Autosport

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Kyalami:-Lauda's hollow victory

Tom Pryce tribute □ Arnoux inherits F2 Silverstone

Autosport

March 10, 1977 Vol 66 No 10

this week

2 Pit & Paddock

6 Racecard

8 Correspondence

10 Tom Pryce—a tribute

12 South African GP : Triumph and tragedy

21 Brands Hatch : A cracking start

24 Special Stage

29 Portuguese Rally : Alen has the answer

36 Road Test : Porsche 924

38 New from Porsche : The incomparable 928

41 Silverstone F2 : Who was the right one ?

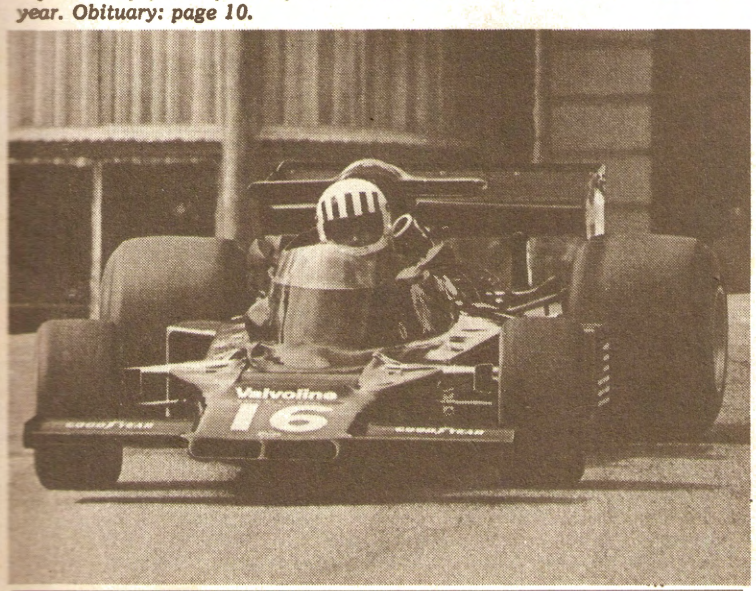
45 Silverstone F3 : Hello goodbye Dolly

46 Silverstone G1 : The Spice of life

50 Sports Extra

56 Weekend Sport

Motor racing will be the poorer for the loss of Tom Pryce and his superlatively flamboyant style. Tom's Shadow is pictured at Monaco last year. Obituary: page 10.



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Marshal training

Last Saturday's appalling tragedy at Kyalami once again forces the attention of all involved in Formula 1 racing on the worrying variations in standards of course marshalling from country to country. Like the fatal accident to Roger Williamson at Zandvoort in 1973, it is to be hoped that the end result of the South African incident will be a positive improvement in standards which will allow our Grand Prix drivers to race in greater safety.

There have frequently been suggestions in years past about means to raise the standards of marshalling abroad to a level which compares with that achieved in Britain. Most of them have been largely unworkable. The Formula 1 Constructors Association, however, has now achieved sufficient influence to ensure that steps are taken immediately to raise standards.

There is ample marshalling expertise available for an extensive training programme to be established under the auspices of the F1CA and with the close co-operation of the CSI and the race organizers. This training programme should be financed by the F1CA, thus ensuring that the majority of Formula 1 teams and sponsors contributes towards the costs, and also by the host organizers and/or promoters. Since standards in Britain are universally recognized as the best, we propose that any such scheme should be based on British facilities and expertise. Additional funds could be contributed, perhaps, by British manufacturers of safety equipment, who might see a scheme like this as a means not only of making a positive contribution to the sport, but also of marketing their products abroad.

The scheme should be operated by a special sub-committee responsible to the CSI's Safety Committee, and formed by representatives of the CSI and the F1CA. The committee should establish new and much more stringent requirements of both marshalling and equipment, and these facilities should be inspected under the CSI's track inspection procedure. The licence to hold a Grand Prix should be subject to the same sanctions if the marshalling requirements are not met in full.

As part of these regulations, each organizer should be required to send race marshals who would be acting in positions of responsibility to England for an annual symposium, which would cover all aspects of marshalling instruction. For the first year of the scheme, this intensive course in England should be supplemented by the establishment of a special force composed of fully experienced marshals, each an expert in his field. The organizers should be required to provide facilities for this party to travel to the Grand Prix circuits in rotation a month or so before each race in order to undertake a practical training programme for marshals *in situ*.

Such a scheme would not encounter the difficulties imposed by other suggestions, which run into all kinds of problems concerning personnel, payment, national pride and local experience. The cost—especially as we are dealing with human life—would not be prohibitive. And we can think of no more eloquent tribute to our deeply lamented Tom Pryce than that his name should be associated with it.

cover picture

Mixed feelings for Niki Lauda and Jody Scheckter on the Kyalami rostrum last Saturday after they had finished first and second in the South African GP, in which Tom Pryce lost his life. Full report : page 12. Photo : Jeff Hutchinson.

next week

World Champion James Hunt reflects on the tragic South African Grand Prix, and looks ahead to the Race of Champions—Our detailed preview of the big Brands Hatch Formula 1 meeting—Walter Rohrl on the Opel international rallying programme—Private Ear—The ShellSport International series starts at Mallory Park—Ford Fiesta S road test*

* These items were correct at the time of going to press.

edited by Nigel Roebuck

Williams F1 March drive for Neve

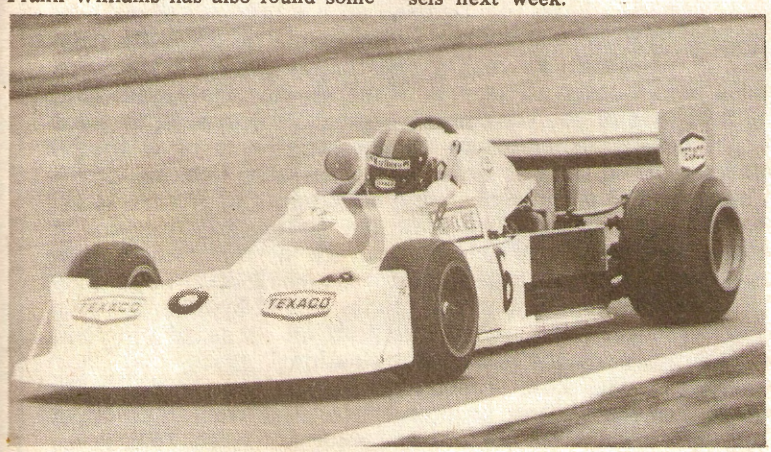
As we forecast a couple of weeks ago, Frank Williams has decided to leave Walter Wolf Racing (née Frank Williams Racing), and will once more run his own F1 outfit. Rumours that this would happen eventually were rife throughout the second half of last season when it was becoming obvious that Wolf was something more than just a sponsor and was taking over.

Over the winter it appeared that Frank's main function within the team was the acquisition of sponsorship, at which he has proved singularly adept in the past. But his motivation has always come primarily from a real love of racing, and most people felt he would not be really happy again until running his own team once more.

From the Spanish Grand Prix onwards, the newly constituted Williams team will run a March 771 for Patrick Neve, who so dominated last Sunday's *Daily Express* Trophy at Silverstone. The young Belgian, who seemed destined to become yet another of the sport's forgotten men after a disastrous time in 1976, has worked tremendously hard over the winter to ensure himself of a future. After three outings with a RAM Brabham and one with the Ensign, last season fizzled out to nothing. At the beginning of the year he had signed a contract with Bernie Ecclestone (after which he had to turn down an offer from John Surtees to drive the Durex TS19), but nothing ever came of it. Patrick, therefore, set about finding himself a sponsor in Belgium, and this he has done. Frank Williams has also found some money for the enterprise, and the team is now sufficiently well financed to undertake a full season of GP racing (including Watkins Glen and Mosport), despite the fact that Williams is no longer a member of the F1CA.

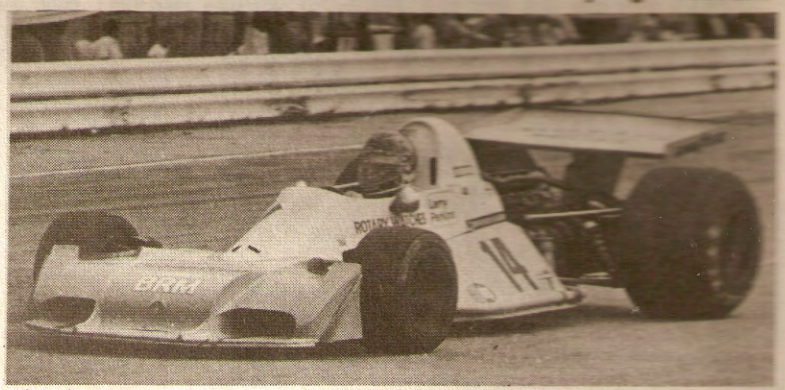
Frank was at Silverstone on Sunday (along with Max Mosley and Ken Tyrrell, who had dashed back from Kyalami), and was delighted with his new boy's sensational performance in the works March-BMW 772P. Equally thrilled were Mosley and Robin Herd. "He's obviously a very, very good driver," enthused Max on Monday, "and, apart from the fact that he was so quick, the thing that impressed us was his consistency. His lap times varied hardly at all." Jochen Neerpasch was amazed at the performance of this "unknown," and we think he may well have returned to Germany with some sort of "Stuck deal" in mind for the Belgian. "Yes, Neerpasch was impressed," agreed Mosley. Would March consider running a car for Neve if BMW were to offer an attractive deal?" "That's not the plan at the moment," said Max, "but sometimes things can change, you know. . . ."

So Patrick Neve is very much the man of the moment. In his first drive for seven months, his first F2 drive ever, he made many of the supposed "aces" look somewhat second-rate, and now comes the news of the F1 deal. An official announcement regarding Neve and the Williams March is to be made in Brussels next week.





Patrick Neve's pace and maturity in the works March caused a sensation at Silverstone last Sunday (above). Rene Arnoux could hardly believe his good fortune after the race, while Neve's expression says it all. . . .



The old P201 held together for Larry Perkins at Kyalami, but the Australian's patience must be wearing thin.

Stanley-BRM blues for Larry Perkins

The word from Kyalami was that Larry Perkins is starting to find his current employment rather unsatisfactory. Following the disastrous test session at Snetterton with the P207, the old P201 (campaigned so gallantly by Bob Evans during 1975) was dispatched to South Africa, and some indication of Larry's problems may be gauged from the evidence of the speed trap on the long Kyalami straight. Despite the fact that Perkins reportedly found the P201's engine stronger than that in the latest car, he recorded only 239kph through the trap compared with fastest man Jody Scheckter whose Wolf went through at over 281kph! For the record, the quickest cars at the recent Kyalami Formula Atlantic meeting were clocked at 244kph. . . . Also for the record, when the car made its first appearance at Kyalami in 1974, Jean-Pierre Beltoise qualified in 1m 17.3s and finished a strong second. Somewhere, therefore, BRM have contrived to lose 4s in three years.

From our telephone conversation with them last week it is clear that Rotary's patience with the team goes beyond the call of duty, and we respect them for it. But how long will Larry's patience hold out? The Australian is held in high regard as a driver, but is patently wasting his time at present. Could he be looking for another drive? If so, the obvious opening would be at Team Surtees, for observers at Kyalami came back in no doubts that Big John is less than thrilled with Hans Binder, whose three outings with the team have been extremely disappointing. When he signed Vittorio Brambilla, Surtees made it plain that he wanted someone to get in his car and *drive* it. Were he to take on Perkins as well, he would have two such men. . . .

P207 tests at Donington

Last week, a modern F1 car set foot on Donington for a test session! In fact, the car in question was the BRM P207 driven, in Larry Perkins's absence, by Francois Migault. The track's final surfacing is not yet complete, but Migault was not going very hard, the team's intention being to see if the overheating problem had been solved. Apparently results were rather better this time, but Derbyshire in early March is not the Osterreichring in mid-August. . . . Migault hopes to drive a second BRM from Jarama onwards. Who knows, it could be the first one. . . .

G2 Mercedes 450 SLC

There are new rumours in the German magazine *Rallye Racing* about the racing comeback of a Mercedes-Benz 450SLC, prepared by the AMG tuning shop based at Affalterbach, near Stuttgart.

There are serious signs that a 500bhp Mercedes will be in action at Salzburgring for the second European Touring Car Championship event on April 24. No plans are finalised but, as we understand, AMG will do some races this year to gain experience of the car in preparation for a full 1978 ETC season.

Officially, AMG-director Hans-Werner Aufrecht has denied all speculation, but this seems to be only a precautionary measure. Sponsorship should come from the German Hannen-brewery, which has backed Harald Ertl in the past. Hannen is known as the "personal" sponsor of AMG with an alliance reaching back to 1971, when AMG raced the famous 300 SEL 6.8 at Spa-Francorchamps, Paul Ricard, Nürburgring and Hockenheim. Most spectacular triumph was their second place at the Spa 24-hour race.

One of the 1971 drivers, German Touring Car Champion Hans Heyer, is expected to test and drive the AMG-car in the future. Technical difficulties concern the gearbox (the 450SLC is fitted with an automatic transmission in production so they have to run this one also in racing), the final drive (probably because of the high power and torque output) and the lubrication system. Regulations don't allow dry sump lubrication on Gp 2 cars at the moment. On the other side, all seems to be well with the tyres, which come from Goodyear's Cologne base.

F1CA considers roll cages for GP cars

Tragically ironic, bearing in mind Tom Pryce's appalling accident last weekend, is the news that, at the F1CA meeting last Friday, the very day before, proposals were put to all members that new regulations regarding roll-cages be implemented in F1 racing as soon as possible.

In a great many recent motor racing accidents (such as those which befell Helmuth Koinigg at Watkins Glen in 1974 and Mark Donohue at the Osterreichring the following year), the driver might well have been saved from death or serious injury had there been some form of protective structure at the *front* of the cockpit as well as at the rear.

The impact of the marshal's heavy extinguisher against the Shadow (which was travelling at over 160mph) was such that most of the car's very substantial roll-over bar was torn away, so that it seems doubtful that even a device such as that proposed at the F1CA meeting could have done very much to protect the driver. Those, however, were freakish circumstances which God forbid should ever arise again.

Certainly, we think the idea a sound one. But apart from the fact that there are bound to be objections from certain quarters that roll-cages are not aesthetically pleasing, others feel that they will hamper the removal of an injured driver from, possibly, a burning car. Both these points are valid up to a point. No, roll-cages *don't* look very nice, though that seems of little consequence if they do indeed offer substantial protection to a driver's head. And, yes, they would make fire rescue more difficult, but many more racing fatalities are caused by head injuries than by burns.

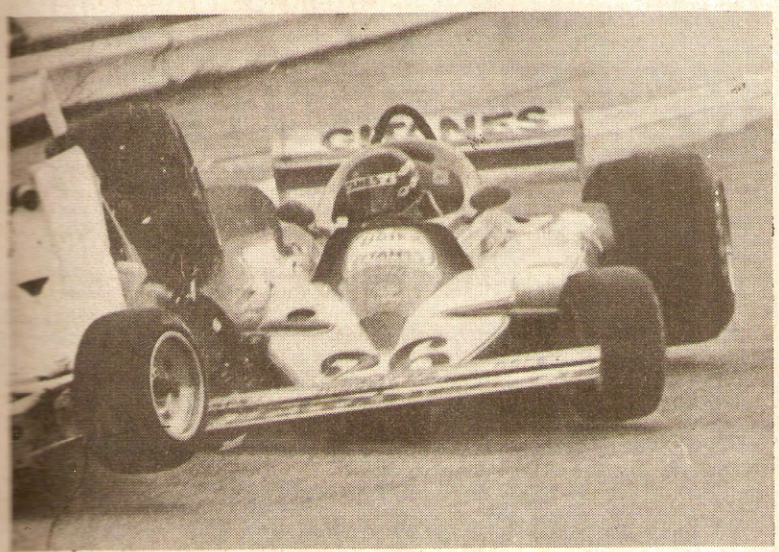
Three years ago, USAC veteran Mel Kenyon turned up at Indianapolis with a roll-cage fitted to his car. "They're all laughing now," he said, "but, sooner or later, they'll all be using them." After a lot of testing, in fact, Kenyon later removed the roll-cage after finding that it completely upset the aerodynamics at Indy speeds. The rear wing was not getting full down-force because the airflow was being disturbed by the cage. Removal of it instantly added 5mph to his lap speeds! Prior to that, roll-cages had been used on USAC Championship cars without any ill effects — but that was before the days of wings. USAC sprint cars have, of course, used them successfully for years, and in fact there has been a dramatic reduction in driver injuries and fatalities.

We believe that a roll-cage design was submitted to all the constructors last week, and that team designers are now considering its worth and feasibility. The proposal was that it be implemented by everyone in time for the Spanish Grand Prix.

If the roll-cages *do* appear for Jarama, and if they *do* upset the rear wings, then all the teams will have to face re-sorting programmes, and that's all there is to it. Quite obviously, driver safety is the primary consideration. The other great problem with all safety devices is that they tend to be heavy, the consequence being that no one will use the things until they are made mandatory.

While on the subject of safety, Mario Andretti (no doubt spurred on by his recent narrow escape at Interlagos) is currently pushing hard for the compulsory fitting of USAC-type fuel tanks. The material for them was developed for helicopter use in Vietnam and is said to withstand machine-gun fire. . . . As usual, there is a weight penalty — about 20lb — and Mario's suggestion is that the minimum weight l m t be raised by that amount to allow for them. It sounds like common sense, doesn't it?

A roll-cage might have saved the life of Tom Pryce at Kyalami last weekend, and this photograph illustrates clearly just how close to serious injury came Jacques Laffite. The Shadow's rear wheel is no more than a couple of feet from Laffite's head. A full roll-cage would surely have a definite application in this sort of situation, as also it would in the event of frontal impact such as that suffered by poor Pryce.



Mel Kenyon's roll-cage, as fitted to his USAC car three years ago. This particular example played havoc with the car's aerodynamics, but the basic idea is good sense.





New car and sponsors for Edwards.

Guy's G8 March V6

Guy Edwards has done it again. In this season's ShellSport International series, he will drive the ex-Hexagon March 751, powered by a 3.4-litre V6 Cosworth engine. The car will be sponsored by the weekly magazine *Titbits* in conjunction with the stop smoking product MD4. Edwards retains his ties with John Macdonald, who will run the car, and the team's first outing is at Mallory Park this weekend. Guy's ability to bring new sponsors to the sport is really quite remarkable.

Sullivan lands F2 Toj

Last week, we received a press release from Jorg Obermoser's Toj team entitled "New Toj for Keijo Rosberg" with a line through Rosberg's type-written name and the words "Danny Sullivan" substituted in ink! At the weekend, we spoke to Sullivan about it, and he said that, yes, he would be driving the BMW-powered car throughout this year's European F2 Championship. German sources told us last week that the replacement for Rosberg would be Rolf Stommelen, and we now learn that, in fact, two cars will be run. Their first appearance will be at Thruxton on Easter Monday.

New G2 Mazda

After their sometimes successful season in G2 last year, when they had two class wins at Salzburg and Mugello, Arian Racing and Smith Kendon Travel Sweets are to undertake a full season again this year in G2. However, instead of the RX3 that they used last year, the car will be an RX5 Cosmo complete with 2.6 rotary engine.

The car itself has been prepared by Arian, the company headed by John Markey who will be one of the drivers, and the engine has been worked on by Weslake Ltd. They say that it's developing nearly 3000bhp, and with a five-speed gearbox, it should be one of the quickest machines about. However, it is also the noisiest. . . .

The other driver in the Mazda when it goes to Europe is Mazda PR man David Palmer. He has negotiated deals with NGK, Ferodo, Bilstein and Corbeau but still needs a fuel/oil contract for the car. Smith Kendon, the travel sweets firm make 16 million tins of sweets a year, a very high percentage of which goes abroad, retain their involvement. The Mazda will initially run on carbs, but Weslake are obviously well involved, and are working on an injection system.

Ashley Lola needs miles

Formula 3 enthusiasts must wait a little longer before seeing the race debut of the Lola T570, which Ian Ashley is to drive.

The former BRM F1 driver practised the new car at Silverstone last Saturday and Sunday morning, recording a slow 1m 33.31s in the official session. He and the Lola Cars team decided to withdraw from the opening round of the Vandervell series until they have put some testing miles on the clock. The car was completed in the early hours of Saturday morning, and was obviously totally unsorted, suffering in particular from a braking problem which was severely unbalancing the car into the corners.

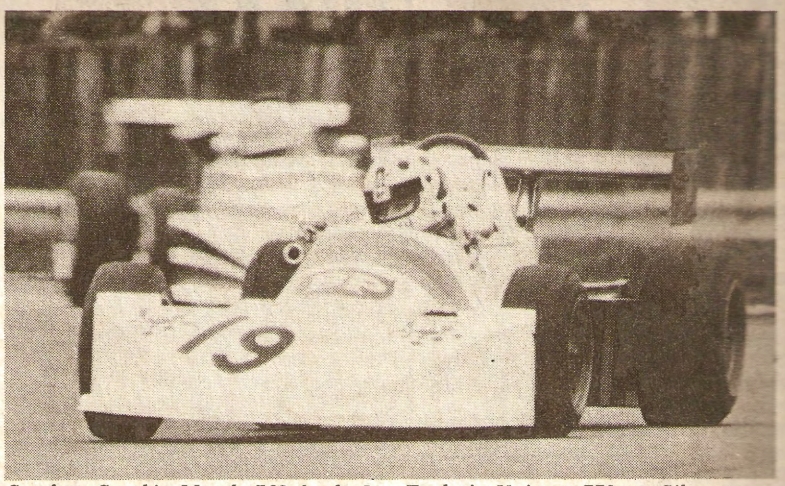
● Ian Grob missed the Silverstone Formula 3 race, and will not make his debut with his new Chevron B38 for another couple of weeks. Grob was playing with a go-kart 10 days ago, and fell off, breaking his collarbone. The new Chevron was entered at Silverstone by KVG Racing, the sponsors of Grob's sports car and Formula 2 efforts.

BBC plans Henton F1 documentary

Our feelings about the BBC's attitude to the television broadcasting of Grand Prix racing are well known, so we will not bore you with a further dissertation on the subject, particularly when your letters indicate almost unanimous approval for what we have said. (As licence-paying viewers like you, we also become fed up to the teeth with horses and plum-in-throat voices night after endless night, with constant reference made to the sponsors, but there you are. Some advertising, it seems, is more equal than others. . . .)

However, we do have some good news on that front. A 50min documentary is to be made about Grand Prix racing, or, more precisely, about the British Racing Team, the new F1 venture started recently by Brian Henton and Don Shaw. The latter, of course, works for the BBC a great deal as a script-writer, and he proposed to them that a film be made, not about the glossy, glamorous aspects of GP racing, but about the efforts made by a few friends to mount a genuinely competitive private challenge not only for F1 survival but for success. In the making of the film, the Beeb will have cameras at the Race of Champions, the Spanish Grand Prix and the John Player Grand Prix.

The contradiction in policy here is explained by the fact that there is a distinction between policy governing factual documentaries and sports programmes. Henton and Shaw are delighted that the BBC have agreed to make the film, and hope that it will help to thaw the ice which presently exists between the BBC and the F1CA. We are in total agreement with that, but still find it strange that the Beeb will have cameras at these races, but will not put them out live. . . .



Stephen South's March 763 leads Ian Taylor's Unipart 773 at Silverstone.

South gets the job done

Silverstone Formula 3 race winner Stephen South showed just what can be done on a shoestring budget last weekend. With no sponsorship apart from the usual trade support, South has had his March 763 in his garage at home in Harrow, Middlesex, in recent weeks, preparing the car himself for a make-or-break F3 season, his third in the formula. On Friday morning he loaded up the car and drove his van to Silverstone on his own. Fortunately, a kind offer of help from Alan Docking (who ran Rupert Keegan's F3 car last season) and friends got Stephen on to the track, where he put up the kind of performance which should have the sponsors queueing up.

Opert signs Tom Gloy

The Fred Opert team were trying out a new tweak on their Chevrons at Silverstone over the weekend. They had a new brake fluid called Prestone Silicone manufactured by the well-known Union Carbide company. The advantage of this is that it has a much higher boiling point and thus allows the brakes to be used harder. Other drivers remarked on Keke Rosberg's braking capabilities in particular, and it may become used universally throughout F2.

