to the 80 points of Colin Mack while Goff leads the navigators on 101 points with David Thomas second on 90. The two remaining rounds are the Martin Group rally next month and the J. J. Brown in December.

● Two new cars appeared on the Derngate Trophy Sporting Trial last weekend. Charles Pollard turned up with his Kincraft but did not get the hang of it and John Beson appeared with a lightened JABS but was also down the finishing order. Malcolm Eaves, the former hill climb man, turned up with his Bilbo and was running fairly well in the morning until the water pump packed up on the second tour.

● Regs are now available for Herts County Automobile and Aero Club's sprint at Silverstone on November 22. Entries are limited to 80 plus reserves and the secretary of the meeting is D. G. Woodard, 449 North Western Avenue, Watford, Herts.

● Tony Dixon has attracted further sponsorship for his Formula Ford Elden. The new sponsor is Scarletts night club of Croydon, who hope to involve their clientele in the racing game with forums, etc. They've also support from Continental Car Centre in Caterham, Renault specialists.

● An interesting idea suggested by Chris Hart of the Northern Champagne Clubmans Challenge is that organisers of meetings charge an extra £2 for each late entry . . .

● Autocross drivers will be pleased to learn that the Standard Class awards for BTRDA autocross championship rounds are being reintroduced next year.

Championship positions

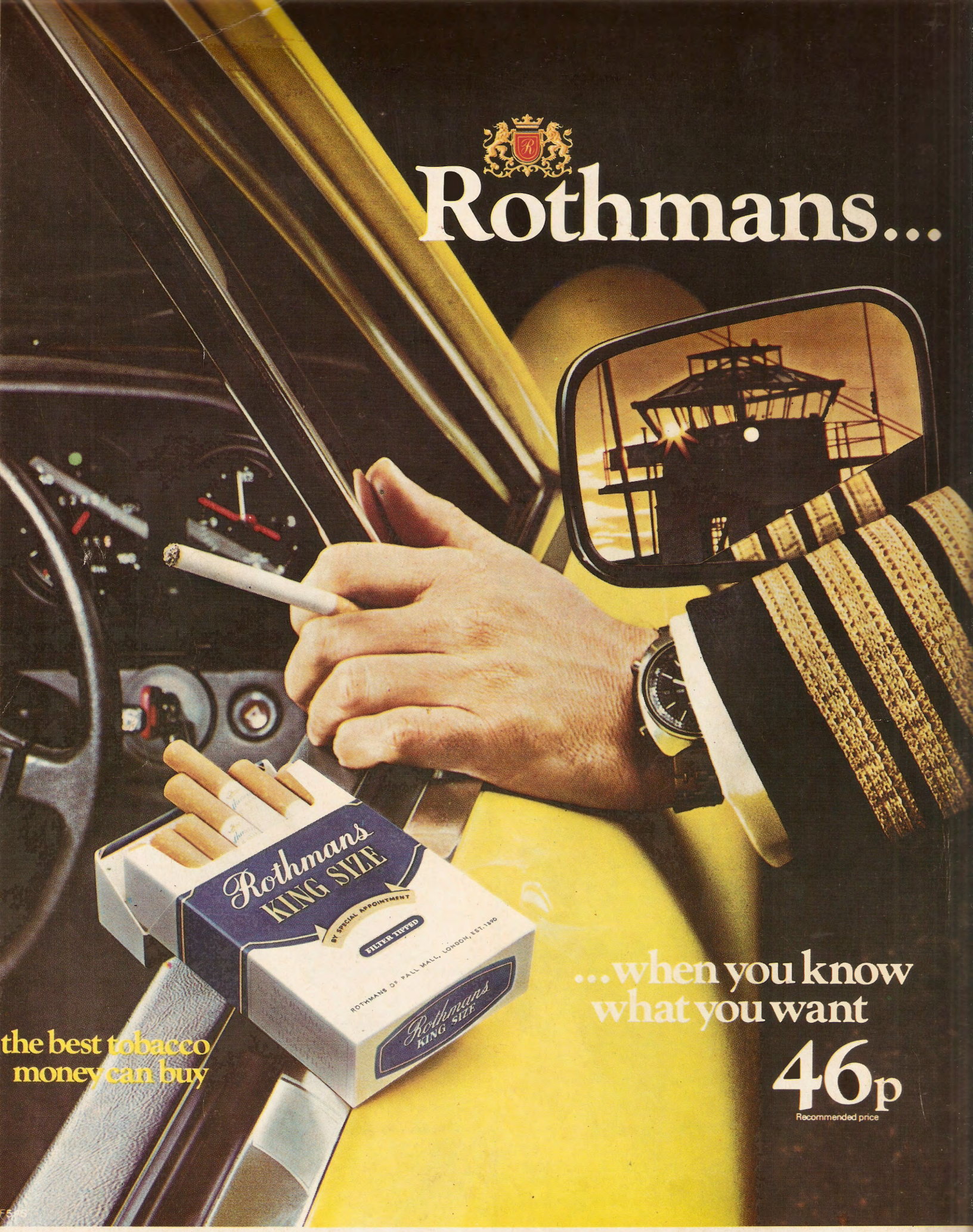
RAC Sprint championship, final positions: 1, Dave Harris, 68; 2, David Franklin, 54; 3, Bob Rose, 54; 4, David Render, 49; 5, Johnty Williamson, 49; 6, Rob Turnbull, 45.

Allied Polymer Group FF2000 championship, final positions: 1, Derek Lawrence*, 95; 2, Bernard Vermilio, 72; 3, Ian Taylor, 48; 4, Jeremy Rossiter, 44; 5, Tiff Needell, 35; 6, Syd Fox, 27. (*Champion.)

Oldham and Crowther Thoroughbred sports car championship, final positions, class A: 1, John Chatham, 43; 2, David Preece, 33; 3, John Harper, 22; 4, Gary Bristow, 18. **Class B:** 1, Reg Woodcock, 56; 2, Simon Phillips, 32; 3, Alan Ede, 31; 4, Robert Mansfield, 12. **Class C:** 1, Bruce Brown, 43; 2, Mike Gue, 41; 3, Jerry Trace, 33; 4, Mike Walker, 20.

JCB/Speed Merchants Historic car championship, final positions, over 3000 cc: 1, David Ham, 24; 2, Martin Morris, 22; 3, John Beasley, 20. **2001 to 3000 cc:** 1, Willie Green, 30; 2, Frank Lockhart, 24; 3, Frank Sytner, 10. **Up to 2000 cc:** 1, Simon Phillips, 30; 2, Ted Rollason, 24; 3, Robert Cooper, Tony Goodwin, 13.

Speed Merchants Team Trophy: 1, Robert Cooper, Simon Phillips, 48; 2, Willie Green, Patrick Lindsay, 40; 3, David Ham, Peter van Rossem and Bruce Halford, Martin Morris, 39.



MIDDLE TAR GROUP

As defined in H.M. Government Tables.

EVERY PACKET CARRIES A GOVERNMENT HEALTH WARNING