Opert rang us from Silverstone on Tuesday to say that he had decided to run a three-car team of Chevrons in the Atlantic series this year, with Rosberg as number one and the driver who finished second to him in New Zealand, Tom Gloy, also in the team. The third driver is undecided at the moment.

Hutch for Hill charity show

David Soul, one of the stars of *Starsky and Hutch*, is to top the bill at a Royal Gala Evening of Stars at the Gaumont Theatre, Southampton, on Monday, March 21. The show is in aid of The Graham Hill Appeal which aims to establish a unit in Graham's name at the Royal Orthopaedic Hospital to give intensive care to disabled people. Other stars appearing include Tom O'Connor, George Melly, the Goodies, Diane Solomon and the New Seekers, and the show, hosted by Michael Caine, will be held in the presence of The Earl Mountbatten of Burma, KG.

● The funeral of Tom Pryce will take place today (Thursday) at 2.30 pm, at St Bartholomew's Church, Otford, near Sevenoaks, Kent.



Jumper—better times ahead?

JPJ signs for Alfa

At last Jean-Pierre Jarier has found something to drive. He has signed a contract with Alfa Romeo to drive one of the latest Group 6 cars at Dijon in April and at Paul Ricard in July. For Dijon, he will share a car with Arturo Merzario, the other one being driven by regular Brabham-Alfa men Carlos Pace and John Watson. Vittorio Brambilla will also drive for the team on occasion.

Alfa Romeo have two types of car at their disposal this year, the very latest version of the 3-litre 33TT 12 and also the turbocharged 2-litre car. Jarier thinks there will be very little difference between the competitiveness of the two.

"Jumper" seems to be a much happier man now. At the end of last season, he seemed to be generally disillusioned with motor racing, had lost his Shadow F1 drive and appeared to have little in prospect. He is determined to use the Alfa drives to show the world that he has lost none of his ability and hopes that further drives with the team will result. As well as that, Jarier is fairly sure that he will participate in all the French F2 races, having agreed in principle a deal with Pierre Maublanc.

David Lang in F3 March

David Lang, the Australian former rally driver who raced in Formula Ford 1600 last season, looks like landing a works Formula 3 drive with March Racing.

Lang, who piloted the original Tiga for Tim Schenken and Howden Ganley in FF1600 novice events last year and made something of an impact with some ragged but very fast driving, was at Goodwood last Monday and at Silverstone on Tuesday at the wheel of a brand new March-Toyota 773. He had never driven a car with wings and racing tyres before, but got down to fairly respectable times in the 1m 18s bracket at Goodwood, and absolutely loved it: "I had a real ball out there—I certainly don't want to drive a Formula Ford again. . . ."

Provided that Lang's planned sponsorship arrangements come through, he will be out in the March at Thruxton this weekend. If all goes to plan, his car will be run this year by the March "Reading" team, alongside Aryon Cornelsen, while as at Silverstone James King and Mario Ferraris will drive the "Bicester" cars.



David Lang—finished with FF1600.

Florida in February is a nice place to be, as those on the Page Tours/ AUTOSPORT *trip to the Daytona 500 found out recently. The tripsters included British Stock Car Champion Tom Laffey.*



edited by Quentin Spurring

Foyt opens USAC season in style

Last Sunday, at Ontario Motor Speedway in California, the 1977 Citicorp USAC Championship Trail got under way. For A. J. Foyt, it was a special occasion. It was Foyt's 250th USAC championship start, and it also marked the beginning of his 20th USAC season (and his 24th season in motor racing)!

So. How did A. J. celebrate? Well, he took the lead after 25 of the 80 laps, and pulled effortlessly away to win by half a lap. That's how.

In qualifying, the USAC circus experienced the kind of domination which has been predicted for the Ford-Cosworth DFX engine this season. Cars powered by the sleeved version of the DFV Formula 1 engine occupied the three prime positions on the starting grid, with Johnny Rutherford on the pole with the works Citicorp McLaren M24. Last year's Indy 500 winner ran at over 197mph, which is 7mph better than the pole speed at Ontario last season. Tom Sneva made it a crushing debut for the new M24 McLaren by putting Roger Penske's CAM2 car alongside the works machine on the front row, and Al Unser completed the DFX picture with a third fastest lap in the VPJ Parnelli, a revised version of the car with which Unser scored the first DFX USAC victory in the Schaefer 500 at Pocono last June.

At the start of the race—the Datsun 200—Rutherford destroyed his chances by missing a gear; two pit-stops later, the poleman was out, on the ninth lap. Showing in the lead came Gordon Johncock, the reigning USAC champion, and the Sinmast Wildcat led the race for Offenhauser with Sneva and Foyt in the latest Coyote (which he had qualified sixth) in hot pursuit. A.J. forced his way into second place to challenge Johncock for the lead, and took over the running on the 25th lap.

Johncock maintained his second place until, on his third pitstop, a wheel nut jammed and he lost 2½ minutes, ceding the place to Al Unser. Sneva had been running a strong third, but his DFX blew at the 60-lap mark.

Unser ran out of fuel on the last lap and coasted across the line in second place still ahead of Pancho Carter in the latest Offenhauser powered Eagle, who would have provided a greater threat had he not lost time in the pits with a flat rear tyre. Tom Bigelow's old-style Eagle-Offy came in fourth in front of Johncock, while after Roger McCluskey and Bobby Unser both retired their Lightnings, Bill Simpson finished sixth in a Teddy Yip entered McLaren M16C.

Alan Jones, who is to drive for Yip's Theodore Racing team in the three USAC 500-milers, took part in practice but withdrew from the race, and his car was taken over by Steve Krisiloff. Vern Schuppan, who like



A.J.—250 USAC starts.

Jones had made the trip over to California for the USAC opener having competed in the recent Rothmans International F5000 series in Australia, finished the Datsun 200 in ninth place in his ex-Johncock championship winning Wildcat.

The next race on the USAC schedule is at Phoenix, Arizona, on March 27.

JPJ wins a wild one

Last weekend, Jean-Pierre Jarier won the Six Hours of Dacca, a curious event in West Africa for a variety of cars up to and including Group 5! The 4.3km circuit sounds some way from a GPDA dream, being made up of public roads, including a stretch of motorway. Leading entries were Group 5 Porsche Carreras for Jarier and Carlo Facetti, the latter's car being one of the Kremer entries at the recent Daytona 24 Hours. As well as these two, there were sundry other Porsches, Panteras, Alfas and even a Stratos, many of the drivers being completely unknown to us.

A pitched battle between Jarier (driving a Porsche for the first time in his life) and Facetti was the main feature of the race, but the Frenchman generally had the upper hand and, when Facetti finally retired after going off the road. Jarier was without problems, covering exactly 500 miles in the six hours.

Rothmans Far East series

For the second year, Rothmans International are running a lucrative Far Eastern Series, incorporating six races and including the Grands Prix of Malaysia, Indonesia, Macao and the Phillipines. Total prize money has been increased to a purse of US$26,000, and eligible cars are 1600cc *Formule Libre*, the same as last year, with a two-valve per cylinder class for residents of the region.

As only the four best scores of the series count, European drivers could find the series worthwhile, as three of the events are run after the close of the European season. The first event of the series will be the Malaysian GP on the weekend of April 24, followed by the round-the-houses Penang GP the following week. The Indonesian GP is scheduled for October, with the Macao event in November, followed immediately by the Phillipines race.

Hospitality, weather and food are of the highest order during the series, registration for which is now under way. Further information may be obtained from K. Y. Chin, c/o Rothmans of Pall Mall, Virginia Park, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; or from Ian Gow, Tobacco Exporters International, PO Box 14802, Hong Kong.

● For 42-year-old A. J. Foyt, the Datsun 200 win was his 37th USAC Championship victory, and his 105th finish in the top three. Anthony Joseph made it even more clear that life begins at 40 when his Chevrolet led the supporting USAC formula stock car race all the way until blowing a tyre with three laps to go, handing the race to Jerry Austin, who won by a car's length from Bobby Unser.



Moët winner

Niki Lauda's astounding consistency has won a magnum of Moët et Chandon champagne for John Glanville, of Buckhurst Hill, Essex, who predicted that the Austrian would win at 116.59mph, his winning average last year. In fact, Niki averaged 116.588mph!

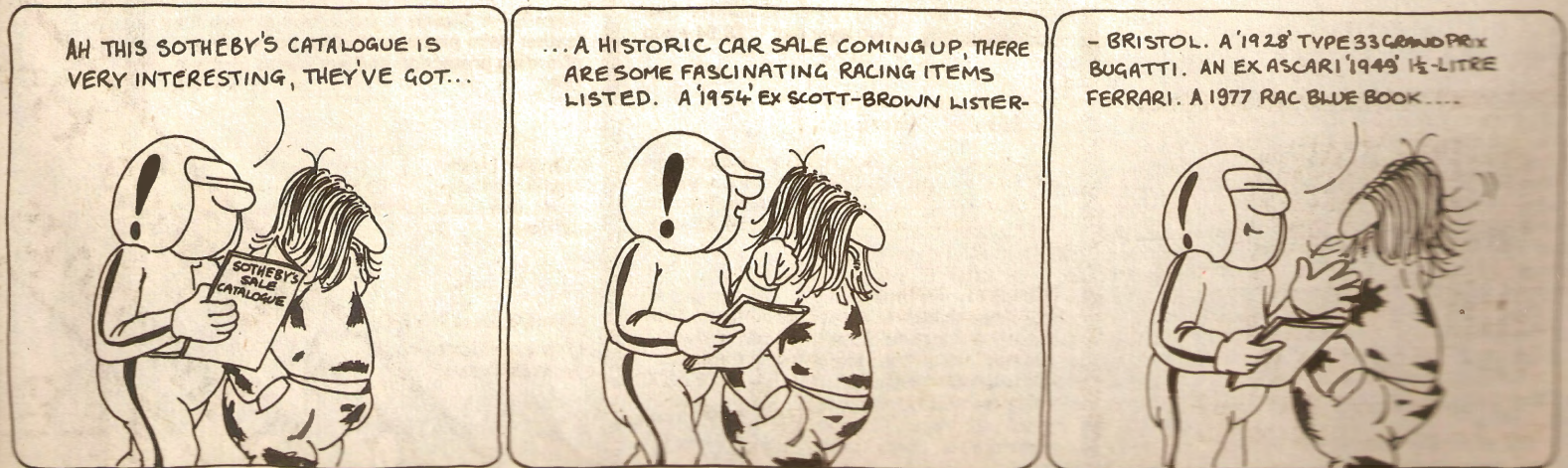
Your favourite to win the race was James Hunt, with Lauda second. Together, the two pulled almost half the total votes cast.

The next opportunity for you to land a magnum of the glorious fluid comes in three weeks' time when the Grand Prix teams assemble at Long Beach for US Grand Prix West. Last year's winner was Clay Regazzoni's Ferrari at 85.572mph. Can he do it this year for Ensign?

Send your entries (on a postcard, please) to AUTOSPORT *Editorial, Regent House, 54-62 Regent Street, London, W1A 2YJ, not later than Friday, April 1.*

catchpole

by Barry Foley



correspondence

the editor is not bound to agree with readers' opinions

RAC agree . . .

May I ask for your assistance in making an open reply to John Brown's open letter to me (March 3)?

We are in full agreement in aiming to make the Lombard RAC the best rally in the world. Even being the best does not necessarily mean being beyond criticism. If criticism is justified, I am always grateful for it being put as constructively as does John Brown. He has presented a number of worthwhile paths of action and I would like to say that most are already being surveyed. In only one area do I not quite see eye to eye with him and this is what appears to be a light dismissal of commercial interests. I would have thought that his own direct involvement in the past location of the rally would have brought more active realisation that this cannot entirely be ignored, and by this I do not mean that Lombard seek in any way to affect the planning of the rally as a competition.

Wishing John another successful rallying year in 1977.

LONDON, SW1 D. H. DELAMONT

Director, RAC Motor Sport Division

. . . but not everyone

In his inimitable style, John Brown makes some very valid points in his open letter to Dean Delamont. Equally in character is his use of a sledge-hammer and cold chisel as his principal surgical instruments.

Rule One: "Get a dictator and let him get on with it!" Does John really want Field Marshal Amin to take over the running of the rally? I think not. Does he really blame the Royal Automobile Club for insisting that its permanent salaried executive takes the title of "Clerk of the Course"? If so, I think he is being unreasonable. There are many advantages in a situation where the "rallymaster" does not top the bill; for instance, when a diplomatic problem can be passed upstairs and so allow him to concentrate on rally technology. It matters very little what title he is given as long as he possesses sufficient strength of character and commands respect in the rallying world.

Rule Two: "The Lombard RAC Rally is for competitors first and foremost." I agree; if John means that they should receive 51 per cent of the organisers' attention. I suspect that he has in mind a rather higher figure. Of all sports I can think of none which relies on a higher degree of tolerance by non-competitors; not only those sufficiently interested to spectate, but those who encounter the rally by chance and on whose normal lives it intrudes. Money is flowing into the sport as a result of public interest. The sport needs the money and the public must receive a very large chunk of the organisers' consideration. If that entails subjecting competitors to "Mickey Mouse" stages —too bad!

Rule Three: "Find out what competitors want and give it to them." I seem to recall John voicing this opinion ten years ago in the heyday of "on the road" rallying. They certainly knew what they wanted—higher average speeds, a blind eye turned towards "pruned" mileages and the paying of no more than token respect to black spots. I venture to suggest that had they been heeded the term "rally" would by now have reverted to its original meaning of "A gathering together of Boy Scouts." By all means give competitors the opportunity to contribute. Some sound ideas will result—as well as some crazy ones.

Rallying is changing more rapidly than any other sport. The Lombard RAC Rally, as the focal point of the sport, needs a set of regulations which keeps pace with the evolution and designed to ensure the continued running of the event in a manner which is acceptable to all concerned. Regulations are not a punitive straitjacket; they are the tools used by an organiser to ensure a fair and harmonious event. Those for the next Lombard RAC should be drawn up from first principles. Priorities must be established. Pretty high on the list must come spectator safety.

I like the idea of running cars through stages at intervals of 30 secs wherever possible, and ensuring that the "show goes on" exactly at the published time. It may be that such measures conflict with the desires and whims of competitors. Matters such as these must be weighed carefully.

After a new set of regulations has been drafted I would suggest that a "model" is set up and a group of current competitors invited to take part in one or more table-top rallies. After this, a club which is seeking to upgrade its stage event should be invited to run it to the draft regulations of the Lombard RAC. By this process I am sure that the rally can regain its status and ensure its future.

SWINDON, WILTS TONY AMBROSE

Sad loss

Tom Pryce's accident must be one of the most tragic in the history of motor racing. That it should happen to anyone makes life seem so unfair, but that it should happen to such a super person as Tom makes it so much worse. Sharing some of his racing activities, and also the same local village pub, as I was privileged to do, I had the opportunity of watching Tom's superb car control, immense natural talent and extreme maturity on the track, as well as his ability still to be able to enjoy more boyish pursuits away from it.

A more genuine person you could not wish to meet, whose supreme enjoyment was to get into a racing car and, in his own words, "Give it one." He was a real racing driver who just never, ever, gave up trying, no matter how impossible the odds. There will never be another Tom Pryce.

IGHTHAM, KENT GRAHAME WHITE

Marathon man

In my recent absence in Australia and Singapore arranging final details for the Singapore Airlines Car Rally, which will run from London to Sydney during August and September, Mr Nick Brittan—according to his article (*Private Ear*, March 3)—has held his own committee meetings on the progress of the event.

Mr Brittan has said that the organisers, and to a large extent that means me, have not made formal requests to the Australian governing body of motor sport. Well, Mr Brittan and any of his keen readers are quite welcome to come to my studio at 17 Gerald Road, London SW1, to read the relevant letters which date back to last year.

Mr Brittan insinuates that United Dominions Trust were far from happy with the result of the 1974 World Cup Rally, which we organised. Strange. I spoke to UDT only today (Monday) and they could not give any evidence to support this statement. Mr Brittan said that six experts did not know who won the 1974 World Cup Rally which, I suppose, is a bit like UDT, who did not know who Mr Brittan was.

He has said that he would be grateful to receive a cable from Sydney in September advising him of the winner of the Singapore Airlines Rally. Bearing in mind his intense interest in the event, I guess that somehow we will be able to club together and send him a postcard.

All we really need is a few more Mr Brittans and we most certainly shall be able to recreate that wonderful British spirit of adventure that has stood this country in such good stead over so many years—the kind of person that I, as an Australian, have always looked up to as the true leader of men and the pioneer of adventure that has made Britain so great.

LONDON, SW1 WYLTON DICKSON

AFN example

The conjunction in a recent issue of correspondence about BBC Radio coverage of motor racing and your report of the Daytona 500 prompts me to write to mention, for the benefit of racing enthusiasts who may not know about them, the superb broadcasts on AFN (American Forces Network) of major American races. Last year, I listened to broadcasts of the following races: Daytona 500, Long Beach GP (yes), the Talledega NASCAR and the USAC races at Pocono and Ontario.

The bloke from BBC Radio may be pleased with himself for telling the world that the Japanese GP was going to be postponed. If he listens to the AFN broadcasts, he will get a lesson in professional radio journalism. Like a four hour uninterrupted broadcast, starting with a 30 minute introduction before the start, with interviews with drivers, pit crews, etc, three hours of commentary on the race from fluent and informed commentators on each bend and in the pits; live interviews with drivers retiring from the race; recorded interviews interspersing the processional bits (of which there aren't too many in NASCAR racing!); and a closing sequence including interviews with the winners and the losers. I am sure there are lots of reasons why the BBC cannot do the same . . .

The broadcasts are usually between about 6pm and midnight on Sunday evening. They can be picked up clearly on ordinary radio at about 350 meters Medium Wave in most parts of England. It might raise standards if AFN broadcasts were more widely known.

BURTON-ON-TRENT RON CROSSMAN

Bladon Racing Cars

Hawthorn fan

Your correspondent M. J. Biscombe (February 24) is quite correct in his assessment of Mike Hawthorn's ability when on form.

The Ferraris of that period were not the equal of the opposition in handling, as I found out when competing in Historic events with my Type 625 against the Maseratis. The 250Fs could be power-slid and could drift beautifully, whereas the Ferrari was fully committed when cornering, and avoidance action was hard to undertake. This no doubt accounts for the celebrated manoeuvre of Fangio when overtaking both Hawthorn and Collins at the Nurburgring.

An excellent example of the relative abilities of Hawthorn and Fangio occurred during the 1955 Le Mans race, when these two drivers each took the first spell for Jaguar and Mercedes respectively. This meant that we had the equivalent of a full length Grand Prix race before the driver changes became operative.

I was driving the 1100cc Cooper-Climax during this time, and thus had a mobile grandstand view of a fantastic duel between two equally matched drivers of superlative skill. I do not think that anyone will deny that the SLR Mercedes was a much more developed racing car than the D-Type Jaguar, with the exception of brakes, and here the German car had the controversial rear air-brake to counterbalance the discs of the Jaguar.

In spite of this superiority of the German car, Hawthorn held Fangio all the way, and the constant passing and repassing of these two was truly unforgettable. I can vouch that on this occasion Mike fully proved his ability to match the world's finest.

Having said this, I must take issue with your correspondent on the subject of Stirling Moss, whom I still feel to have been one of the very best drivers, and certainly the best all-rounder.

For anyone to compete successfully in a 500cc event, a saloon car race, a sports car race and a Grand Prix type event, all on the same day, as did Moss on the occasion of the *Daily Express* Silverstone meetings, is proof of outstanding genius. Not only this, Moss also put up outstanding performances in such events as the Alpine Rally, and his Mille Miglia drive in the Mercedes must rank as an all-time epic.

BURNLEY, LANCS JOHN BROWN

Then as now?

Good news of the week (AUTOSPORT, March 7, 1952) came from the BARC, who announced plans for a *News of the World* sponsored nine-hour sports car race at Goodwood, the first opportunity for British spectators to see night racing as the event was due to finish at midnight . . . BRM was in the news again with a plan to woo Juan Manuel Fangio to join Stirling Moss in a two-car team for the Grand Prix season . . . *Pit and Paddock* announced that Ken Rawlings was now out and about again and would be able to attend the Hagley dinner/dance at Dudley Zoo—really! . . . A pictorial record of the Le Mans start showed how Stirling Moss benefited from much practice in getting the XK 120C Jaguar away from the line . . .

Tom Pryce



Silverstone last Saturday was cool and overcast, but still there was that sense of refreshing exhilaration which always puts its stamp on the first meeting of every season. It was good to be around racing cars again, and the murk of the late morning was forgotten.

Throughout the qualifying sessions, many minds were thousands of miles away, at Kyalami, where the South African GP was in progress. A radio report was due at half past one. Half an hour before that, somebody heard the news of Tom Pryce's accident. As at Brands Hatch nine years ago, when word of Jim Clark's death began to filter through, everyone in the paddock seemed to know within a couple of minutes, and all the pleasure of the day was gone.

At 27, Tom Pryce was a popular man with spectator, journalist and fellow driver alike. A quiet and easy-going individual, his climb to the upper reaches of motor racing was achieved solely by his own effort and dedication. His background was not a wealthy one and there was no way he could progress by the increasingly prevalent rent-a-drive route. Through the lower formulae, however, his ability and potential were so apparent that a GP drive was inevitable.

Seven years ago, we first heard the name of Tom Pryce when he won the Daily Express Crusader Championship at Silverstone in 1970. The prize was a Formula Ford car, and Tom was on his way. In 1971, he was the undisputed star of the now-defunct Formula F100, and also shone in the few Formula Vee races in which he took part. The following year, he took a step up into F3, driving a works Royale, and moving further onwards with several highly successful Atlantic races later in the season. Pryce's immediate competitiveness in Formula 2 was remarkable in 1973, and he was chosen as driver for the Token F1 project.

Together, they made their first appearance at Silverstone in the *Daily Express* Trophy in 1974, a race which ended in victory for James Hunt and Hesketh. Amid all the resultant hysteria, it was easy to overlook the young Welshman in the unfamiliar green car. More than once, Tom spun during the race, but his flair and enthusiasm were impressive to see. He also drove the Token in the Belgian Grand Prix at Nivelles, but another good showing ended with a minor accident.

For reasons known only to themselves, the AC de Monaco turned down the team's entry for the Grand Prix that year on the grounds that Pryce did not have enough experience, so Tom accepted a March ride in the F3 race, scoring possibly the most convincing win the Formula has ever seen. The sight of the little white car hurtling into Casino Square in a perfectly-executed power slide is something one does not forget, and must have embarrassed Monegasque officials considerably. In both heat and final, Tom's superiority was such as to be almost unbelievable. No one could get near him.

After Peter Revson's death at Kyalami, the Shadow team persuaded Brian Redman to make a comeback to Grand Prix racing, but the Lancastrian asked Don Nichols to release him from his contract after only three races. Once more, there was a vacancy in the team, and Nichols knew whom he wanted. For the Dutch Grand Prix, at Zandvoort, Tom Pryce appeared in a works Shadow for the first time.

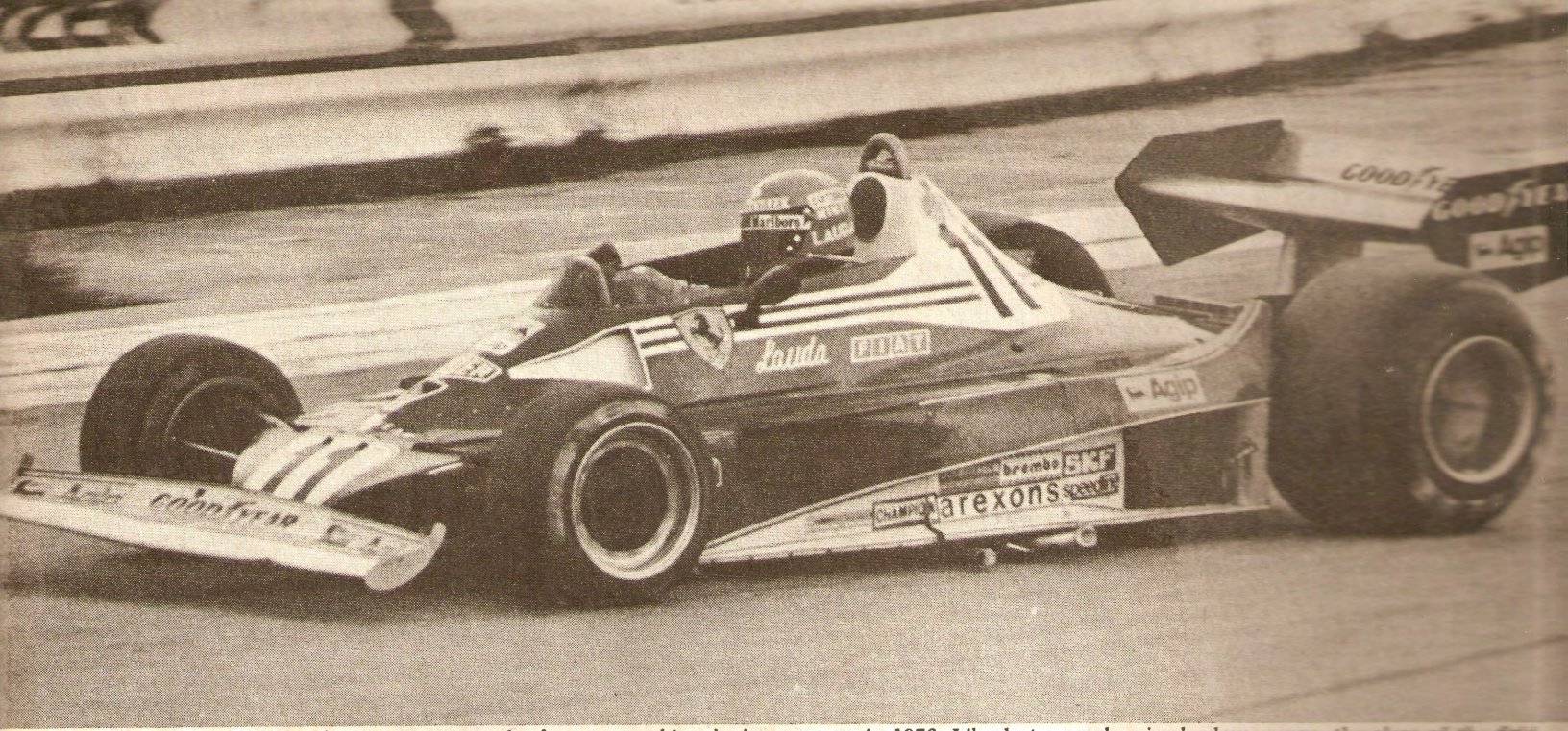
Pryce's qualifying performance at Dijon, his second Shadow outing, shook everyone. Until the very last seconds of practice, the Welshman was on the front row, alongside Niki Lauda's Ferrari! Only a tremendous effort by Ronnie Peterson put him back on row two. Unhappily, Tom was put out of the race in a startline shunt, as had also happened at Zandvoort.

Other than those two drives in the Token, Tom Pryce's Grand Prix career was spent entirely with the Shadow team, through good times and bad. At the start of the 1975 season, it seemed merely a matter of time before they scored their first GP victory together. At the Race of Champions that year, Tom's DN5 won superbly, but the car's competitiveness waned as the season progressed, and at year's and came the shattering news that UOP were withdrawing from racing. Without a major sponsor, the team bravely carried on, but their vastly reduced budget inevitably took its toll. At best, the DN5 was a midfield runner, but Pryce continued to try as hard as ever. Only in the rain—surely racing's great equaliser—was his ability put in true perspective. In slippery conditions, Tom's phenomenal car control would take the Shadow right up the leader board. Remember Fuji last year? Or the Österreichring in 1975? Only last week, at Kyalami, he topped the practice times during the first, wet session.

Sadly, the record books will tell only of Tom Pryce's win at Brands Hatch two years ago. They cannot tell of the glorious, flamboyant driving style which so belied his quiet, patient character, nor his amazing and unfashionable loyalty to a team going through hard times. Shadow gave him his big break, and he stood by them, certain that better things were ahead for the team. That he should die in such stupid and bizarre circumstances merely heightens an already massive blow to Grand Prix racing. On the radio, someone said that we will now never know just how great a driver Tom Pryce might have become, but I think we do, don't we? In terms of natural, raw ability, he was at least the equal of anyone in the world.

To Don Nichols, Alan Rees and the Shadow team, to his family in Ruthin, most of all to his wife, Nella, we can but offer our sincerest condolences at the loss of a thoroughly likeable man and a brilliant racing driver.

NSR



Niki Lauda's average speed this year was exactly the same as his winning average in 1976. Like last year, he simply drove away, the class of the field. The Great Days, it would seem, are back.

Triumph and tragedy

Brilliant victory by Niki Lauda (Ferrari)—Bizarre accident claims the lives of Tom Pryce and a race marshal—Scheckter (Wolf) holds off Depailler (Elf-Tyrrell) for second place ahead of early leader Hunt (Marlboro-McLaren)—Report and photography : JEFF HUTCHINSON

The dream that drove Niki Lauda from near death back to domination came true at Kyalami, but his victory in the race and his fight back to the top were marred by the horrifying and bizarre accident of his fellow driver Tom Pryce.

It happened on lap 23 of the 78-lap race. Two over-eager marshals dashed from the pit lane to the other side of the track where Pryce's team-mate had come to a safe and briefly fiery halt before the main grandstand. Thousands watched as the second marshal, slowed by the weighty fire extinguisher, was struck head on by the Shadow killing both the marshal and Pryce instantly. The fire extinguisher might as well have been a gun. The Shadow ran on, like death's chariot, full speed down the long straight where it eventually glanced off the barrier and ploughed into the Ligier Matra of Jacques Laffite just as he was turning into Crowthorne corner.

Both cars slammed into the retaining wall, Laffite escaping from his badly wrecked car unhurt, while the stricken Shadow and poor Tom Pryce were long beyond help.

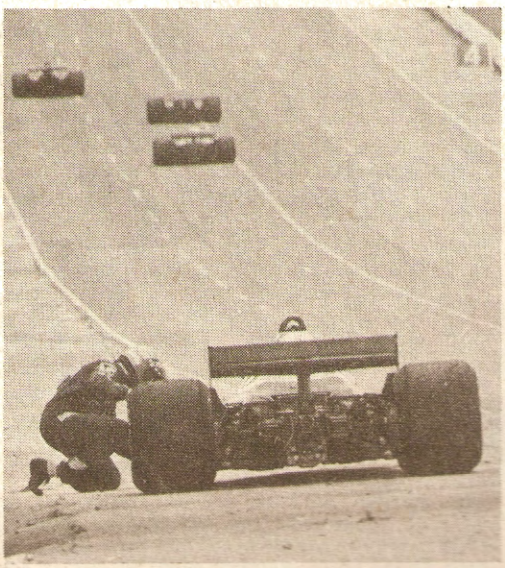
It was a tragedy which left little room for joy inside the sick hearts of the survivors, including Lauda, who upturned the bottle of champagne on the heads of the screaming spectators below the winner's rostrum and headed off to the shelter of his garage.

For the second year running he had crossed the line on a prayer, last year with an almost flat tyre, this year with a car that he later described as "completely gone." By that he meant oil pressure and water temperature which had been flashing their warning at him for the last 25 laps.

His Ferrari had picked up part of the wreckage of Pryce's accident in the underside of its monocoque, which damaged the water system and he ended up with only one third of the usual 12 litres of water left in the system.

It was a brilliantly judged victory, but he did not notice that it was him the crowds were cheering for, even though their own countryman Jody Scheckter chased him all the way to the chequered flag finishing just five seconds behind.

As the place-men go on by the flag, Niki has already pulled up, and has discovered the Shadow's roll-over bar jammed under the Ferrari.



The only other man to lead the race besides Lauda was pole-man James Hunt, who got ahead at the start, but the straight line speed of his Marlboro McLaren was not enough to hold that lead. Lauda moved easily by after six laps of stalking his old adversary, but for Scheckter and the eventual third-placed driver Patrick Depailler in the Tyrrell it was a much harder job, both taking the opportunity of closing the gap as back markers slowed Hunt's progress on to the straight.

The Wolf went all the way round Crowthorne rubbing wheels with the McLaren before Scheckter could take second place on lap 18 while it took Depailler until lap 67 before executing a similarly hair-raising manoeuvre at the same spot which almost had both cars off the track. Once by, Depailler closed the gap to Scheckter down to just half a second while Hunt came in a safe fourth another three seconds away, but still well clear of his team-mate Jochen Mass and the Brabham of John Watson who had an equally exciting battle for the final point, Mass holding his slim lead by just a third of a second.

A brilliant seventh place, after a bad start which put him at the back of the field, went to Vittorio Brambilla who took his Surtees by half the field including the understeering Ferrari of Carlos Reutemann in eighth place whom he passed shortly before the end.

Only 27 seconds separated the first eight cars at the finish of the South African Grand Prix which turned out to be a depressing combination of triumph and tragedy.

ENTRY & PRACTICE

Kyalami is 6000ft above sea level, nestling among the soft rolling greens and browns of the Transvaal countryside just a few kilometres away from the skyscraper profile of Johannesburg, known as "The City of Gold."

Yellow pyramids of fine sand dominate the countryside, a permanent reminder and now all that's left of the once gold-rich rock upon which Johannesburg and most of South Africa was built.

It's a rich nation full of rich people, like Louis Luyt, owner of the newly launched *Citizen* newspaper which, for the second year running, was backing the South African Grand Prix and picking up over half of this year's quarter million pound price tag.

Like the first two tracks at Buenos Aires and Interlagos the much improved Kyalami circuit is a moody one, but tempered slightly by the attitude which can claim around 100bhp or 20% of the power of an F1 engine.

It is renowned for its sudden changes of character. One day the times can be fast, the next day slow, even though the car is left alone. Most teams spent a whole week of private testing before the race, but when it came to getting the time on the day it did not always help.

In fact, all the pre-race testing meant nothing on the first day when, after five weeks of near drought, Kyalami awoke to a steady downpour of rain and swirling low clouds that were to last the whole day. During the first of the two sessions only a dozen cars took to the track, Hans Stuck, Ian Scheckter's replacement in the March team, showing off the wet weather attributes of his March and his own driving style with a comfortably quickest time before the oil pressure warning light blinked on and he sat out the rest of the day while the engine was changed.

In the afternoon session, all but three of the 23 entries did at least a few laps, Tom Pryce putting his fine car control to good use and setting the fastest time, despite a problem with locking front brakes which was forcing him to brake much earlier than usual.

Niki Lauda showed that he can be just as good in the wet as he is in the dry, and he took the second quickest time of the day behind Pryce while Stuck's earlier time was good enough to retain third fastest time of the day.

Fourth quickest in the wet was Scheckter, while fifth, and disproving his critics who say he can't drive well in the wet, was Carlos Pace, who narrowly headed the fiery Brambilla, reliving his moments of glory when he stormed away with the wet Austrian GP two years ago.

The first day's wet practice might have given the South African spectators the rare sight of watching their heroes wrestling to keep 400-odd horses on a tight rein, but it was a pain for the drivers and their teams who were beginning to wake up to the fact that, in all probability, they were going to get a dry day the following day, and just one hour of timed practice that would count for the grid positions.

Although the 90 minutes of untimed practice on the second day is to be dropped in future races, it was still in force here, despite the problems caused by the rain on Wednesday, so when it turned out dry on Thursday, the grid placings were all down to the final hour, and what a hectic one it turned out to be.

The rain had washed off the track and spread a thin layer of silt, which made the track a lot slower than it had been all the previous week, most drivers complaining that the cars were sliding a lot more than they had been.

Nobody managed to do any sub-1m 16s times during the first untimed session, Hunt getting the nearest to it with a 1m 16.23s while Lauda could not better 1m 16.27s after repeatedly turning in 1m 15.6s times the previous week, and the day before official practice.

Both Hunt and Lauda were running brand new cars, Hunt taking the opportunity of the morning session to get down to the sort of fine tuning that wins him pole positions, for on Tuesday he had managed only a few laps before an engine broke, while the previous week with the old 'T' chassis had been disjointed. The only change to his new McLaren, the eleventh in the M23 line, was a restyled rear anti-roll bar set up and slight strengthening modifications to the front of the chassis following the expensive "crash test" programme carried out on Jochen Mass's car, courtesy of the Elf Tyrrell team.

Lauda's new Ferrari, chassis number 30, featured most of the new things he had been mainly testing on the "T" car, most of those changes centred around the aerodynamics and the back end of the car. The big cast rear cross-member has now been replaced by two separate fabricated suspension pick-up points bolted by A-tubes to the gearbox casing and the roll-bar has been moved underneath these units, as have the brake ducts which are neatly incorporated into them.

The battery has been moved next to the oil tank and the fire extinguisher back above the engine, which is now faired in by a much neater, shorter engine cover that stops well before the gearbox, there being nothing else interrupting the air flow before it reaches the cast triangulated wing support and the rear wing. A shorter, steeper, nose piece has been fitted up front, while the large air ducts are now back to the original small type. The water radiators have also been moved a few centimetres farther forward and the ducting more exaggerated for better air-flow.

It looked like being another Hunt versus Lauda battle for pole position, but as we moved into the final vital hour the battle was not with the Ferrari but with another red Italian 12-cylinder, the experimental Brabham-Alfa Romeo BT45B of Carlos Pace, the same car in which Watson had set a shattering 1m 15.1s during private practice. Pace was not happy with his usual BT45 race chassis, "it just does not feel nice to drive, especially through the fast corners. I don't know what's wrong with it, perhaps there is still something not right after the Brazil crash," said Carlos.

So he got what he wanted, to run the BT45B with its entirely new rear end. "This car feels much better, I want to drive this," said Pace. He and Hunt battled for pole position, both teams hanging out a sub-1m 16.0s time for the two cars and when practice was all over neither team was sure who had taken pole. Then came the official times, Pace was given pole with a 1m 16.01s, while Hunt was not given better than 1m 16.15s. A word from the McLaren team and a closer look at the official times revealed a 1m 15.96s, and so for the third time this year James Hunt sat on pole position.

Pace's worried look after the final session was not over his lost pole; after all he was on the front row, and with such a long drag down to the first corner from the start he could probably put the Alfa into the lead anyhow. What was worrying him was the fact that the brake pedal had gone right to the floor during the last couple of laps, just as it had done the previous week, for no apparent reason. The BT45B chassis was running only the single caliper front brakes unlike the pair of BT45 "race" chassis. This potential brake problem and other possible problems with the new rear end, which had still not been given enough miles for Gordon Murray's satisfaction, did not alter the decision that Pace should race the 45B chassis.

John Watson would have also liked to race the new car, for he was not very happy with the way his usual race car was handling and even less happy with its engine, which finally did something nasty inside halfway through the final timed session and forced him to park for the rest of the hour. "Maybe it was a valve," said John, who had not been able to better 1m 16.71s with his misfiring engine before it broke. That meant he was starting way back in eleventh spot, a disappointment after his encouraging time the previous week.

Lauda was also disappointed, even though his eventual best of 1m 16.29s was quick enough for third spot right behind Hunt.

The final hour's testing after the day's that had gone before saw Lauda have more troubles than he had over the entire period. First he was forced to stop and change a seat which broke, and then, when he went out for his fast time on a new set of tyres his run was spoilt by another silly thing.

"When the tyres were put on, or the air put in, there must have been some water got inside, because the pressures went up too high from 16 to 22psi and spoiled the handling," said Niki. "Two weeks of testing to get everything right and we have to mess it all up in the last hour," he added. But he was not looking *that* upset, for he was probably counting on the fact that he would be able to out-drag the McLaren at the start and probably lap as fast or faster much more easily, for he had got third fastest time when the car was bad and for the first time in eight months he knew how to make it good again.

Next to Lauda on the second row was the first of the two Tyrrell P34s, once again led by Patrick Depailler, driving the old P34/2 chassis, while Peterson was running a brand new car, P34/5. Most of the things like revised fuel system, air starter, etc, that he had been testing during the previous week had been taken off, and the car was back in "standard" trim for the race. In order to get the handling right both Tyrrells were having to run quite a lot of wing compared to other cars and although not slow, they did not show their S. American speed advantage on the long Kyalami straight.

In fact, the fastest of the official straight line speeds was set up by Jody Scheckter's new Wolf, which was doing even better than in South America with fifth quickest time overall. A new spare chassis was seen throughout the week in long and short wheelbase form plus various other experimental bits, but in the end it was converted to the same specification as the original chassis in which Jody set his time and which he intended to race, all being well. The fact that Scheckter was holding fifth place on the grid in only his third race with the car shows the big steps forward the team are taking although he still feels there is a lot more work to be done.

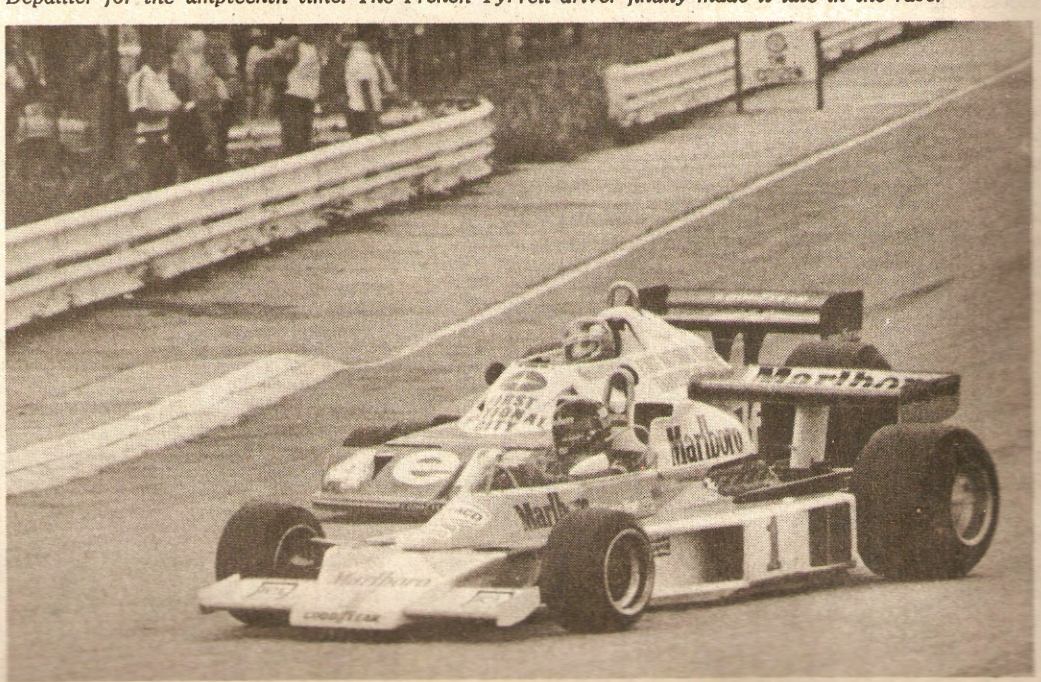
Mario Andretti did not have the front end of his Lotus 78 blow-up or the back end catch fire this time, but his practice was still spoiled when this time his engine blew up after setting a best of 1m 16.38s.

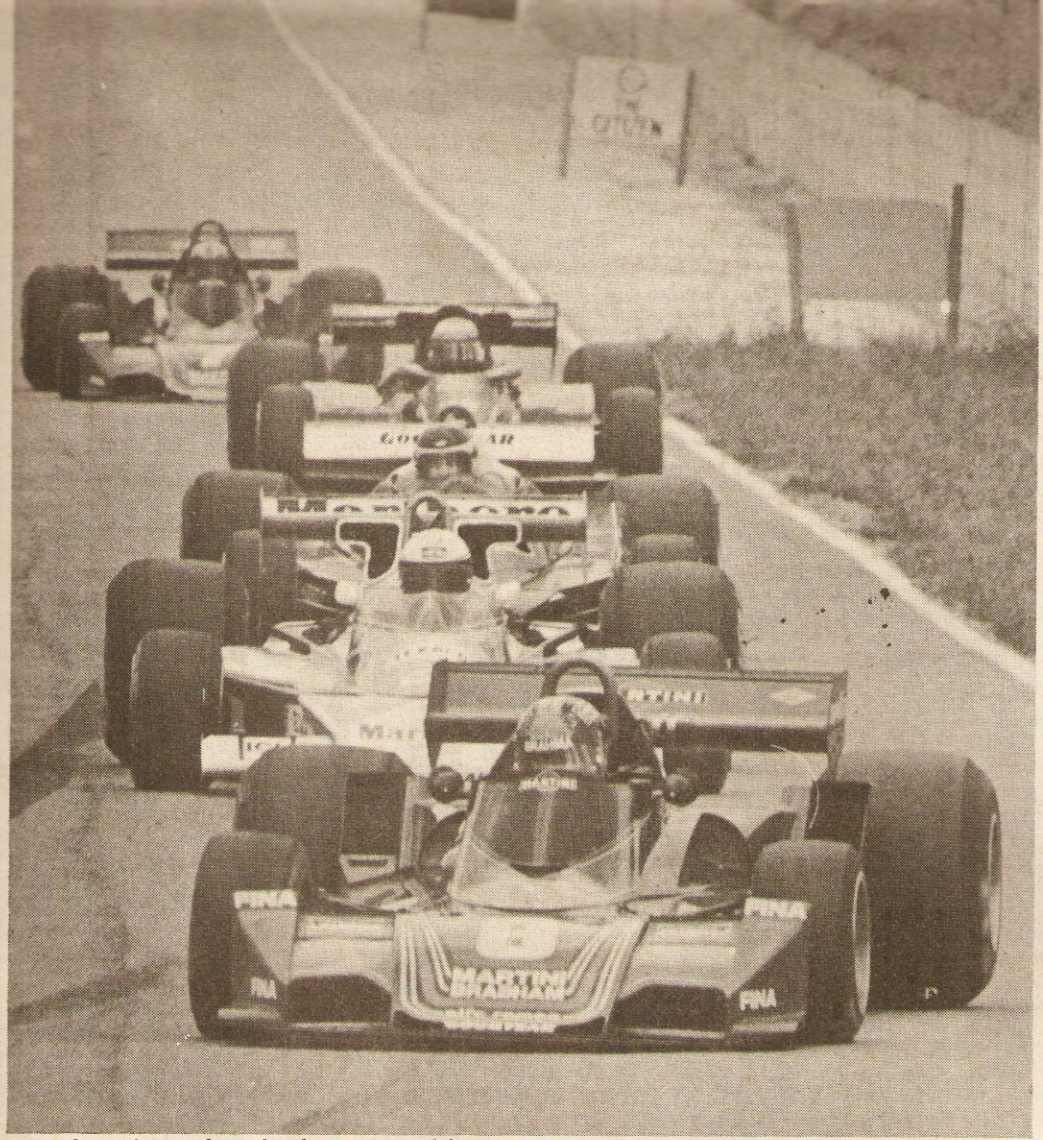
Engines were his trouble all week. "We have got the chassis going really well, but what we need now are some really good engines to go with it," said Mario who had run Cosworth engines most of the week but had a Nicholson-McLaren engine fitted when it blew up on Thursday.

Andretti's misfortune was Nilsson's good luck.

▶

At times, the World Champion had to fight desperately at Kyalami. Here he shuts the door on Patrick Depailler for the umpteenth time. The French Tyrrell driver finally made it late in the race.





For a long time, a huge battle was waged between Pace, Mass, Reutemann, Andretti and Watson.

F1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP **3**
SOUTH AFRICAN GP

continued

for he got to try Andretti's new tyres, and just before the session ended he set tenth quickest time with a 1m 16.65s.

Ronnie Peterson and Carlos Reutemann shared the fourth row in the second Tyrrell and Ferrari cars, Reutemann also having the same trouble with tyres as Lauda.

Heading the fifth row, ahead of Nilsson, was the lone Copersucar of Emerson Fittipaldi, Ingo Hoffmann missing from this race. "He is doing F2 and anyway, we are concentrating on one car until we get the new car going well. We need to get some points," said Emerson who is beginning to look more like doing that every time out, thanks mainly to the efficient organisation of Team Manager Dave Luff. Since the last outing Luff had fitted a revised suspension geometry at the rear (Maurice Philippe is no longer with the team) and, according to Emerson, this helped the turn-in characteristics of the car a lot more.

Watson brought up the next row, while alongside him was the Ligier of Jacques Laffite. After trying a new engine almost every day, he finally found one that worked quite well, without losing its compression through head distortion around the valve seats, as several others have done, but then he said that it was the car itself that was slow on the straight, while he was also suffering from oversteer when he tried to reduce wing at the rear.

Thirteenth place on the grid was held by Jochen Mass, only a second slower than his team-mate on pole, but an amazing six rows farther back. Jochen's problem was understeer. "It's really bad and I can't get rid of it, only make it a bit better," said Mass, who was unhappy with his ex-T-car chassis no 6, with which he had had such a bad relationship in the past. "I'm even beginning to think I've got something in my mind about this car, but I'm sure it's something in the front end of the car," said Jochen. The car was the oldest in the race, for its first "owner" was Denny Hulme.

Beside Mass was the brand new Surtees TS19 chassis of Vittorio Brambilla, which after overheating troubles in private testing had gone back to the usual twin oil coolers at the rear to supplement the new one mounted in the front. The cockpit section (with Ferrari style ducts) was also new on the Surtees, for which "Big John" was hoping great things after very encouraging testing times, only to be spoiled by a broken valve spring and subsequent sick engine in the vital final hour. Despite his troubles, Vittorio was very enthusiastic about his car's handling, as was Binder in the Durex car, which was even farther back in 19th spot after blowing its engine early on in the final hour.

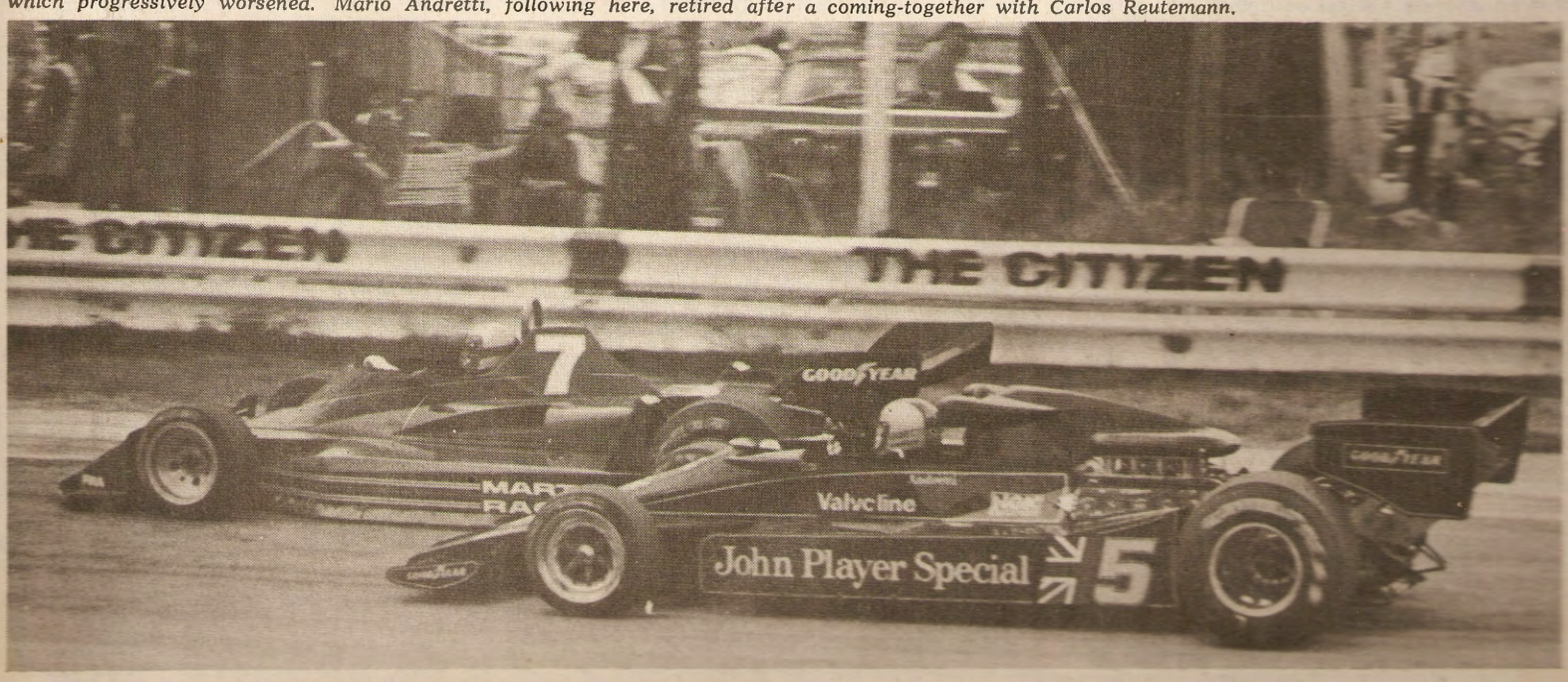
Tom Pryce went from the top of Wednesday's times to 15th on Thursday when he unhappily reported that his Shadow's engine "wouldn't pull the skin off a rice pudding," while similar dramas such as faulty fuel metering unit, electrics, and then a broken exhaust pipe saw Zorzi down in 18th place. In fact, this was a good effort, for he had not managed any laps the previous day because of a broken engine.

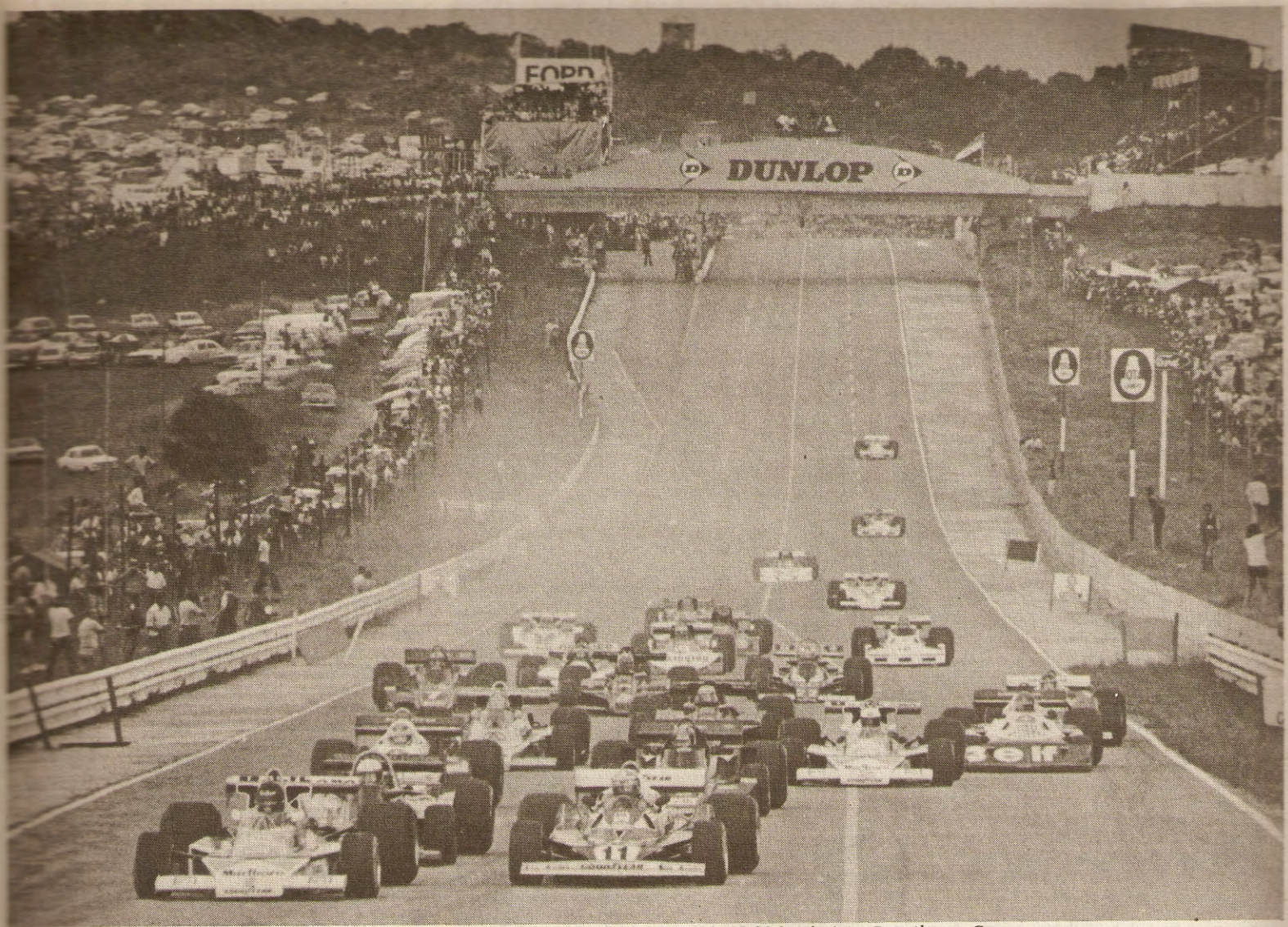
Most disappointing of all the tail-end runners was Clay Regazzoni in the Ensign, still using his Brazil chassis. Although there was a new one on hand, it was in fact never run, for it was not equipped with the better rising-rate titanium springs of the older chassis. Said Morris Nunn, "He says the handling is good," and according to the official straight-line speed trap the top speed was not *that* bad (270.27kph compared with Hunt at 272.96kph), so both Nunn and Regazzoni were left scratching their heads.

The Marches of Ribeiro and Stuck shared the ninth row, both drivers trying really hard, if the angles of the cars around some of the corners were anything to go by. But Ribeiro's best was still 1.5 secs off the pace. "It has very bad oversteer and we cannot do enough to stop it without going too slow down the straight," said Ribeiro. Stuck's car had been put back to the standard narrow track suspension following Howden Ganley's testing the previous week in wider track form.

Binder and Zorzi shared the tenth row, while the eleventh row was shared by Boy Hayje and Larry Perkins. Hayje did well to record a 1: 19.59 first time out both in the F&S RAM-March 761 and at Kyalami, especially as a lot of his time during the final hour was lost while a leaking

Watson's Brabham-Alfa BT45B set the quickest time ever at Kyalami during testing, but the race was a different matter, John being slowed by understeer which progressively worsened. Mario Andretti, following here, retired after a coming-together with Carlos Reutemann.





Seconds after the start, Hunt snatches the lead from Lauda, Scheckter and Pace as the field heads into Crowthorne Corner.

brake caliper had to be changed, his March still fitted with single caliper front brakes unlike the up-dated works cars. Perkins was content to lap in 1:21.7 in the Stanley-BRM entry, which turned out to be an old P201 chassis fitted with the matching old engine unit.

The 207 had been tested the previous week, and blown its engine. There was only one spare in existence, so the team decided to race the P201 with its old type engine, the car last used by Ian Ashley in Brazil in 1976. The old car had been put on a ship three weeks earlier, and it arrived looking as if it had been used as the ship's figurehead in a force 10 gale! Its first outing saw its engine blow up in two laps, while on Thursday it stopped after one lap, and was then recussitated for another few laps. During this time Perkins managed to learn the track and qualify with a surprisingly good time, especially as the BRM was clocked on the straight at a breathtaking 239kph! Larry did the best he could, and wore a smile even at the bad jokes, while BRM team manager Aubrey Woods was not there to face the press, but sent his innocent substitute Neil Walker from the engine design department. "A water pump problem" was what he was telling the few interested enquirers asking after the new car and engine. Apparently it has two inlets which somehow successfully fight against each other to prevent water circulating through the engine at high revs, with the results the radiators are cool and the engine overheats and blows up. A single inlet pump is on the way.

Completing the grid was an unlucky Brett Lunger, who managed to get his wrecked car rebuilt in time thanks to his B&S crew and the enthusiastic help of local engineering wizard Ken Gilderand. Between them they virtually rebuilt the wrecked monocoque.

During the untimed session, Lunger had the oil pressure go because of a cracked scavenge pump, which was changed for the final session, but the motor had already been damaged and it blew up after just one flying lap. "But at least I got to race," said the ever cheerful Lunger, who so far had not had much to smile about with his Chesterfield-backed March 761.

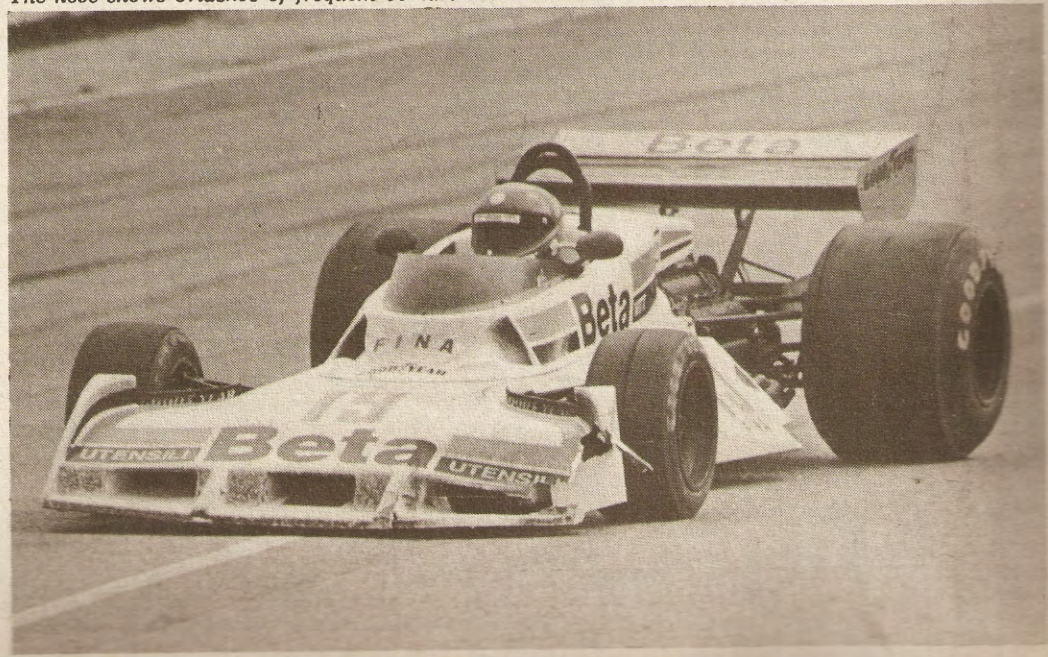
THE GRAND PRIX

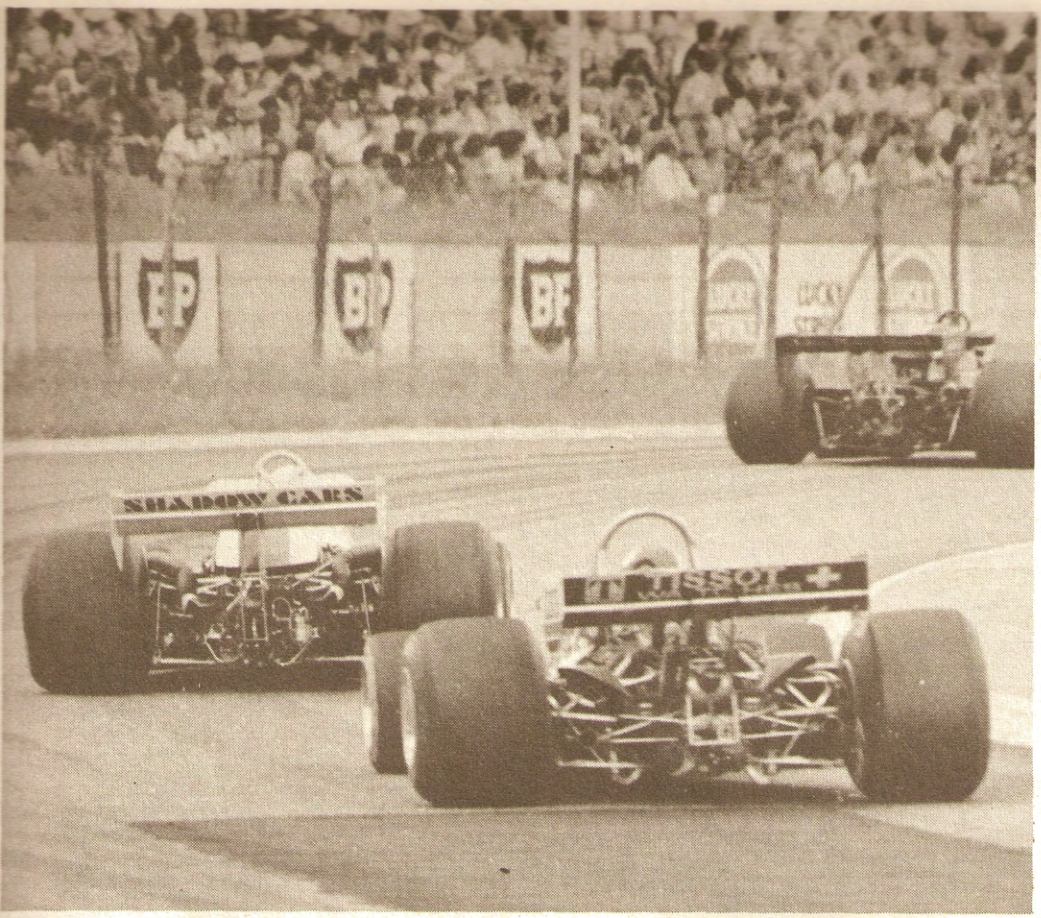
A twenty-minute pre-race warm-up session several hours before the 1.30pm start saw no problems among the 23-car field. The Ligier team was trying a bracing bar across the vee of the heads with the hope that it would cut down vibration and any possible recurrence of the plug and valve seat troubles it has been suffering this year. Pace's Brabham had also been exhaustively stripped and the braking system renewed, and a small driveshaft modification had been made in a bid to prevent brake knock-off at the rear on full suspension travel, which was thought to be the case of his earlier braking problems.

Despite threatening black clouds which blocked out the hot South African sun at regular intervals, the rain held off until after the race.

The field lined up, and the green light went on right on time. Hunt made a better start than usual, while Pace on the outside got left behind with too much wheelspin. By the time the field came into view over the brow of the long main straight just after the start, the red-and-white McLaren showed firmly in the lead with Lauda trying the outside and Scheckter slotting in behind. For a second it looked as though Lauda was going to pull by the McLaren going into the ▶

After dropping almost to last place on lap one, Brambilla drove his heart out with the Surtees. The nose shows evidence of frequent contact with Watson's Brabham which finished just ahead. . . .





Early in the race, Gunnar Nilsson's JPS 78 leads the ill-fated Tom Pryce (Shadow) and Clay Regazzoni (Ensign).

F1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP — SOUTH AFRICAN GRAND PRIX **3**

Continued

first turn, but he eased back and slotted in ahead of Scheckter, the rest of the field keeping a sensible single file behind. Depailler had moved into fourth place, while Pace was back in fifth spot and Mass, Andretti, Peterson, Fittipaldi and Reutemann completing the leading bunch.

Right at the tail end of the field after making bad starts were Pryce and Brambilla, the Italian's clutch slipping at the start, but then fortunately coming right.

As the race settled down, Hunt and Lauda pulled out a few yards over Scheckter and Depailler, while Pace was already beginning to feel the first signs of understeer on the Brabham and was falling back slowly—but not slowly enough to let Mass, Andretti, Peterson and Reutemann get ahead, although they were all trying hard. Fittipaldi had fallen back to lead Watson, Stuck, Laffite and Nilsson, who made up the next bunch.

But all the attention of the crowd was rivetted on the first two cars. Lauda was sitting right in the slipstream of the McLaren, and it was certainly only a matter of time before the Ferrari pulled ahead. The move came at the start of the seventh lap, when the Ferrari pulled out of Hunt's slipstream and was well ahead as they went into braking for the tight Crowthorne bend at the end of the straight. The South African crowd cheered more crazily than if it had been their own Scheckter who had just taken the lead.

There was no doubt about it, the crowd all wanted to see Lauda win. When a man is at the top, they like to see him fall, but when he falls the way Lauda did, and then gets up to fight again, he wins their hearts—especially as the man whose turn it was to eat his dust was the current new man at the top.

Next time around, Lauda weaved the Ferrari down the straight to break Hunt's tow, and by lap 10 the Ferrari was already romping away to a victory that looked impossible to stop.

Hunt's interest moved to the Wolf of Scheckter. Without the tow of the Ferrari the McLaren was gradually slipping back into the Wolf's jaws, Hunt saying later that the early pressure applied by Lauda on full tanks had also produced slight problems with the inside shoulder of the front left tyre: "It was getting more and more difficult to turn into the corners."

Scheckter finally made his move on lap 18 going into the first turn, just as Lauda had. The Wolf pulled out of the McLaren's slipstream and dived for the inside of the tight right-hand bend, but Hunt was determined to hold his place. All the way through the corner they were side-by-side, puffs of blue rubber smoke shooting up from between the rear tyres as they touched several times through the corner, Hunt finally having either to give way at the exit or to run out of road. Afterwards a casual Hunt commented, "Oh, it's alright if it's wheel to wheel; it's when you get a wheel between the others that it gets a bit dodgy!" It didn't look so all right from the outside!

This sure was a close motor race.

Farther down the field, it was getting just as exciting, Brambilla gave everybody a weak heart as he consistently dived to the inside and overtook cars into Crowthorne, most of their drivers not having the nerve to argue with him as Hunt had done with Scheckter. As one said, "When you look across and see Vittorio locked up and smoking past you under braking, you don't say, excuse me, and try to shut the door." Some were brave enough to do just that, but from almost last on the first lap he was up to eleventh place by lap 20 and pushing a slowing Fittipaldi hard for tenth, the Copersucar troubled by fading rear brakes.

The position up front was set for a while, Lauda holding around 5secs over Scheckter, who was not making any noticeable impression on the gap. Behind, Hunt was falling back slowly and was now busy with Depailler, the Elf-Tyrrell man looking for a way by to third place. There was now quite a long gap to the second group, still being led by Pace, but less the Tyrrell of Peterson which had stopped after just five laps with no fuel pressure, thought to be caused by either a fuel metering unit or relief valve problem.

The retirement of Peterson did little to relieve the pressure on Pace, however, for every lap he was having to hold off determined attacks from Mass, Reutemann, Andretti and Watson, Fittipaldi and Brambilla came next, while Stuck was being chased hard for the next place by Laffite and Pryce. After a bad start at the back of the field, Tom had followed Brambilla up and into a good placing very soon after the start.

It was on lap 20 that the sequence of events started that ended in disaster. Renzo Zorzi, running back in nineteenth spot, pulled his Shadow up halfway down the pit row on the outside of the track when his engine died.

As he was climbing out of the car, leaking fuel ignited and he ran clear before thinking to return and press the fire extinguisher button which killed the fire that had virtually died down by itself. Just when the small drama seemed over, two marshals suddenly jumped the pit barrier and ran across the track at a point where visibility was very limited. The first marshal, a few feet ahead of the second, just made it across safely while the second, 19-year-old Jansen van Vuuren, was hit square on by Pryce as he raced at full speed almost side by side with Stuck whom he was trying to pass.

The marshal was thrown along the car and to the side of the track like a rag doll while the Shadow continued at full speed down the track, Pryce almost certainly killed instantly by the marshal's fire extinguisher. The Shadow veered at a shallow angle across the track and ran along the inside barrier, eventually bouncing off it back across the track right into the path of the oncoming Ligier, which Pryce had passed only a couple of laps before.

The Shadow bounced high into the air and slammed into the outside catchfencing and retaining wall, Laffite ending up there too, the French driver lucky to escape with nothing worse than a couple of bruised knees, although his car was badly damaged.

From then on, all pleasure in the race was lost, but it carried on through to the end which could not come soon enough for Niki Lauda, in more ways than one.

His Ferrari had picked up part of the wreckage of Tom Pryce's car, part of the roll bar, which was jammed in the left side and had upset the water system. The engine started to overheat as it lost its water and with 25 laps to go Niki was getting warning signs that the oil pressure was dropping. He had slowed at the time of the crash allowing Scheckter to close right up, but he soon opened out the lead again which he kept to the finish. But nobody knew just how close Lauda came to not finishing until the chequered flag came out.

He immediately pulled the Ferrari off the track and parked, and after a very subdued presentation ceremony the Austrian said that his car "was completely finished." A closer look showed only four out of the usual twelve litres of water left in the water system, while almost certainly the engine would have blown up during the next lap or two.

Although it was still Jody Scheckter chasing Lauda over the line for second, there was a Monza-type greeting for Lauda as fans flooded the track and surrounded him as he fought his way from his parked car back up the pit lane.

Patrick Depailler came in third, just half a second behind his old team-mate and almost three seconds clear of Hunt, who had fought to hold him off for over half the race, finally losing the battle with eleven laps to run.

Depailler made repeated attempts to get by Hunt going into Crowthorne and on lap 67 he pulled out of the McLaren's slipstream ready to go by on the inside. But Hunt had other ideas. He moved the Marlboro car across the track squeezing Depailler on to the hard shoulder and almost into the barrier. By this time the two cars were into the braking area and the drivers were committed to their actions which fortunately did not end so tragically as had the earlier one at the same spot, although for a while it looked as though it might.

The Tyrrell bounced across the inside of the corner and Depailler scrambled around the bend half sideways, completely off line, while he had Hunt on his outside also forced off line. There was no way Hunt could stop the Frenchman getting out of the corner ahead of him.

It had been a hairy move and, if it had not come off and ended with two bent cars there would no doubt have been another slanging match like the last time Hunt and Depailler tangled almost a year ago at Long Beach. Who would have been in the wrong? Hunt, for putting the Tyrrell into an accident situation when it was trying desperately to pass for the umpteenth time and was obviously the faster car, or Depailler for putting himself in the situation in the first place? It's hard to draw the line between the rights and the wrongs of a situation like that, although one thing is for sure: if it had been Renzo Zorzi doing the same thing to Hunt or Depailler he would have been dragged over the coals.

The same situation did not arise for the fifth-placed man behind Hunt, for that was his own team-mate Jochen Mass who had held on to his understeering car despite being under pressure all

the very last lap to finish ten seconds behind Hunt and just a couple of lengths clear of John Watson's Brabham, which also suffered from understeer problems as the race went on.

His team-mate Pace had finally given up fifth place and his tenuous lead of the "B" race when he was forced to stop and change front tyres because of a much more exaggerated understeer trouble. He stopped again before the end, but by that time, "there was a bad vibration at the back of the car," which may not have helped his understeer troubles, either. He finally finished a distant twelfth, two laps down, after his great first-half effort.

Also missing from this group and the final results was the Lotus of Mario Andretti who after being passed by Reutemann and Watson in the early stages of the race, got ahead of Watson again, but fell foul of Reutemann's back wheel with his own front right wheel, trying to outmanoeuvre the understeering Argentine at the tight left-hander called Clubhouse. The impact knocked the front wheel out of line and Mario came into the pits to retire.

So it was left to Watson to pick up the final point, less than half a second behind Mass after a really hard drive which also saw him take fastest lap of the race, set on lap 7 while still on full tanks. Later in the race the track got very slippery.

Brambilla took a well-earned seventh place after passing a desperately understeering Reutemann near the end of the race, but almost spoiling his fine drive when trying to pass Watson a few laps later.

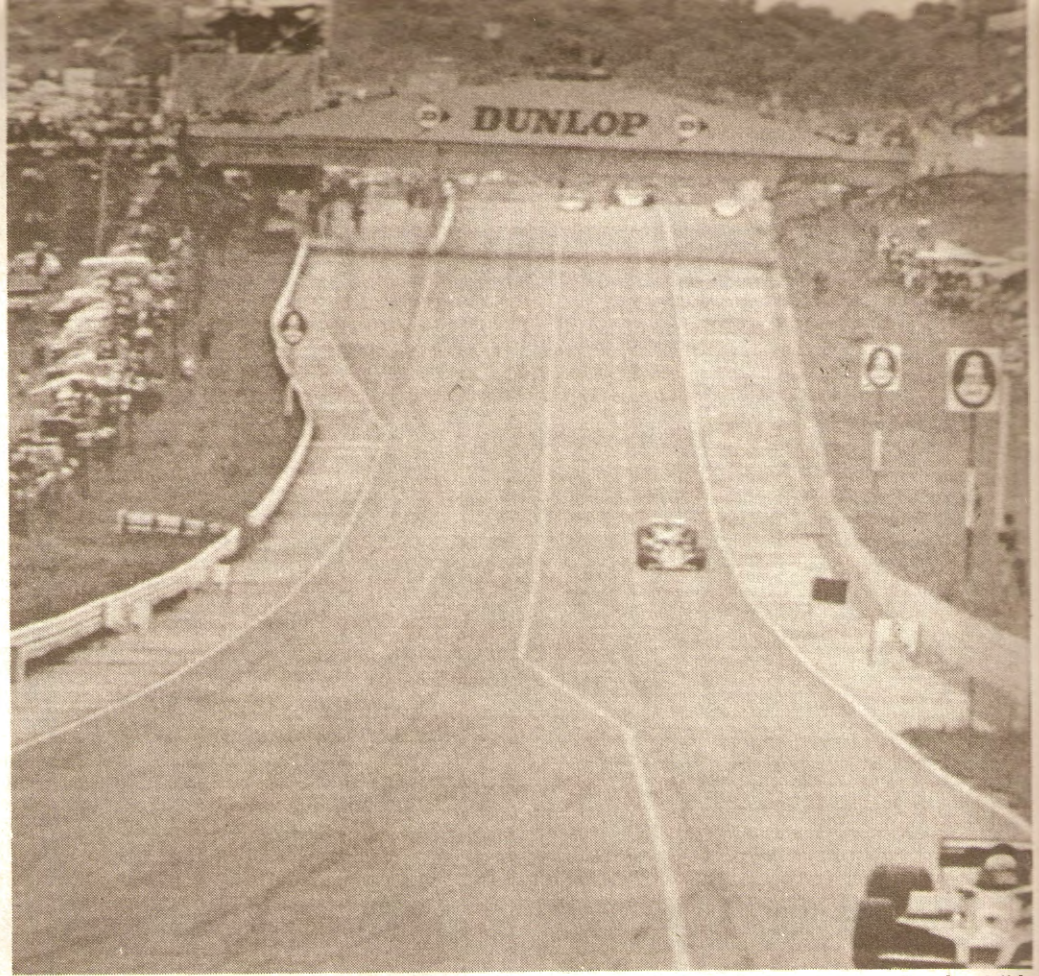
Twice he had an almost suicidal run down the inside into Crowthorne Bend. The first time he backed off at the last minute and splintered the nose of his Surtees against the Brabham's rear wheel, while the second time he managed to get by but then was going so fast he could not make the corner and went rallying over the sandy outside edge which did the nose a further power of no good. He still managed to hold his place to the end, however, although a scant three seconds ahead of Reutemann in eighth place.

Ninth was Clay Regazzoni, who never really shone all weekend with the Ensign which he said was still suffering from a slow engine, while his slow start in the race was caused by bad brakes and an understeer problem. Towards the end of the race the handling got much better, a point borne out by the fact that his own fastest lap came shortly before half distance while most of the fastest laps were set in the fifteen laps when the track was not so slippery.

From first to ninth place the cars were covered by just 46 seconds after an hour and three-quarters of racing, just to demonstrate just how close and hard fought the race was.

Fittipaldi came in a disappointed tenth, a further 26s down, the last driver to remain unlapped by the flying Lauda.

A lap behind was the Surtees of Binder, while



As Mario Andretti's car turns into Crowthorne, the tragic accident is about to happen. Barely visible in the photograph, over half-a-mile down the road, the cars of Stuck and Pryce are cresting the rise under the Dunlop bridge. Between the two cars — right over the blind brow — is Jansen van Vuuren, the marshal who lost his life in the accident. Poor Tom Pryce also died instantly, his car careering on down to Crowthorne at full throttle before striking Laffite's Ligier, four rows of catch fencing and, finally, a concrete wall.

also a lap down came Nilsson's Lotus which had to stop for a tyre change and new nose (following the accident) although before that it had been going slowly with a poor engine from which he said he could only coax 10,200rpm on the straight, 600 less than it should be.

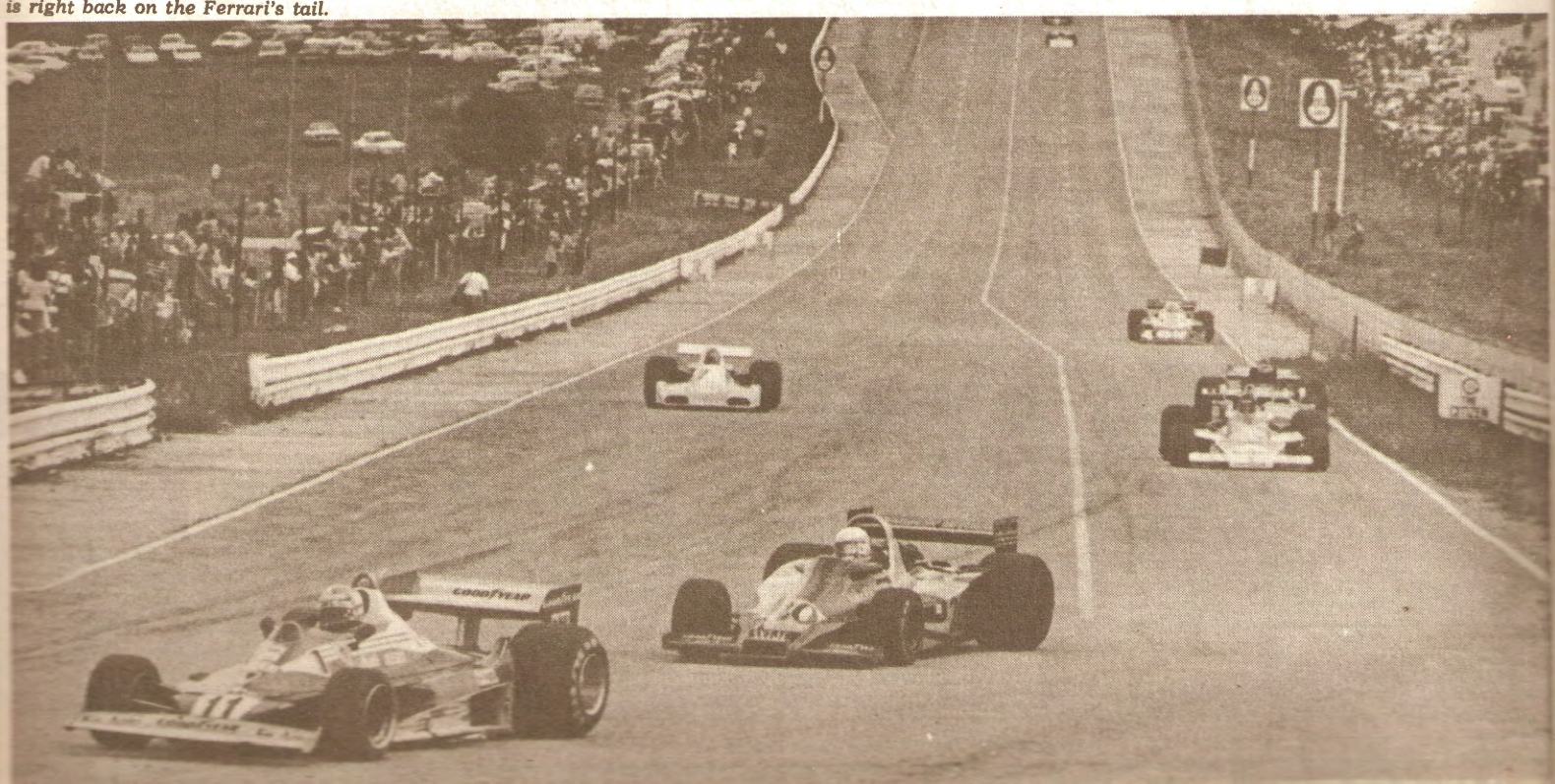
Completing the list of finishers were Pace and Brett Lunger, two laps down, Lunger's March also suffering from an acute power shortage.

Five laps down, and the final runner, was Larry Perkins, who despite finishing on 10½ cylinders and with weak arms from a steering vibration (when the weights came off the front wheels), he was smiling at the fact that he had actually managed to finish and get some racing miles, however slow, under his belt this year.

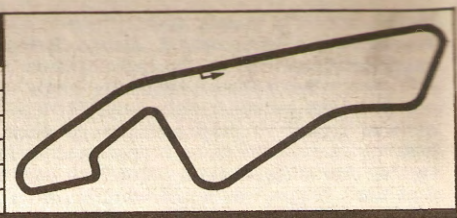
The only other retirements were the Marches of Stuck and Ribeiro, which blew up on laps 55 and 66 respectively, Stuck hardly caring about anything other than his good fortune at missing the marshal by a couple of inches.

While Jody's second place now puts him back in the lead of this year's World Championship standings there was one message which came out loud and clear from South Africa—watch out—Lauda's back!

Shortly after the accident, with the marker boards on the left gone (hit by the Shadow), Lauda's lead has been cut back from 6s, and Scheckter's Wolf is right back on the Ferrari's tail.



SOUTH AFRICAN GRAND PRIX. DATE 5 MAR. 1977 CIRCUIT KYALAMI



WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND 3 LENGTH 78 laps of 2.55 mile circuit. 198.90 miles

WEATHER OVERCAST. SOME SUN. DRY. No. of STARTERS 23 FINISHERS 15

WINNER N. LAUDA in FERRARI 312 T2 av. speed 116.588 mph

FASTEST LAP J. WATSON in MARTINI-BRABHAM-ALFA No. 7 on lap 7 in 1 min. 17.63 sec. 118.257 mph

EXISTING LAP RECORD D. CHARLTON in McLAREN-FORD M23 in 1 min. 17.05 sec. 119.324 mph

PREVIOUS YEAR'S RESULT N. LAUDA in FERRARI 312T at 116.58 mph

ENTRIES

NO.	DRIVER	CAR	ENTRANT	FUEL/OIL CONTR.	TYRE	CHASSIS	ENGINE	
1	J. HUNT	MARLBORO-McLAREN M23	MARLBORO TEAM McLAREN	TEXACO HAVOLINE	GOOD	M 23/11	DFV	
2	J. MASS	MARLBORO-McLAREN M23	MARLBORO TEAM McLAREN	TEXACO HAVOLINE	GOOD	M 23/6	DFV	
3	R. PETERSON	TYRRELL-FORD 34	ELF TEAM TYRRELL	ELF ELF	GOOD	34/5	DFV	
4	P. DEPAILLER	TYRRELL-FORD 34	ELF TEAM TYRRELL	ELF ELF	GOOD	34/2	DFV	
5	M. ANDRETTI	JPS-78	JOHN PLAYER TEAM LOTUS	- VALVOLINE	GOOD	78-2	DFV	
6	G. NILSSON	JPS-78	JOHN PLAYER TEAM LOTUS	- VALVOLINE	GOOD	78-1	DFV	
7	J. WATSON	MARTINI-BRABHAM-ALFA	MARTINI RACING	FINA FINA	GOOD	BT 45-3	Alfa flat-12	
8	C. PACE	MARTINI-BRABHAM-ALFA	MARTINI RACING	FINA FINA	GOOD	BT 45B-1	Alfa flat-12	NEW CAR.
8T	C. PACE	MARTINI-BRABHAM-ALFA	MARTINI RACING	FINA FINA	GOOD	BT 45-5	Alfa flat-12	
9	A. RIBEIRO	MARCH 761B	HOLLYWOOD MARCH RACING	- VALVOLINE	GOOD	761B-2	DFV	
10	H. STUCK	MARCH 761B	TEAM ROTHMANS INTERNATIONAL	- VALVOLINE	GOOD	761B-1	DFV	
11	N. LAUDA	FERRARI 312 T2	S.p.a. FERRARI S.E.F.A.C.	AGIP AGIP	GOOD	312 T2 030	Type 312B	NEW CAR
12	C. REUTEMANN	FERRARI 312 T2	S.p.a. FERRARI S.E.F.A.C.	AGIP AGIP	GOOD	312 T2 029	Type 312B	
12T	C. REUTEMANN	FERRARI 312 T2	S.p.a. FERRARI S.E.F.A.C.	AGIP AGIP	GOOD	312 T2 027	Type 312B	
14	L. PERKINS	STANLEY-BRM P201	ROTARY WATCHES - STANLEY - BRM	- -	GOOD	P 201-04	BRM V12	
16	T. PRYCE	SHADOW-FORD DN8	SHADOW RACING WITH TABATIP	FINA VALVOLINE	GOOD	DN8-2A	DFV	
17	R. ZORZI	SHADOW-FORD DN8	SHADOW RACING WITH TABATIP	FINA VALVOLINE	GOOD	DN8-1A	DFV	
18	H. BINDER	DUREX-SURTEES TS 19	DUREX TEAM SURTEES	FINA DUCKHAMS	GOOD	TS 19-02	DFV	
19	V. BRAMBILLA	BETA-SURTEES TS 19	BETA TEAM SURTEES	FINA DUCKHAMS	GOOD	TS 19-06	DFV	
20	J. SCHECKTER	WOLF WR1	WALTER WOLF RACING	FINA FINA	GOOD	WR1-01	DFV	
20T	J. SCHECKTER	WOLF WR1	WALTER WOLF RACING	FINA FINA	GOOD	WR1-02	DFV	
22	C. REGAZZONI	ENSIGN N177	TEAM TISSOT - ENSIGN WITH CASTROL	- CASTROL	GOOD	N177/MN-06	DFV	
26	J. LAFFITE	GITANES-LIGIER-MATRA	LIGIER - GITANES	SHELL -	GOOD	JS7-02	Type MS. V12	
28	E. FITTIPALDI	COPERSUCAR-FITTIPALDI FD	COPERSUCAR - FITTIPALDI	- -	GOOD	FD04-3	DFV	
28T	E. FITTIPALDI	COPERSUCAR-FITTIPALDI FD	COPERSUCAR - FITTIPALDI	- -	GOOD	FD04-4	DFV	
30	B. LUNGER	MARCH 761	CHESTERFIELD RACING	- -	GOOD	761-2	DFV	
33	B. HAYJE	MARCH 761	RAM RACING WITH F. AND S. PROPERTIES	- -	GOOD	761-3	DFV	

RESULTS

POS.	NO.	DRIVER	CAR	LAPS	TIME	SPEED	BRAKES	DAMPERS	GEARBOX	PLUGS	INJECTION	ELECS.
1	11	N. LAUDA	FERRARI 312 T2	78	1h. 42m. 21.6s.	116.588 mph.	LOCK FER	KONI	FERRARI 312 TRANS.	CHAMPION	LUCAS	MARELLI DINOPLEX
2	20	J. SCHECKTER	WOLF WR1	78	1h. 42m. 26.8s.		LOCK FER	KONI	HEW FG 400	CHAMPION	LUCAS	LUCAS
3	4	P. DEPAILLER	TYRRELL-FORD 34	78	1h. 42m. 27.3s.		LOCK FER	ARM	HEW FG 400	CHAMPION	LUCAS	LUCAS
4	1	J. HUNT	MARLBORO-McLAREN	78	1h. 42m. 31.1s.		LOCK FER	KONI	HEW FG 400/6	CHAMPION	LUCAS	LUCAS
5	2	J. MASS	MARLBORO-McLAREN	78	1h. 42m. 41.5s.		LOCK FER	KONI	HEW FG 400/6	CHAMPION	LUCAS	LUCAS
6	7	J. WATSON	MARTINI-BRABHAM-ALFA	78	1h. 42m. 41.8s.		GIRL FER	KONI	HEW FG 400	CHAMPION	LUCAS	MARELLI DINOPLEX
7	19	V. BRAMBILLA	BETA-SURTEES TS 19	78	1h. 42m. 45.2s.		LOCK FER	KONI	HEW FG 400	CHAMPION	LUCAS	MARELLI DINOPLEX
8	12	C. REUTEMANN	FERRARI 312 T2	78	1h. 42m. 48.3s.		LOCK FER	KONI	FERRARI 312 TRANS	CHAMPION	LUCAS	MARELLI DINOPLEX
9	22	C. REGAZZONI	ENSIGN N177	78	1h. 43m. 07.8s.		LOCK FER	KONI	HEW FG 400	CHAMPION	LUCAS	LUCAS
10	28	E. FITTIPALDI	COPERSUCAR-FITTIPALDI FD	78	1h. 43m. 33.3s.		LOCK FER	KONI	HEW FGA 400	CHAMPION	LUCAS	LUCAS
11	18	H. BINDER	DUREX-SURTEES TS 19	77			LOCK FER	KONI	HEW FG 400	CHAMPION	LUCAS	MARELLI DINOPLEX
12	6	G. NILSSON	JPS-78	77			LOCK FER	KONI	HEW FG 400	NGK	LUCAS	LUCAS
13	8	C. PACE	MARTINI-BRABHAM-ALFA	76			GIRL FER	KONI	HEW FG 400	CHAMPION	LUCAS	MARELLI DINOPLEX
14	30	B. LUNGER	MARCH 761	76			LOCK FER	KONI	HEW FG 400	CHAMPION	LUCAS	LUCAS
15	14	L. PERKINS	STANLEY-BRM P201	73			LOCK FER	KONI	BRM Type 161	CHAMPION	LUCAS	MARELLI DINOPLEX

RETIREMENTS

NO.	DRIVER	LAPS	REASON
3	R. PETERSON	5	FUEL PRESSURE.
17	R. ZORZI	21	ENGINE. FUEL LINE.
26	J. LAFFITE	22	ACCIDENT.
16	T. PRYCE	22	ACCIDENT.
33	B. HAYJE	33	GEARBOX.
5	M. ANDRETTI	43	ACCIDENT.
10	H. STUCK	55	ENGINE.
9	A. RIBEIRO	66	ENGINE.

CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS

DRIVERS

J. SCHECKTER	15
C. REUTEMANN	13
N. LAUDA	13
J. HUNT	9
C. PACE	6
E. FITTIPALDI	6
P. DEPAILLER	4
M. ANDRETTI	2
G. NILSSON	2
J. MASS	2
C. REGAZZONI	1
R. ZORZI	1
J. WATSON	1

MANUFACTURERS

FERRARI	22
WOLF-FORD	15
McLAREN-FORD	9
BRABHAM-ALFA	7
FITTIPALDI-FORD	6
TYRRELL-FORD	4
JPS-FORD	4
ENSIGN-FORD	1
SHADOW-FORD	1

DATE WED 2 PM MARCH 2 WEATHER RAINING VERY WET.

PRACTICE 1

10	H.STUCK	lm.	33.13s.
9	V.BRAMBILLA	lm.	34.48s.
11	N.LAUDA	lm.	37.36s.
26	J.LAFFITE	lm.	39.33s.
3	R.PETERSON	lm.	39.68s.
15	T.PRYCE	lm.	40.01s.
6	C.PACE	lm.	40.48s.
22	C.REGAZZONI	lm.	41.42s.
18	H.BINDER	lm.	43.76s.
20	J.SCHECKTER	lm.	46.87s.
30	B.LUNGER	lm.	52.43s.
2	J.MASS	lm.	54.61s.

DATE WED 2 PM MARCH 2 WEATHER WET.

PRACTICE 2

16	T.PRYCE	lm.	31.57s.
11	N.LAUDA	lm.	32.38s.
20	J.SCHECKTER	lm.	33.23s.
8	C.PACE	lm.	33.27s.
19	V.BRAMBILLA	lm.	33.91s.
12	C.REUTEMANN	lm.	34.09s.
6	G.NILSSON	lm.	34.44s.
28	E.FITTIPALDI	lm.	34.51s.
1	J.HUNT	lm.	34.94s.
2	J.MASS	lm.	35.05s.
22	C.REGAZZONI	lm.	35.43s.
18	H.BINDER	lm.	35.51s.
7	J.WATSON	lm.	35.79s.
9	A.RIBEIRO	lm.	37.05s.
30	B.LUNGER	lm.	38.94s.
5	M.ANDRETTI	lm.	39.37s.
10	H.STUCK	lm.	53.68s.
14	L.PERKINS	lm.	59.40s.

DATE THUR 2 PM MARCH 3 WEATHER DRY. OVERCAST.

PRACTICE 3

1	J.HUNT	lm.	15.96s.
8	C.PACE	lm.	16.01s.
11	N.LAUDA	lm.	16.29s.
4	P.DEPAILLER	lm.	16.33s.
20	J.SCHECKTER	lm.	16.35s.
5	M.ANDRETTI	lm.	16.38s.
3	R.PETERSON	lm.	16.44s.
12	C.REUTEMANN	lm.	16.54s.
28	E.FITTIPALDI	lm.	16.64s.
6	G.NILSSON	lm.	16.65s.
7	J.WATSON	lm.	16.71s.
26	J.LAFFITE	lm.	16.74s.
2	J.MASS	lm.	16.99s.
19	V.BRAMBILLA	lm.	17.08s.
16	T.PRYCE	lm.	17.11s.
22	C.REGAZZONI	lm.	17.21s.
9	A.RIBEIRO	lm.	17.44s.
10	H.STUCK	lm.	17.49s.
18	H.BINDER	lm.	18.07s.
17	R.ZORZI	lm.	18.42s.
33	B.HAYJE	lm.	19.59s.
14	L.PERKINS	lm.	21.77s.
30	B.LUNGER	lm.	24.35s.

STARTING GRID

POLE

8 C.PACE lm. 16.01s.	1 J.HUNT lm. 15.96s.
4 P.DEPAILLER lm. 16.33s.	11 N.LAUDA lm. 16.29s.
5 M.ANDRETTI lm. 16.38s.	20 J.SCHECKTER lm. 16.35s.
12 C.REUTEMANN lm. 16.54s.	3 R.PETERSON lm. 16.44s.
6 G.NILSSON lm. 16.65s.	28 E.FITTIPALDI lm. 16.64s.
26 J.LAFFITE lm. 16.74s.	7 J.WATSON lm. 16.71s.
19 V.BRAMBILLA lm. 17.08s.	2 J.MASS lm. 16.99s.
22 C.REGAZZONI lm. 17.21s.	16 T.PRYCE lm. 17.11s.
10 H.STUCK lm. 17.49s.	9 A.RIBEIRO lm. 17.44s.
17 R.ZORZI lm. 18.42s.	18 H.BINDER lm. 18.07s.
14 L.PERKINS lm. 21.77s.	33 B.HAYJE lm. 19.59s.
	30 B.LUNGER lm. 24.35s.

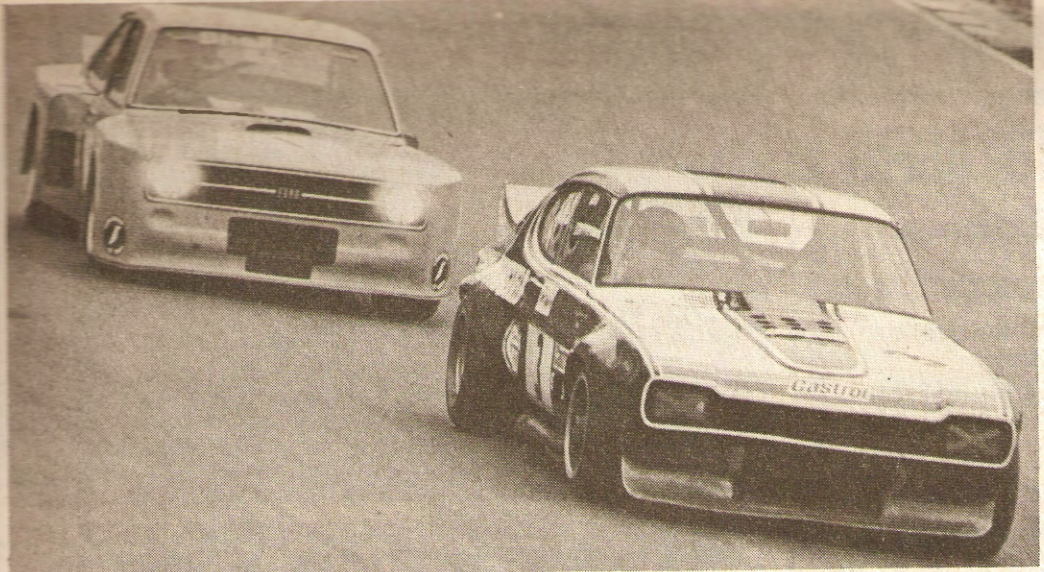
LAP CHART

AUTOSPORT

GRID ORDER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
1 J.HUNT	1	1	1	1	1	1	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
8 C.PACE	11	11	11	11	11	11	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
11 N.LAUDA	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
4 P.DEPAILLER	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
20 J.SCHECKTER	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
5 M.ANDRETTI	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3 R.PETERSON	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
12 C.REUTEMANN	3	3	3	3	3	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	5	5	5	5	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	5
28 E.FITTIPALDI	28	28	28	12	12	28	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	7
6 G.NILSSON	12	12	12	28	28	7	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19
7 J.WATSON	10	7	7	7	7	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28
26 J.LAFFITE	6	10	10	10	10	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	19	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
2 J.MASS	7	6	6	6	26	6	6	6	6	19	19	19	19	26	26	26	26	26	26	16	16	16	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	22	22	22	22	22	22
19 V.BRAMBILLA	26	26	26	26	6	22	22	19	19	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	16	16	26	26	26	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	6	6	6	⑥	9	9
16 T.PRYCE	33	22	22	22	22	19	19	22	22	22	22	22	22	16	16	16	16	6	6	6	6	6	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	18	18
22 C.REGAZZONI	22	18	18	19	19	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	30	30
9 A.RIBEIRO	18	33	19	18	16	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	9	9	9	9	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	6	6
10 H.STUCK	9	19	16	16	18	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	18	18	18	18	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	14	14	14
18 H.BINDER	17	9	33	9	9	33	33	33	33	33	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	30	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14			
17 R.ZORZI	19	16	9	33	33	17	17	17	17	17	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	30	30	33														
33 B.HAYJE	30	17	17	17	17	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	33	33	14														
14 L.PERKINS	16	30	30	30	30	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14															
30 B.LUNGER	14	14	14	14	14																															

-1 LAP

37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78
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7	7	7	7	7	7	7	12	12	12	12	⑧	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22
19	19	19	19	19	19	19	28	28	28	28	28	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28
28	28	28	28	28	28	28	22	22	22	22	22	10	10	10	10	10	10	⑩	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	⑧	9	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	
10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	9	9	9	9	8	8	8	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	18	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6		
22	22	22	22	22	22	22	9	9	9	9	9	18	18	18	8	9	9	9	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	6	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8			
9	9	9	9	9	9	9	18	18	18	18	18	8	8	8	18	18	18	18	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	8	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30			
18	18	18	18	18	18	18	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	14	14	14	14	14	14	14					
30	30	30	30	6	6	6	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14												
6	6	6	6	30	30	30	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14																							
14	14	14	14	14	14	14																																			



A "hairy" combination, Tony Strawson plus 8.1-litre Capri, hold off Nick Whiting's 3.4 V6 Escort.

BRANDS HATCH

Season's cracking start

If the close competition and quality of Sunday's racing at the opening Brands Hatch meeting is any indication, the 1977 club motor racing season will be a vintage one. The eight-race programme, organised by BRSCC HQ, saw wins for Philip Bullman and Ashley Ward (both in their first FF2000 events), Bernard Devaney and Peter Lawrence (FF1600 heats), Don Macleod (FF1600 heat and final), Derrick Brunt (Prodsaloons) and Tony Strawson (Special saloons), all of them after closely fought, incident-packed races.

The packed programme, allowing barely a 20 minute break between practice and racing, started with the first of three 10-lap qualifiers for the Townsend Thoresen FF1600 Championship round. Sensation of the grid was Francisco Serra, former Brazilian kart champion, whose only single-seater experience before Sunday was in Formula Vee in his home country. In his works-entered Van Diemen, Serra, nicknamed "Chico," lapped in 52s dead, putting him 0.2s ahead of the considerably more experienced Mike Blanchet's works Lola, and 0.6s in front of Russell Dell's Tiga.

All three made good starts, but it was Serra into Paddock first with Dell taking Blanchet round the outside to follow the young Brazilian up towards Druids with Peter Lawrence, Australian Rod MacLeod and Brian Sims following close behind. On the second lap, Blanchet slipped past Dell in a well-calculated move at Paddock, a manoeuvre he repeated on the next lap to take the lead from Serra, his experience showing early on. But the FF debutant would not let it rest and, changing his tactics from lap to lap, tried first the inside, then the outside line to recapture his lead, succeeding on lap six, when he eased past in a side-by-side run up the hill. He stayed in front until the final lap when Van Diemen and Lola touched. Blanchet rolled — fortunately without personal injury — and Lawrence and Dell slipped through to head Serra at the flag. A cracking start.

Heat two followed with 1976 TEAC champion Tony Halliwell sitting on pole with 51s dead in the ex-Derek Daly Hawke with Stuart Veitch (Royale) and Robert Coates (Hawke) alongside. This time Halliwell took the starting advantage and no doubt pleased his new sponsors, Fairview Estates, by leading the first lap, until the superior experience and newer car of Bernard Devaney put the popular Irishman in front.

To break up the single-seaters came the opening round of the new Century Supreme Special Saloon Car Championship with, as expected, the immaculate new 3.4-litre Ford Escort of Nick Whiting — finished only last week — on the pole. His 49.4s put him a good 1.4s ahead of Tony Strawson's "hairy" 8-litre Capri entered by the ubiquitous Marshall-Wingfield organisation and 2.6s ahead of Tony Dickinson's 2-litre Escort. The smaller Escort made a good start, but it was Strawberry who led up the hill to Druids to start 10 closely-fought laps in which these two special saloon experts were never separated by more than half a second. Whiting's persistent attempts to get alongside at the start of Brabham straight failed as the superior power of the Capri allowed Strawberry to pull away down the straight. Half a length separated them at the finish—a superb race.

The third, and quickest, Formula Ford heat followed, with five different chassis occupying the five places on the first two rows — an indication, perhaps, that the supremacy of the Hawke will come under heavy fire this season.

Former FF champion and one of the most experienced men in the formula, Don Macleod, put the works Van Diemen on pole with David Leslie, runner-up in last year's Dunlop Star of Tomorrow contest, alongside with his Royale, the front row completed by the Crosslé of David McLeeland. Macleod made a superb start, as did Leslie, but while the latter missed a gear, Frank Bayes, James Weaver (who had completely rebuilt his Hawke after it was involved in someone else's practice accident on Wednesday), Roger Pedrick and Nick Orford slipped past. Macleod, McLeeland and Bayes pulled slowly away and the interest was centred on Leslie's progress through the field, aided somewhat by James Weavers' spin coming out of Druids which helped him into fourth by lap six.

Yet more single-seaters, this time the consolation race for Formula Ford 2000 competitors, of which nearly 50 were entered for this meeting — a tribute, indeed, to the success of this three-year-old formula. The front row had Elden employee Ashley Ward in Frank Bradley's car, Londoner Ken Eady with a Dulon and Chris Fearon's Titan. After warm-up laps, Ward made a bad start and it was Fearon and the wily Syd Fox, in the barely-tested Palliser, who took the initial advantage but Ward made up one place by the end of lap one when the order was Fearon, Ward, Fox. It stayed that way for six laps until Fox passed Ward at Paddock only to visit the pits at the end of the lap as his rear wing was falling off.

The first of the new single-class Production events had attracted a rather disappointing 15 cars, but they made up for their lack of numbers with some superb racing, the highlight being the four-car battle up front. Two of the four Manitou LE BMWs sandwiched Tony Lanfranchi's unsponsored Monorep-prepared BMW on the front row, David Taylor on pole and Derrick Brunt the other side.

It was Lanfranchi whose scorching start set the pace for the 15-lapper as he led into Paddock ahead of Brunt, Taylor, Jock Robertson in the *Mayfair* Opel Commodore, Alan Minshaw's Manchester Liners Demon Tweeks Opel and Malcolm Prior's Strand Garages Vauxhall Magnum. Brunt had put Lanfranchi into second place by the end of lap two establishing the pattern that was to remain. Despite the lack of changing places, however, the sight of about five tons of 3-litre saloons in close formation around the Kent track certainly goes some way to justify MCD's decision to limit the series to the one class. Robertson did all he could in his efforts to pass Taylor, the Commodore appearing to be connected to the BMW much of the time.

Feature event of the day was the opening round of the Lord's Taverners FF2000 series, this event titled in honour of guest John Alderton. The increasing strength of this formula can be gauged from the presence of seven different chassis in the eight top places on the grid for what was to be one of the most competitive FF2000 events ever staged. Philip Bullman's Hawke with a new Rowland engine (see *Sports Extra*) sat on the pole, his 48.4s less than 1s outside the lap record — an impressive achievement for his first race in the formula. Returned from FAtlantic, Jeremy Rossiter's Reynard was in the middle, with Rad Dougall's Royale on the outside ahead of Robert Cooper (Merlyn) and Venezualan Oscar Notz (Crosslé), Rick Morris (Ray), Neil Betteridge (Dulon) and Adrian Reynard.

Bullman, Cooper, Rossiter and Dougall were hotfoot off the line, Bullman moving into the lead just as he entered Paddock, but Cooper had the advantage by the end of lap one. The former FF1600 star and Cooper were wheel to wheel for five laps, Bullman moving right up on Cooper each lap out of Clark Curve, only to see him pull away as the superior power of the Merlyn told. At Paddock, Bullman slipped through leading up the hill followed by Frank Sytner, who started from a lowly grid position following practice problems. Cooper's engine was failing him and he soon visited the pits, leaving Bullman about 2s ahead of Rossiter, Sytner and Dougall who could easily have been covered with one large double bed sheet. Their preoccupation with one another distracted them from any efforts to catch Bullman and he went on to win.

Dusk was threatening and BRSCC Executive Director Peter Browning was halfway through one of his "hurry up" war dances as the FF1600s came out for the Townsend Thoresen championship race. Macleod, McCleeland and Leslie sat on the front row with Frank Bayes and Derek Devaney behind. This 15-lapper confirmed Don Macleod and Van Diemen as early season leaders as he gave a faultless display of driving despite a very strong challenge from the youngster Leslie. He passed Devaney into Paddock on lap three and repeated that favourite manoeuvre on McLeeland two laps later — a "Star of Tomorrow" who is certainly living up to his promise. Having figured in the slowest of the three heats, "Chico" Serra started on the last but one row of the grid but steady progress and expert and tidy driving, took him to 13th on lap two, 10th by lap six, seventh by lap 10 and into fifth by the chequered flag—another Brazilian in the mould of that other FF beginner, Emerson what's his name?

ROBIN BRADFORD

Townsend Thoresen Formula Ford Championship, heat one (10 laps): 1, Peter Lawrence (Royale Rowland RP3A), 8m 53.6s, 81.20mph; 2, Russell Dell (Tiga CES FF76), 8m 54.6s; 3, Francisco Serra (Van Diemen Scholar RF77), 8m 57.2s; 4, Rod MacLeod (Royale Minister RP21), 9m 0.2s. **Fastest lap:** Serra and Mike Blanchet (Lola Minister), 51.4s, 84.30mph.

Townsend Thoresen Formula Ford Championship, heat two (10 laps): 1, Bernard Devaney (Hawke Burton DL17), 8m 48.6s, 81.97mph; 2, Tony Halliwell (Hawke Minister DL15), 8m 52s; 3, Charles Birchenough (Rostron Minister CT3), 8m 52.4s; 4, Robert Coates (Hawke DL17), 8m 55.2s. **Fastest lap:** Birchenough, 51s, 84.96mph.

Century Supreme Special Saloon Car Championship Race (10 laps); overall: 1, Tony Strawson (8.0 Ford Capri), 8m 25.6s, 85.70mph; 2, Nick Whiting (3.4 Ford Escort), 8m 25.8s; 3, Tony Dickinson (2.0 Ford Escort), 8m 48s; 4, Peter Baldwin (1.3 Mini Clubman), 8m 49.8s. **Over 2500cc:** 1, Strawson; 2, Whiting. **Fastest lap:** Whiting, 49.2s, 88.07mph. **1301cc to 2500cc:** 1, Dickinson; 2, Brian Davis (1.8 Ford Escort); 3, Barry Barnes (1.8 Ford Escort). **Fastest lap:** Dickinson, 51.6s, 83.97mph. **1001cc to 1300cc:** 1, Baldwin; 2, Richard Oliver (1.3 Mini Longman); 3, Brian Leeks (1.3 Ford Escort). **Fastest lap:** Baldwin, 51.6s, 83.97mph.

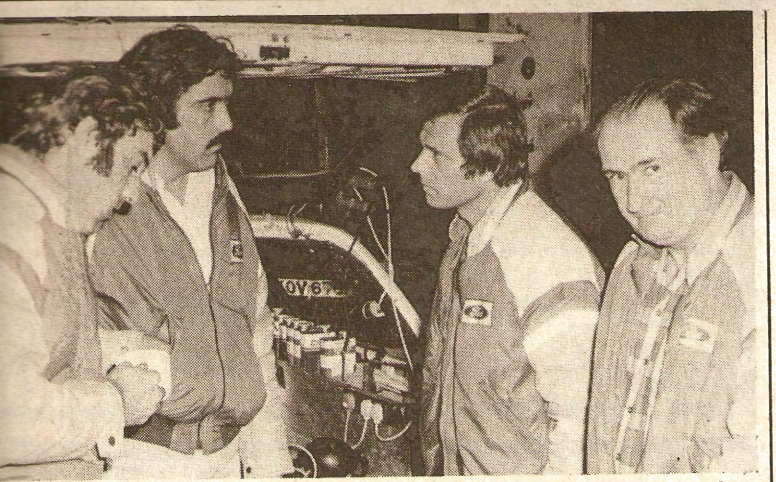
Townsend Thoresen Formula Ford Championship, heat three (10 laps): 1, Don MacLeod (Van Diemen Scholar), 8m 38.4s, 83.55mph; 2, David McCleeland (Crossle 30F), 8m 42.6s; 3, David Leslie (Royale RP24), 8m 23.2s; 4, Frank Bayes (Image Rowland FF2B), 8m 44s. **Fastest lap:** MacLeod and Leslie, 51s, 84.96mph.

BRSCC Formula Ford 2000 Challenge Race (15 laps): 1, Ashley Ward (Elden Minister Mk 22), 12m 31.8s, 86.45mph; 2, Chris Fearon (Titan Titan Mk 10), 12m 39.4s; 3, Ken Eady (Dulon Nelson MP20), 12m 41.6s; 4, Nick Fox (Renard Newbridge SF77), 12m 52.8s. **Fastest lap:** Ward, 49.4s, 87.71mph.

Capital Radio Production Saloon Car Championship Race (15 laps): 1, Derrick Brunt (3.0 BMW 30Si), 14m 56s, 72.54mph; 2, Tony Lanfranchi (3.0 30Si), 14m 57.6s; 3, David Taylor (3.0 BMW 30Si), 14m 58s; 4, Jock Robertson (2.8 Opel Commodore GS/E), 14m 59s; 5, Alan Minshaw (2.8 Opel Commodore GS/E), 15m 03.8s; 6, Ray Moore (2.8 Opel Commodore GS/E), 15m 20.6s. **Fastest lap:** Brunt, Taylor, Lanfranchi and Robertson, 59s, 73.44mph.

John Alderton Formula Ford 2000 Championship Race (20 laps): 1, Philip Bullman (Hawke Rowland DL16), 16m 25.4s, 87.94mph; 2, Jeremy Rossiter (Spax Reynard SF77), 16m 28s; 3, Frank Sytner (Foxcub Dulon Fewkes MP20), 16m 28.2s; 4, Rad Dougall (Royale Titan RP25), 16m 29s; 5, Oscar Notz (Crossle Titan 31F), 16m 35.6s; 6, Stuart Baird (Hawke Titan DL16), 16m 50.4s. **Fastest lap:** Rossiter, 48.2s, 89.90mph.

Townsend Thoresen Formula Ford Championship Race (15 laps): 1, Don MacLeod (Van Diemen Scholar), 12m 56.8s, 83.67mph; 2, David Leslie (Royale RP24), 12m 58.2s; 3, David McCleeland (Crossle 30F), 13m 02.4s; 4, Bernard Devaney (Hawke Burton DL17), 13m 05.6s; 5, Francisco Serra (Van Diemen Scholar RF77), 13m 08.8s; 6, Peter Lawrence (Royale Rowland RP3A), 13m 12.8s. **Fastest lap:** MacLeod, McCleeland, Leslie and Serra, 50s, 84.96mph.



Concern in Portugal . . . Allan Wilkinson, Boreham's new rally development engineer (second from the left) discusses the situation with the mechanics while Peter Ashcroft (right) seems somewhat less than enamoured with the intrusion of the cameraman.

Tyre technology

Pirelli's steel braced Portuguese triumph

Dunlop and Ford's tyre problems on the Rally of Portugal last week only highlighted the two distinct requirements necessary for British forestry style racing on the one hand and European rough road events, incorporating long distance stages over surfaces varying from Morocco-style rough (very !) to smooth, hard-packed gravel — all within the space of one test. Waldegaard's punctures (four altogether, two of which occurred on A2s and two on M&S) cost him over 11m altogether, while Ari Vatanen suffered two M&S punctures on stages 20 and 21 which, together with a stop to investigate a noise from the rear axle on SS22, cut his 3m lead to zero. Such critical time losses are not made up easily and, while Ford suffered the consequences, the entire Fiat ensemble managed to drive the whole rally without a single really critical puncture.

The reason was simple. Fiat were using a new type of P7 (mud and snow pattern) which was steel-braced and weighed some 1½ kilos more than the usual type. We gather that this tyre had steel bracing both in the sidewalls and under the tread itself; while the familiar P7 pattern tends to inhibit the passage of sharp flints getting through to the base of the tread. The strength of this phenomenal tyre could be gauged by the fact that Verini had a stub axle failure during a test which allowed the entire unit to bore its way into the sidewall. He drove 12km in this fashion, yet the tyre still held air at the end of the stage !

Meanwhile, Waldegaard suffered two punctures on SS16 as soon as he switched to A2s after the Povoa halt. He also lost a critical amount of time in Arganil 1 and 2 (the longest test of the rally—an incredibly rough 42km) and incurred a minute's road penalty while the axle was re-fettled following the battering sustained while the car was being driven on the rim.

This was the final straw, and on stages 30 and 31 Dunlop's experimental Safari tyre was tried. Unfortunately Dunlop only had three of these tyres in Portugal, having intended to test them before the event. Now two of them were fitted to the rear and Waldegaard completed Candosa and Vidual without trouble. These Safari tyres follow the P7 idea and are steel rather than textile braced radials (unlike the ordinary M&S). They use an M&S pattern and look identical. Owing to the fact that only three were available, the tyres were only used for a total of 32 stage kilometres, so it is scarcely possible to say how effective they really are in inhibiting punctures.

Fiat in fact used P7s in two sizes and types, but the wider M&S 205/50 VR 15s predominated in the dry conditions. They also used the intermediate compound P7 Monte Carlo and the slick for tarmac.

Meanwhile Fiat plans still seem fairly flexible. Rumours abound concerning their arrival in the UK prior to the RAC. Certainly Markku Alen is pressing hard to get the team over to British events; for the 131 is no easy car to drive on loose, especially if it is rough, and much more development is required in this area. It seems most likely that they *will* compete here, probably with one car, although Bacchelli is also keen to come over to do British national(s) before the season's end. An event like the Lindisfarne or the Castrol '77 would seemingly be ideal. As there now seems to be some doubt over the WCR status of the Radio New Zealand International (there is talk that a paucity of entries may force the organisers to introduce a G5 class, which would enable locally prepared rally cars to compete) Fiat may not go. However there is little doubt that they will go to NZ if the event remains a WCR qualifier. Ari Vatanen is certain to go however, and Henry Liddon will be co-driving.

Man with problems. John Horton was looking after Ford's tyre requirements in Portugal. Here he discusses the construction of Dunlop's latest Safari rubber.



Leyland: next stop Elba

Leyland Cars are not now going to the Trifels Rally in Germany. This event was to have been the third in their programme of TR7 development this year, but the fact that a large proportion of the route has been scrubbed together with the encouraging results obtained from the cars recently, has decided the team in favour of waiting until Elba for their next European venture.

We gather that much of the Elba route has been re-laid with tarmac since last year which will undoubtedly hand the advantage to any Fiat 131s which happen to appear (presumably Cambiaghi at least, as he is contesting the Italian national championship for the factory) for although the TRs handle exceptionally well on tar, there seems to be little save a Stratos to catch a well-driven 131 in this sort of environment. Bacchelli's times on the tarmac stages of the Rally of Portugal last week underline the enormous speed of which the lightweight Fiats are capable.

Meanwhile we hear that Pat Ryan's co-driver on the Circuit is to be Drexel Gillespie.

Tony Pond in action on Olivers Mount during the Mintex recently.



'Pure speculation'

Rumours certainly flourish in Europe. One of the more amusing ones heard in Europe was that Leyland Cars might be planning a TR7 entry on Elba for Achim Warmbold! As far as we are aware such a situation could not be contemplated, if only because there is no available spare car, aside from several other considerations. But then you never know, do you . . . Achim was in London on Monday evening and we gather met Mr Davenport. Just good friends?

● Our spies in Kenya tell us that aside from the usual wife swopping/separations etc, Sandro Munari and Mike Parkes have destroyed the training Lancia Stratos on its first day out. No details of the accident were available as we went to Press, but we gather that the pair were involved in a head-on road accident; not an uncommon occurrence in East Africa. The Safari currently has 75 entries.



Above: Ten kilometres in Arganil don't leave much rubber remaining after Waldegaard's puncture. Bjorn still set an incredible fifth fastest time on the test! Below: the opposition lines up at scrutineering.



UAC get Toyota entry

. . . and Donegal looks good once again

UAC have just received a Toyota GB entry for Ove Andersson's Celica GT on the Circuit of Ireland. The car is being entered in conjunction with Neville Johnson, the local importers who also have an interest in John Haugland's Skoda 130RS. Ove has for some while been under pressure from Neville Johnson to enter an official car from Belgium, and it will be most interesting to watch a previous Safari winner trying his hand at the other major rally event at Easter. Before coming third in Portugal last weekend, Ove's previous drive in a Celica was on the Acropolis last year. He claims to be somewhat out of practice!

But is Andersson really going to go? While in Portugal he expressed a desire to compete there, but seemed less than totally enthusiastic about the possibility of driving the car himself. Certainly the money for the exercise will not be coming from Team Toyota Europe's budget, and one must assume that such a venture will be funded by the very keen Irish importers or Toyota GB themselves.



Mikkola in Portugal last week. Hannu will be in Africa over Easter, but will Andersson drive in Ireland?

Ireland seems to contain a fund of stories and rumours at present; one of the most interesting of which is that Walter Rohrl is also planning to enter the Circuit, in a Kadett prepared by Tony Fall. We gather this entry is subject not only to German approval, but also to Fall finding a suitable engine. The fragility of the Kadett torque tube shaft, when required to transmit over 200 bhp at high revs, was once again demonstrated at the weekend; for despite winning the Dukeries, Mike Rawson still encountered problems even though a considerably strengthened shaft had been fitted following the Mintex failure. The car would certainly not have lasted the duration of a long event. Should Rohrl make the start of the Circuit, he is likely to be entered by Sydney Pentland, one of the local Opel dealers.

Other entries include Adrian Boyd's Alpine (in which he finished fourth two years ago) and Malcolm Wilson's G1 RS2000.

Donegal all-go

Meanwhile plans for Donegal are apparently well advanced. Far from being the non-starter which it appeared to be only a few weeks ago, Donegal is now looking most interesting thanks to the efforts of Derek McMahon, the Donegal MC and doubtless the Irish tourist board. Roger Clark has now been confirmed for the rally, when he will once more be run by the David Sutton ensemble, and McMahon is currently negotiating with a Londonderry Ford dealers (Desmond Motors?) on behalf of the entry. However he has not stopped there, and we now gather that Russell Brookes, Andrew Dawson and Billy Coleman in the Stratos seem very likely to make an appearance.

Nelson in the hills

The Donegal Rally and the 24 Hours of Ypres are certainly two events on the programme being planned for the Checquered Flag Stratos, Flag boss Graham Warner told us that Billy Coleman will be definitely doing both events if all goes well on the Circuit, and everything on the car is sorted out. At the moment it is completely stripped down and they are trying to reduce its weight by at least 1½cwt.

Such a combination of names should give the locals something to think about, but Brian Nelson is certainly getting the right sort of practice at present, for last week he won the Hills of Donegal rally (on which Robert Ward was Clerk of the Course) by over two minutes from Derek Boyd. The compact 120 miles event (80 miles of stages) consisted of six tests run twice, and wreaked enormous carnage among the entry. However Ronnie McCartney debuted his new G1 RS2000 and finished an excellent third overall, beating David Agnew's ex-Warmbold BMW into fourth place.

● Financial support and increased radio links are being given to the CP Granite City Rally by Pye Telecommunications. The links will mean better communications between course cars, card collection points and rally HQ. Also up to date results will be available at the Aboyne lunch halt even before the cars arrive.



Fred Henderson has still to perfect the front suspension geometry on the Oates Garages Corolla.

On the road again

York turkey breeder Mike Rawson had his best win in four years of rallying last weekend when he clinched the Dukeries Rally by 55s from Graham Lepley after 60 miles of stages mainly in the Clipstone complex.

The event, the first round of the Esso/BTRDA Gold Star Rally Championship, attracted a field of 119 competitors for the night followed by daylight type of event which was once again sponsored by the *Mansfield Observer*.

Rawson, with Phil Short alongside in place of his normal man Chris Grey, who was not available, only had one "moment" with the Kadett GTE. That came in the Clipstone complex when they ploughed through, rather than over, a tree trunk marking an escape road after they had misread a blind brow flat out at well over 100mph. Fortunately the trunk was almost rotten, they suffered no damage and were able to remain ahead, although dropping a few seconds to their rivals.

Second, rallying in spite of strong advice to the contrary, was Graham Lepley in his Escort RS1600 fitted with an 1800cc unit. Lepley, who came good in the second half after being down to fifth, drove the event with a broken bone in the back of his right hand and had his hand strapped up throughout. He and Malcolm Harvey came through into the £50 second place prize money on the last few miles, overtaking the High Wycombe crew of Mike Brown and John Mullord in their Granada-engined Escort V6.

With a mixture of forest stages and a fair amount of high speed tarmac work on disused airfields, there was reasonable variety for the crews. In the night section Rawson took an early lead, which he kept throughout, though harried early on by Phil Doughty in his Escort, who was only 30s behind at breakfast. Doughty's effort came to nought when his engine expired early in the second half at Fulbeck and another engine failure around this time put out Dan Grewer's Ascona.

With Rawson and his Kadett leading the field, the man of the second half was undoubtedly Robin Farrington, who was fastest on aggregate of the daylight stages. The RS1800 shared by Farrington and Tony Francis had suffered gearbox trouble on the fourth stage and this had cost them around 2m delay, but they pulled back to finish in eighth spot.

Although commenting that the front suspension geometry on the Toyota Corolla is still far from right "the car weaves about on its own in a straight line at over 70mph," Fred Henderson and Colin Wilson were a steady fourth, 23s down on Brown and Mullord.



Mike Rawson—as the day progressed, gradually increasing confidence brought a long overdue victory.

The Iliffe brothers, Richard and Stuart, moved quietly and efficiently into fifth on their return to rallying after an appreciable absence.

1, M. Rawson/P. Short (Kadett GTE), 1044s; 2, G. Lepley/M. Harvey (RS1600), 1044s; 3, M. Brown/J. Mullord (Escort V6), 1052s; 4, F. Henderson/C. Wilson (Toyota Corolla), 1075s; 5, R. and S. Iliffe (Escort), 1107s.

● Phil Short will be getting a ride in yet another rally car shortly when he returns to the left hand seat of a G4 Vauxhall Magnum. Having co-driven Mike Rawson to victory on the Dukeries last weekend (his first rally finish since the Castrol '76 last year) Phil is co-driving with Chris Lord on the forthcoming Alcoa Trophy when the latter will be trying out his new Century Oils ex-DTV Magnum (the brand new car built for the RAC Rally last year but never used) for the first time. The car will make its Castrol/AUTOSPORT debut on the Cheltenham Festival. Following a nostalgic return (?) to Vauxhall, Phil will then be jumping into a Saab, as he will again be partnering Jack Tordoff in one or two local events in the latter's works-built 96V4. . . .

Malkin for Festival

Colin Malkin, who was recently taken ill just prior to the Mintex (appearing at Harrogate as a spectator only, while under doctor's orders not to drive), is once again fully fit. The Century Oils TR7 will thus be out shortly and both the South West Stages and the Cheltenham Festival are being contested in an effort to sort the car with all possible haste. Meanwhile Del Lines had the TR7 out on the Dukeries last weekend and, we gather, learnt much more about it while taking things very gently to 20th overall.

Hadrian lose Otterburn

Hadrian MC's Centurion Stages rally (Castrol/AUTOSPORT round 6) is returning to an all-daylight format on Saturday, May 28, owing to the fact that the army have decided to run a paratroop exercise that weekend and will require the Otterburn ranges for this purpose. The rally will, therefore, be based entirely on Keilder, where there will be some 65 miles of forest linked by about 85 miles on the public road. The rally is now sponsored by Weatherall Hauliers/Weellan Builders and HQ is the Newcastle Airport hotel. Regulations will be available shortly and, from latest reports emanating from the north east, we can all look forward to an exciting post-rally party!

All change

The Lakeland Stages has changed its date once again, owing to objections which were raised when the rally was scheduled for the same weekend as the Lindisfarne. Thus the new date, dictated entirely by circumstances, is October 22. . . .

Castrol Autosport Rally Championship '77

Eight stages equal 100 miles

Wolverhampton and South Staffs MC are well advanced with their plans for the Castrol '77 which takes place on October 15th this year. A maximum of eight stages will make up a total of a genuine 100 miles of prime forestry roads in the usual areas and the Nant-y-Moch dam road will not be used this year. Entry fee is likely to be between £55-£60 and 180 can be accepted. Regulations will be available in June and all applications, complete with 9in x 6in SAE, should be addressed to Entries Secretary Mrs Christine Chick, 12 Brooklands Road, Albrighton, Near Wolverhampton, WV7 3DW, West Midlands. Tel: Albrighton 3281. David Stephenson is Clerk of the Course as usual and this year he will again have three assistants in Jim Mackay, Norman Jones and John Gibbs. David Cozens is looking after Press and Public Relations this year, while the new secretary is Windsor Evans who is well known in the rally world for his association with Aberdare MC and particularly the Nutcracker Rally in its hayday.

● Burmah are offering free entries on the Burmah International rally (August 19/20) to the three highest placed private entrants from outside the UK on each of the four home internationals preceding the rally. These will be the Mintex, the Circuit of Ireland, the Welsh and the Scottish.

Arkell statement

The Cirencester Car Club wish to put the record straight on the reason for the cancellation of the 1977 Arkell Rally and have issued the following statement.

"For a number of years Cirencester Car Club have been fortunate to be able to use the excellent Cirencester Park as a base for its Arkell Rally. Recent escalation in various charges means that the financial commitment asked of competitors and organisers has reached an unacceptable level. With no other suitable venue and the paucity of good stage mileage in the close vicinity, the organisers regret to say that there will be no Arkell Rally in 1977."

The Bath Motor Club's Festival Stages Rally on June 18/19, due to conflicting interests, is no longer a round of the Pirelli/CCC Championship but is round six of the Esso/BTRDA Championship. Provisionally the stage mileage is set at 70.

● Regulations are now available for the Avon Tyres Chieftain Rally, which will start from the West Country Motor Auctions site at Westbury, Wiltshire on April 10. They can be obtained from Mr R. M. Pease, 85 Leigh Park Road, Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire. It is a qualifying round of the ASWMC, ACSMC and Central Tyres championships, and will include 50 stage miles.



Vatanen in Bramham Park during the Mintex.

Setting the record straight

The Peter Bryant account of Vatanen's drive through the Rufforth airfield test during the Mintex differs somewhat from our published implications, so it seems a good idea to set the record straight. Ari was proceeding down the stage on the "correct route" (although Bryant was concerned because it did not correlate with the diagram) when Coleman's Stratos shot across their path at a T junction on the route corresponding to the diagram. Vatanen thus spun the car round to check the arrows. When the car was facing the other way, they were confronted by Pond's TR7 coming towards them on the route they had been previously following. Now a little confused, Ari spun the car back in its original direction and continued. Later he spun again while trying to make up all the time he had lost. Bryant's contention however is that despite all this time lost, Ari would most certainly not have got a maximum for the test as he did not in fact take a wrong turn off the stage route at any time.

Appropriately Frank Pierson

Newtown and District Motor Club's first Tour of Dyfnant stages rally went off successfully last Sunday when 68 competitors tackled eight stages in the well-known North West Wales forest with only six crews failing to make it to the finish.

With sponsorship from Century Oils, the event was won appropriately by Frank Pierson/Arthur Brick in their now very well rallied Escort, who ended the day on 2152s to win by just over half a minute. Pierson and Brick were fastest on five of the eight stages, but there was a good performance from R. Chilman/D. Griffiths who, from a lowly seeding, came through to take second place in their RS2000.

Third—only 12s behind—were a local crew Will Owen/E. Williams in another RS2000. Fourth place went to M. Powell/L. Badger in a 1.7 Escort on 2208s.

In the only two incidents of note, David Moore inverted his Escort after the flying finish on the first stage but continued. The Avenger of M. Griffiths had a similar incident at the end of the fourth stage but he landed in the trees and could not be recovered.

Fifth on an event which used several never before rallied sections of the forest were Richard Edwards and Mike Bayliss in yet another RS2000 on 2217s while Vaughan Bond and Trevor Griffiths brought their Escort TC into sixth place 2s behind Edwards.

The other class winner—up to 1300cc—was the crew of E. Linton and P. Watson in an Imp on 2314s and the mixed crew award was won by the Escort of Norman Creed/Dorothy Price on 2296s.

Briefly

● Two British crews were among the 170 starters on the annual Nacht der Kempen rally run last weekend on Saturday and Sunday in North East Belgium.

Tony Maslen and David Booth from Kent finished 11th overall in their RS1800 but the RAFMSA crew of Paul Davey/Rod McKenna only managed 76th place after being slowed in the first day by a leaking radiator on their G1 Mexico.

The event was won for the second year in succession by the Belgian National champion Gilbert Staepelaere in an RS1800 who was about 2m ahead of the German driver Peter Brink in a Porsche Carrera after 27 tarmac stages of which the longest was about eight miles.

● Rob Pendleton who was manager of the Rallye Sport department of Lloyds of Stafford has now gone into business by himself dealing in anything and everything on wheels. Rob, like a true rally man, gives a map reference for his address OS 127/948½203 but, for anyone who prefers the conventional method of the phone, he is on Stafford 64165.

● Current leaders of the Esso Uniflo BTRDA Gold Star championship following the Dukeries last weekend are as follows: **Drivers:** Mike Rawson 15; Graham Lepley 14; Mike Brown 13; Fred Henderson 12; Mike Bayliss 11; Robin Farrington 10. **Co-drivers:** Malcolm Harvey 15; John Mullord 14; Coin Wilson 13; Rick Green 12; David O'Brian 10.

● Another Dealer Opel Team forum will take place on 16th March at Allisons of Doncaster Ltd, Wheatley Hall Road, Doncaster. There will be three films including the latest Opel account of the RAC Rally, and all were directed by Barrie Hinchliffe. On the panel will be Tony Fall, Mike Rawson, Jeremy Ferguson and Mike Broad. Refreshments etc will be available.

Alen and Pirelli have the answer

Tyre technology critical in tough well organised rally—Alen's experience and tactics pay off—Brilliant drive from Waldegaard thwarted by punctures—Ford and Toyota dominate on the loose—
Report:HENRY LIDDON—Photography:COLIN TAYLOR PRODUCTIONS

Pirelli and Markku Alen won third round of the WCR for Fiat. The good news for Ford was Waldegaard's second place, despite losing over 10 minutes through 4 punctures, while the bad news consisted of a subdued performance from Roger Clark who retired with an early clutch failure; and an over-exuberant Ari Vatanen. Ove Andersson, with his excellent Portuguese rally record, gave Toyota a fine third place after suffering two punctures on stage 23 (the 37km Marao), having just taken the lead from Vatanen.

Unusually heavy and prolonged rain for the preceeding months caused considerable problems during the practice for this year's Rallye de Portugal sponsored by the Port wine industry. Parts of the route were flooded and all the rougher special stages were liberally coated with drying mud, instead of the dust that is more usual.

ROUTE

The Rally started from the Estoril circuit with the first two stages on tarmac in the nearby Sintra complex, then north to Figueira da Foz for a short halt. With the coming of night the average speeds for the road sections were raised to around the 60kph mark while competitors tackled 10 further stages to the daytime halt at Povoa de Varzim, a coastal resort just north of the sponsors home-town of Porto. During the early evening there were four long rough stages in a small loop back to Povoa. On one of these stages in particular (San Lourenco) the mud was so deep that the organisers were forced to cancel the stage.

Re-starting the next morning at the civilised hour of 09.30 the third loop took competitors through such famous stages as Senora da Graca, Arganil and Candosa, before coming back to Lisbon.

The fourth and final loop of 12 tarmac stages, all held at night in the tight and twisty roads of Sintra, was watched by literally thousands of emotional Portuguese spectators, who displayed a fervour that is reminiscent of the Col de Turini during the last night of the Monte-Carlo Rally.

After the announcement of the results on Sunday afternoon, competitors took part in a light-hearted slalom test held on the main pit straight of the Estoril circuit in front of packed grandstands. Driver or co-driver could enter and some interesting performances took place — Waldegaard giving an electrifying display in his RS1800, which the Boreham mechanics had re-prepared by fitting a lower diff, A2s on the front and 195 M&S on the rear!



Markku Alen (above) has now won the Rallye of Portugal twice on consecutive occasions (he did not compete in 1976). This year's victory for Fiat was a showpiece of tactical driving.

WCR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP PORTUGUESE RALLY **3**

Below: Alen went to great lengths to conserve his car, and certainly the RS1800s were more than a match for the Fiats on the rough. Tyres put the issue beyond doubt, however.











To drive an RS1800 quickly is not a difficult task, but to drive it like this calls for skills on a higher level altogether. Bjorn Waldegaard was often in a hurry last week, trying to make up time after punctures. Above and right, he chops ruthlessly over a sheer drop apex, flinging his car into the corner as Hans Thorszelius calls a "flat right."

WCR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP **PORTUGUESE RALLY** **3**

continued

ENTRY

It was obvious that this was to be an extremely interesting confrontation between Fiat (Lightheartedly christened "the Mafia") and a very strong entry from Ford with Toyota waiting in the wings.

FIAT

Three Italian entered Abarth 131s appeared for the regular teams of Maurizio Verini, Markku Alen and Fulvio Bacchelli. The cars were all fitted with "Moroccan" suspension in preparation for the extremely rough sections in the north, backed as usual by a host of service vehicles and Fiat's own *Rally Doctor* to look after the crews' medical problems. Complementing these three cars, Fiat (France), under the guiding hand of Monsieur Vinatier, entered Jean-Claude Andruet, unfortunately without his normal diminutive co-driver "Biche" who had hurt her neck in J-C's Costa Brava Rally accident. Her place was taken by Christian Delferrier from Belgium.

FORD

This was Boreham's first big world championship event outside the UK for a very long time. Their three car entry consisted of the 1977 team of Roger Clark/Jim Porter, Bjorn Waldegaard/Hans Thorszelius and Ari Vatanen/Peter Bryant, the latter fresh from their Mintex win, but tackling their first major event outside Finland and the UK.

The whole Ford team presented a very professional and determined appearance, the cars as usual were RS1800s prepared to RAC rally specification but with a ride height slightly raised, stiffer shock absorbers and softer 145 lbs springs. Dunlop were on hand to give tyre service consisting mainly of variations on three basic types of tyre, re-cut CR82s, A2s and M&S; while there were just three experimental Safari specification tyres on hand for evaluation.

Service had been arranged by Charles Reynolds, using some well equipped transit vans; however, the drivers could well be summed up by the old Jaguar advertising slogan of Grace, space and pace!

TOYOTA

The diminutive Brussels-based team entered just two cars, both 2-litre Celicas for Hannu Mikkola/Arne Hertz and Ove Andersson/Henry Liddon, sponsored as in previous years by the Toyota concessionaires for Portugal, Salvador Caetano.

Although there were only these nine works entries, the quality of privateers was as high as ever, with 10 cars coming from Austria alone as the event counts for maximum points in the Austrian Rally championship. Among these were Franz Wittmann, Wolfgang Sulc and Klaus Russling/Klaus Krammer all in Opel Kadetts. From France Madame Cotton was looking after a Citroen CX2400 for Portgual's Francisco Romaozinho/Jose Bernardo; whilst Bob Neyret entered himself and Evelyn Vanoni in his own team Aseptogyl Renault Alpine 310. Garage Proprietor Jean Paul Luc in a Citroen CX2200 was among 18 other French entries.

In complete contest unfortunately, there was but one British entry (excluding of course the Boreham multi-national team and the various Scandinavians with British licences), that being an Escort RS2000 for Chris Wathen/Walter Ainsworth entered by Withers of Winsford, or, as the entry list proclaimed "Windorf!" This ill-fated entry was the very standard ex-David Lang car from the Hankiralli. On the way to the boat at Southampton the timing slipped and damaged the cylinder head, but the car was driven on to the boat, where the mechanics worked during the run to Spain. On arrival in Lisbon, it was decided to fly out a new cylinder head. This unit was fitted

so the car, after all this, did not even start.

Once again, generous organisers make this an attractive event for a British privateer, particularly with the de-valuation of the Escudos which recently took place, although petrol is still over £1.60 per gallon. As compensation, however, excellent wine can be had for under £1-per-bottle!

From nearby Spain, came Costa Brava Rally winner Beny Fernandez in his Sutton built ex-Aaby RS1800 while Portugal not unnaturally, provided the bulk of the entries including local hero "Meqepe" in his Kadett (G2 this year!) and Americo Nunes/Mira Amaral in a Porsche.

RALLY

After the heavy rains and clinging mist of the preceeding days, the start was hot and sunny as cars left the Estoril stadium for the three kilometres to the first two tarmac stages of Lagoa Azul and Peninha. Both were held in the Sintra complex and were to be used again on the last night.

As expected, the Fiats took an immediate lead with Bacchelli making the running, followed by Alen, Andruet and Verini. The first of these two stages is fast, dry tarmac while the second more twisty, with a few corners containing difficult patches of sand. All the leading crews were not unnaturally on various combinations of racing tyre, from pure slick, through Dunlop CR82s to quite heavily cut P7.

There then followed a 103 kilometre section to take the rally away from the heavily populated areas around Lisbon. This section ended at the first rough gravel stage of the event, "Montejunto" (SS3), whee Ford and Toyota immediately showed their rough road superiority. Hannu Mikkola was fastest on 5m 12s, followed by Vatanen, Waldegaard and Andersson, all being quicker than the Fiats!

Even after SS3 the pattern of the rally was beginning to emerge. Perhaps the most surprising thing was Roger Clark down in 11th position, slower even than a Portuguese Group One Opel, and after only three stages was exactly one minute behind rally leader Bacchelli, who in turn was just four seconds in front of Mikkola and a further five in front of Vatanen.

Still travelling north up the coastline, crews faced two more tarmac stages but, before the second of these, Clark's unhappy rally had come to an end, when the mechanics were unable to change his clutch in time when a release bearing seized after he had attempted to change gear. The clutch had been giving trouble from the start. Also in trouble was the Austrian, Sulc, who had rolled his Opel on the Peninha stage, whilst Bob Neyret was unable to find his service crew and had to do the first gravel stage on racing tyres, which eventually caused his retirement. He sustained three punctures on this test alone.

During the two hour rest halt at Figueira da Foz, some crews had a final practice run over the nearby stage, checking for any gravel or damp patches. While doing just this, Andersson was horrified to find his German Pirelli tyre truck motoring sedately up the stage, needless to say, the correct service point was hurriedly pointed out to the offending tyre fitters!

On re-starting from this two hour rest halt, the rally pace quickened, the average speed for road sections was increased—there being just time for routine maintenance but not for any major repairs. After the test on the coast, all the stages were on gravel and mud with everyone changing to P7, M&S, A2, M&S35 or whatever rough road tyre had been chosen. All except for the luckless Neyret who was still unable to find his service crew!

On the journey inland, the organisers had notified competitors of a flooded section and had suggested an alternative route, which in the darkness caused some confusion, particularly in the Fiat camp, and 47 cars losing time at the next TC. Andruet was the only factory driver to suffer a time penalty here, however, and with the slight ambiguity of road instructions, the organisers quite rightly erased all road penalties at this point. This was at the start of the Lousa special stage, 21 kilometres long, the first 10 kilometres being rough and muddy, while the final half consisted of a downhill stretch on an incredibly slippery surface. Vatanen easily made fastest time from Bacchelli and Mikkola, whilst Markku Alen had begun playing his waiting game, being 33 seconds slower than Vatanen. He appeared to be very content to let the young tigers play a dangerous game up-front!

Between stages 7 and 8 Mikkola had a re-occurrence of throttle-sticking, and came perilously close to being penalised on the road at the start of the 14 kilometre Bucaco stage. However, his time had run out, as, some five kilometres into this stage, all four studs on his left hand rear wheel sheared. His luck had struck again.

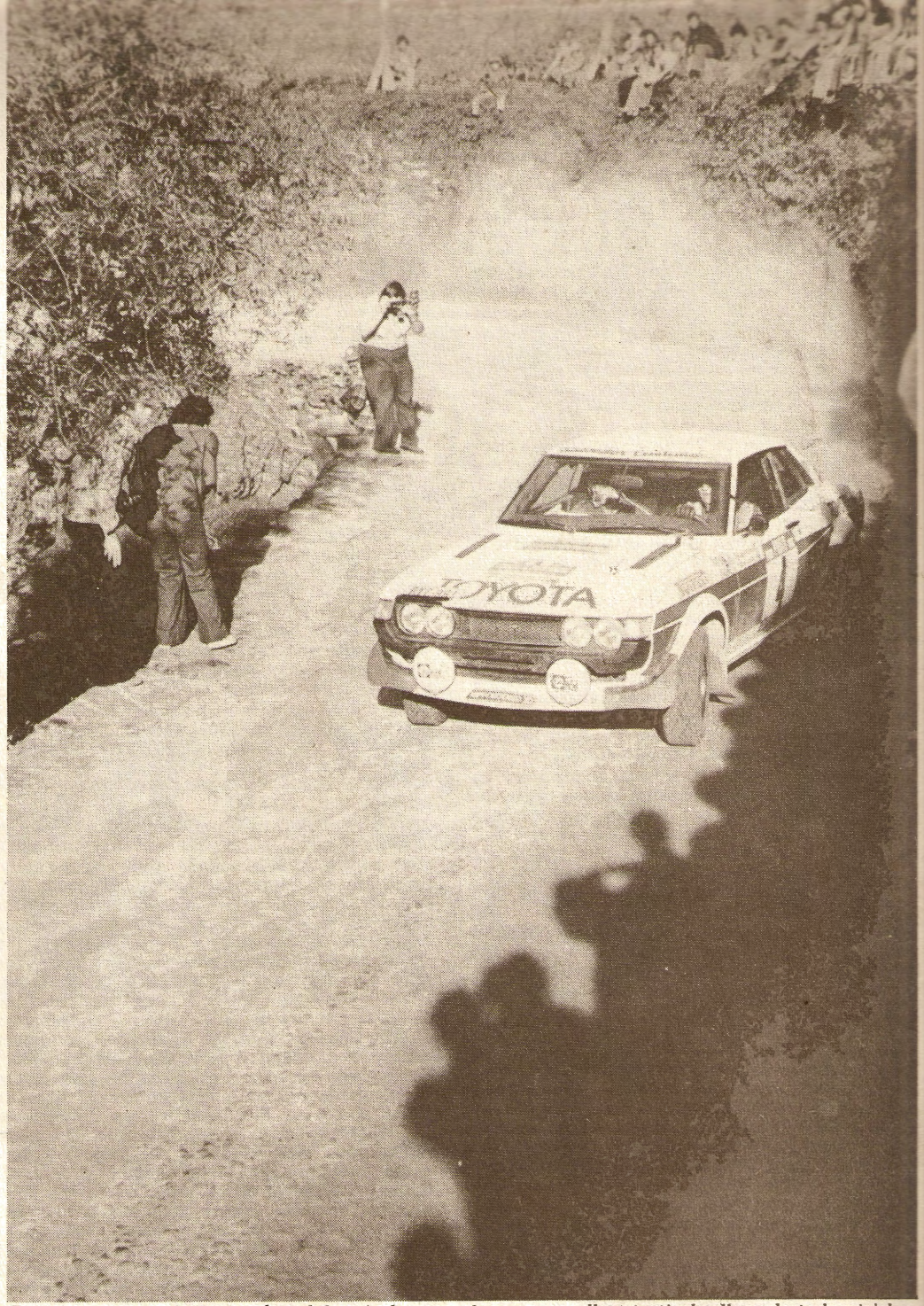
Then followed two shorter but rougher stages where Vatanen and Waldegaard clearly demonstrated the RS1800's forest breeding and rough-road capability, although the quickest team manager in the business was never far behind in his Toyota! But Romaozinho's rally ended here when the electrics failed on his Citroen, locking the steering!

The night was brilliantly clear as the rally wound its way through Viseu and two more stages before reaching the Douro Valley, where the slopes leading down to the river support the grapes which produce the sponsor's licquor! A twisty part-gravel part-tarmac stage downhill was the scene for Andersson's first puncture; he was trying A2s on this stage for the first (and last!) time.

The event appeared to have settled into a pattern and, with just two short tarmac stages, before the morning halt, it was not surprising that there were some dramatic braking marks on the Penha stage near Guimaraes. Vatanen was quickest from Andruet, Bacchelli and Verini. Povoa de Varzim north of Porto was the scene of frenzied service activity before the *parc-fermé* and an 11-hour halt . . . Fernandez in his Escort never made it there as he also suffered wheel stud failures.

The "tigers" were still in front with Waldegaard moving up, but Alen and Andersson appeared to be content to wait. The classification after the end of the first leg was as follows: Vatanen 1hr 34m 36s; Bacchelli 1hr 35m 4s; Waldegaard 1hr 35m 15s; Verini 1hr 36m 27s; Alen 1hr 36m 30s; Andersson 1hr 37m 13s. Refreshed, the crews re-started at 8 o'clock in the evening for a short 275 kilometres loop up towards the northern Spanish border. This loop now only contained three rough stages owing to the cancellation of SS18, which made the evening considerably easier on the cars, with increased servicing time. The first of these stages had been incredibly rough during practice, but now some of the larger holes had been filled in, particularly near the start. This was the 20 kilometre Santa Luzia stage (which, incidentally starts near a Hotel of that name that boasts "the finest view in all Europe").

This test probably decided the rally. Vatanen set fastest time of 14m 49s with Andersson just 4s behind; while Alen (as cautious as ever on the rough) was over half-a-minute slower. Bacchelli damaged a rear suspension mounting and broke a strut on the rough at the start of this stage, but drove with undiminished speed to the end where he demanded of his service crew that the damaged part should be repaired in the three



Experience counts in Portugal, and Ove Andersson drove an excellent tactical rally, only to be stricken with punctures and caught by a flying Waldegaard in a thrilling last night finale.

▶

or four minutes available; a tactical error which was to cost him 11 minutes road penalty.

Waldegaard stopped when a rear tyre punctured and got out to change the damaged wheel, only to find *both* rear A2s flat. With only one spare, he was forced to drive the 12 kilometres to the finish of the stage. After re-fettling and tyre and halfshaft changes he dropped one minute of road time at the next TC. With Bacchelli and Waldegaard suddenly out of the picture, Vatanen now had a considerable lead, and Alen found himself in second position (his tactics were paying off).

The remaining stage of this loop was equally rough and dramatic. Some three kilometres from the finish Verini stopped with a broken halfshaft, but Andruet in the Fiat (France) car stopped to help and gently pushed Verini's car towards the finish line and the waiting service crew—a generous gesture that was to be re-paid later. The rally returned to Povoa at around 1 o'clock on Friday morning for a further eight hour rest halt before the start of the third and most difficult section. Andersson had been quickest over this leg and was now just three seconds behind Alen, but Vatanen was way out in front with a 3m 9s lead on his first World Championship event in mainland Europe.

Re-starting once again, this time at 9.30 in the morning, jaded crews were faced with four difficult daylight stages in quick succession—on the first of these SS20, Fafe, Vatanen's rally nearly ended when a tyre punctured and the car very nearly rolled. Then, three kilometres into SS21, Cabreira a rough 27 kilometre stage, Vatanen sustained yet another puncture. Waldegaard, driving superbly, was fastest.

Joseph Haider who had brought his Opel up into 10th position was having trouble with the engine towards the end of this stage (which finishes downhill on cobbles). Alen in the Fiat crossed the finishing line with a dead engine and no electrics, but frantic calls on "Radio Mafia" soon had the car running again with a new battery.

The weather, scenery and stages were all vaguely reminiscent of a good Scottish Rally, and, like that event, the cars were taking tremendous punishment, especially with so little time for service.

Senora da Graca, SS22 (an old TAP Rally favourite), starts uphill on tarmac and cobbles for five kilometres before becoming very rough and eventually finishing downhill. While waiting outside the time control at the start of this 37 kilometre stage, Andersson glanced at his axle and was very concerned to notice the lower rear shock absorber bolt missing. In the remaining two minutes he fixed a new one, using a spare wheel nut as a washer.

Waldegaard and Andersson were both a minute quicker than Alen and nearly two minutes quicker than Vatanen who was troubled by a tyre rubbing a wheel arch which prompted him to stop and investigate. At the end of the stage, the Toyota virtually caught the Fiat on the finishing line, and in so doing took the lead in the rally by 15 seconds from Vatanen. The test had finished back on a tarmac road. This area was the scene of feverish service activity and tyre changing before the next long stage SS23 Marao. Three corners into this 37km stage, Vatanen overshot a left hand junction, nearly collecting a photographer in the process. Perhaps the writing was on the wall, and still Alen was driving smoothly on the rough where the Fiat is not at its best. A farther four kilometres into this test, Andersson's brief lead dissolved when he suffered a puncture. The tyre was changed but just a few bends farther on, another punctured and the luckless crew had to drive the remaining 30 kilometres of the stage with a flat, watching helplessly as car after car drove past. However, even after losing over six minutes, they still remained in fourth place and luckily the correct service crew were waiting at the finish where the complete axle and shock absorber assembly was changed as a precaution.

As expected these four long stages from Fafe to Vila Real had taken their toll, with many of the privateers failing to complete these sections, among them Jean-Paul Luc in his Citroen.

With the cancellation of SS24, a stage winding through a vineyard, there were just three comparatively short stages to a welcome rest halt at Viseu. However on the second of these stages, Lapa, the central drama of the rally took place, when Vatanen having crossed the flying left hand front suspension away, before spinning round to face the direction in which he had arrived.

Alen, momentarily distracted by his fellow countryman's predicament, nearly did the same, while, on the very first bend of this same stage, Bacchelli rolled. He was however soon righted again by enthusiastic spectators. As Ford mechanics attempted to make Vatanen's badly damaged car roadworthy, insult was added to injury when another Escort charged into the stationary RS1800, head-on.

At the meal halt in Viseu, the leader, at last, was Markku Alen on 4hrs 4m 25s. Next came Waldegaard 4hrs 5m 58s, followed by Andersson on 4hrs 9m 35s.

The rally was now entering the infamous Arganil area for a group of seven stages which included the daunting 43 kilometre Arganil stage itself. This test was tackled twice. On the first run through this classic stage, Waldegaard trying as hard as ever to catch Alen, received his third puncture which destroyed any chance he might have had of winning the event. Through the Vidual stage which would have been familiar to London/Mexico World Cup Rally competitors, the cars returned to Arganil once again where yet another puncture awaited Waldegaard, who drove into the Ford service area with a leaking differential. A final run through the Candosa stage brought competitors to a welcome breakfast halt.

Most crews had some 20 minutes in hand on this section and could spare up to an hour out on the next section back to Lisbon. It was during these two periods that the cars were prepared for the final night, both Ford and Toyota lowering the cars for the final tarmac stages, while Mick Jones and John Taylor also changed Waldegaard's axle, as the axle tube and carrier had bent as a result of all the miles driven on the Minilite rims.

Cars returned to Estoril around midday on Saturday, which again allowed time for some sleep before the final night's section of the rally. As it was a Saturday night and a full moon, the crowds in the Sintra area were enormous, with coffee stalls and refreshment booths being set-up along the stages. Many people camped the night and even arrived over six hours before the rally was due, in order to secure a good spot.

The format for the last night consisted of 12 all-tarmac stages, based upon a combination of just four roads in the Sintra area; the main interest being centred on the Andersson/Waldegaard battle for second place. At the start of the night, Andersson led the Ford by 27 seconds while of course Alen held a very comfortable five minutes' lead. Once again cars were on racing tyres. Andersson had slicks only, Waldegaard just CR82s. The night began with a 4.2 kilometre stage at Alcabideche where the Ford was two seconds quicker than the Toyota and on target to regain second place. Waldegaard shaved three more seconds away on the next stage, and on Sintra I, 10.5 kilometres of narrow twisting tarmac which ends with downhill hairpins to the ancient village of Sintra itself, Waldegaard was suddenly 23 seconds quicker than Andersson who had made a rare error and spun on a wet patch, miraculously not touching the car on impossibly close rocky walls. Second place belonged to Bjorn.

The thousands of spectators watched all night as Waldegaard increased his lead over the Toyota and saw Andruet pull in front of team-mate Verini (by arrangement) to take fourth position. Local hero Meqepe in his Opel Kadett was sixth while Franz Wittmann also in an Opel, came in seventh.

The rally ended back in Estoril Stadium around 5.30 in the morning with emotional scenes from Fiat who had won their first event in the 1977 World Rally Championship and consolidated their lead.

Of the 44 special stages in the event, Ford had been quickest on 34 and must be very happy to have proved their superiority on the loose.

If the short-comings in the "rubber department" can be overcome *before* April, then they must be favourites for a win in the next round of the World Rally Championship—the Safari.

Full marks go to Cesar Torres and his team for once again running a superb, tough and uncompromising rally, watched by thousands of enthusiastic spectators and Police who willingly closed streets and junctions to speed the rally cars on their way. Even the weather appeared to be controlled by Torres for as soon as the final car had completed the Slalom test, the wind got up, and it began spotting with rain.

WCR Round 3

1, M. Alen/I. Kivimaki (Fiat 131 Abarth Rallye) 6h 52m 47s;
2, B. Waldegaard/H. Thorszelius (RS1800) 6h 55m 43s;
3, O. Andersson/H. Liddon (Toyota Celica) 6h 56m 08s;
4, J-C Andruet/C. Delferrier (Fiat 131 Abarth Rallye), 7h 06m 34s;
5, M. Verini/N. Russo (Fiat 131 Abarth Rallye) 7h 07m 00s;
6, "Meqepe"/M. Vilar (Opel Kadett GTE) 7h 28m 55s;
7, F. Wittman/K. Nestinger (Opel Kadett GTE) 7h 38m 27s; 8, G. Salvi/P. Almeida (RS2000) 7h 45m 32s; 9, A. Nunes/M. Amaral (Porsche 911S), 7h 46m 36s; 10, K. Russling/K. Krammer (Opel Kadett GTE) 7h 46m 43s.
(102 starters—27 finishers)

Group One
1, G. Salvi/P. Almeida (RS2000), eighth overall, 1h 45m 32s;
2, K. Russling/K. Krammer (Opel Kadett GTE), 10th overall, 7h 46m 43s.

Group Two
1, Meqepe/M. Vilar (Opel Kadett GTE), sixth overall, 7h 28m 55s.

Group Three
1, W. Herrmann/J. Fellbaum (Porsche Carrera), 11th overall, 7h 57m 58s.

Fastest on stages

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
Waldegaard	21	6	3	3	4	4
Vatanen	13	3	—	1	1	3
Bacchelli	5	4	5	9	1	2
Alen	2	9	10	8	8	6
Andruet	4	3	12	4	2	4
Andersson	1	14	10	8	2	3
Mikkola	1	1	1	—	2	2
Verini	—	1	3	14	16	6
Meqepe	—	—	1	1	4	8
Fernandez	—	—	—	1	1	1

Rally leaders: Stages 1-10 Bacchelli; 11-21 Vatanen; 22 Andersson; 23-26 Vatanen; 5, and 27 to 46 Alen.

Details of tests
46 stages, 2 cancelled because of weather damage; 120km asphalt; 459km gravel. Total distance 2457km. 11 stages in daylight, remainder at night. All dry surfaces.

WCR points
Fiat 48; Opel 39; Ford 34; Porsche 27; Toyota 24; Lancia and Saab 18; Datsun 15; SEAT 14; Renault Alpine and Volkswagen 10.

Stage times
SS1 Lagoa Azul 1, 5.0km; 1, Bacchelli 2.26; 2, Alen 2.27; 3, Andruet 2.29; 4 = Verini and Vatanen 2.30.
SS2 Peninha 1, 6.5km: 1, Bacchelli 4.02; 2, Alen 4.08; 3, Andruet 4.09; 4, Verini 4.10; 5, Mikkola 4.12.
SS3 Montejunto, 8.0km: 1, Mikkola 5.12; 2, Vatanen 5.16; 3, Waldegaard 5.17; 4 = Andersson and Bacchelli 5.24.
SS4 Pedro de Moel, 7.5km: 1, Andruet 3.46; 2, Alen 3.48; 3, Verini 3.53; 4, Waldegaard 3.54; 5, Bacchelli 3.56.
SS5 Figueira da Foz, 9.0km: 1, Andruet 4.53; 2, Alen 4.55; 3, Verini 4.59; 4, Bacchelli 5.01; 5 = Mikkola and Vatanen 5.06.
SS6 Relvas—Lousa, 21.0km: 1, Vatanen 16.30; 2, Bacchelli 16.41; 3, Mikkola 16.46; 4, Waldegaard 16.50; 5, Verini 16.57.
SS7 Candosa 1, 6.5km: 1, Bacchelli 5.18; 2, Mikkola 5.21; 3 = Andersson and Andruet 5.22; 5, Alen 5.23.
SS8 Bucaco, 14.5km: 1, Vatanen 10.38; 2, Bacchelli 10.52; 3, Waldegaard 10.54; 4, Andersson 10.59; 5, Alen 11.00.
SS9 Caramulo, 7.0km: 1, Waldegaard 5.55; 2, Vatanen 6.01; 3 = Andersson and Bacchelli 6.08; 5, Verini 6.11.
SS10 Ladario, 9.0km : 1, Vatanen 7.30; 2, Waldegaard 7.33; 3, Andersson 7.35; 4, Bacchelli 7.48; 5, Verini 7.55.
SS11 Viseu 1, 8.0km: 1 = Waldegaard and Vatanen 5.54; 3, Bacchelli 5.57; 4, Alen 5.59; 5, Andersson 6.01.
SS12 Lapa 1, 7.0km: 1, Vatanen 4.33; 2, Bacchelli 4.39; 3, Alen 4.44; 4 = Verini, Waldegaard and Andersson 4.45.
SS13 Armamar 1, 9.5km: 1, Vatanen 8.17; 2, Waldegaard 8.23; 3, Bacchelli 8.26; 4, Verini 8.35; 5, Fernandez 8.37.
SS14 Regua, 5.0km: 1, Vatanen 3.50; 2, Andruet 3.59; 3, Bacchelli 3.52; 4, Alen 3.55; 5, Verini 3.57.
SS15 Penha, 6.5km: 1, Vatanen 4.25; 2, Andruet 4.27; 3, Alen 4.29; 4, Verini 4.30; 5, Waldegaard 4.32.
SS16 Santa Luzia, 20.0km; 1, Vatanen 14.49; 2, Andersson 14.53; 3, Bacchelli 15.08; 4, Verini 15.19; 5, Alen 15.24.
SS17 Orbacem, 11.5km; 1, Vatanen 7.40; 2, Alen 7.50; 3, Andersson 7.56; 4, Verini 8.01; 5, Waldegaard 8.09.
SS18 Santa Lourenço Cancelled.
SS19 Donte de Lima, 22.0km: 1, Waldegaard 17.29; 2, Vatanen 17.51; 3, Andersson 18.06; 4, Bacchelli 18.09; 5, Alen 18.21.
SS20 Fafe, 8.0km : 1, Waldegaard 6.28; 2, Alen 6.35 ; 3, Andersson 6.38; 4, Verini 6.45; 5=, Meqepe and Wittmann 6.48.
SS21 Cabreira, 27.0km: 1, Waldegaard 20.49; 2, Andersson 21.03; 3, Alen 21.20; 4, Bacchelli 21.37; 5, Verini 22.07.
SS22 Senhora da Graca 37.5km; 1, Waldegaard 29.39; 2, Andersson 29.48; 3, Alen 30.46; 4, Bacchelli 31.12; 5, Verini 31.20.
SS23 Marao, 37.0km: 1, Vatanen 28.13 ; 2, Waldegaard 28.38; 3, Alen 28.46; 4, Bacchelli 29.14; 5, Verini 29.17.
SS25 Armamar 2, 9.5km: 1 = Waldegaard and Vatanen 8.12; 3, Andersson 8.26; 4, Verini 8.27; 5, Bacchelli 8.28.
SS26 Lapa 2, 7.0km; 1, Vatanen 4.36; 2, Waldegaard 4.44; 3, Alen 4.46; 4, Andersson 4.48; 5, Verini 4.51.
SS27 Viseu 2, 8.0km; 1, Waldegaard 5.36; 2, Alen 5.38; 3, Andersson 5.42; 4=, Verini, Andruet and Bacchelli 5.50.
SS28 Vide 1, 12 .0km: 1, Waldegaard 8.37 ; 2, Alen 8.36; 3, Andersson 8.47; 4, Verini 8.57; 5, Andruet 8.58.
SS29 Arganil 1, 43.0km; 1, Alen 31.04; 2, Bacchelli 31.26; 3, Andruet 31.39; 4, Andersson 31.41; 5, Waldegaard 32.28.
SS30 Candosa 2, 6.5km; 1, Bacchelli 5.19; 2, Verini 5.22; 3, Alen 5.24; 4, Andersson 5.26; 5 = Waldegaard and Andruet 5.27.
SS31 Vidual, 25.5km; 1, Bacchelli 19.32; 2, Waldegaard 19.42; 3, Andersson 20.00; 4, Verini 20.23; 5, Alen 20.30.
SS32 Vide 2, 12.0km; 1, Andersson 8.42; 2, Waldegaard 8.49; 3, Verini 8.57; 4, Bacchelli 9.02; 5, Alen 9.03.
SS33 Arganil 2, 43.0km; 1, Alen 31.41; 2, Andersson 32.00; 3, Andruet 32.03; 4, Verini 32.14; 5, Wittman 34.53.
SS34 Candosa 3, 6.5km; 1, Waldegaard 5.20; 2, Andersson 5.23; 3 = Alen and Andruet 5.29; 5, Verini 5.33.
SS35 Alcabideche, 4.2km; 1, Waldegaard 2.50; 2 = Andersson and Andruet 2.52; 4 = Verini and Alen 2.54.
SS36 Peninha 2, 6.5km; 1, Waldegaard 4.15; 2, Andersson 4.18; 3, Alen 4.23; 4, Andruet 4.24; 5, Meqepe 4.32.
SS37 Sintra 1, 10.5km: 1, Waldegaard 7.32; 2, Alen 7.42; 3, Meqepe 7.46; 4, Anrruet 7.49; 5, Andersson 7.55.
SS38 Lagoa Azul 2, 5.0km; 1, Waldegaard 2.35; 2, Andruet 2.36; 3, Alen 2.39; 4, Andersson 2.40; 5, Verini 2.43.
SS39 Peninha 3, 6.5km; 1, Waldegaard 4.13; 2, Andersson 4.17; 3, Andruet 4.21; 4, Alen 4.22; 5, Meqepe 4.26.
SS40 Sintra 2, 10.5km; 1, Waldegaard 7.31; 2, Andersson 7.36; 2, Andruet 7.38; 4, Alen 7.39; 5, Verini 7.46.
SS41 Alcabideche 2, 4.2km; 1, Waldegaard 2.49; 2 = Andersson and Andruet 2.50; 4, Verini 2.52; 5, Meqepe 2.56.
SS42 Peninha 4, 6.5km; 1, Waldegaard 4.27; 2, Andersson 4.28; 3, Andruet 4.34; 4, Alen 4.36; 5=, Verini and Meqepe 4.38.
SS43 Lagoa Azul 3, 5.0km; 1, Andruet 2.37; 2, Andersson 2.39; 3, Waldegaard 2.40; 4, Alen 2.45; 5, Meqepe 2.46.
SS44 Sintra 3, 10.5km: 1, Waldegaard 7.39; 2, Andersson 7.45; 3, Andruet 7.48; 4, Meqepe 7.54; 5, Verini 8.03.
SS45 Peninha 5, 6.5km; 1, Waldegaard 4.28; 2, Andersson 4.29; 3, Andruet 4.30; 4, Alen 4.41; 5, Verini 4.54.
SS46 Lagoa Azul 4, 5.0km; 1 = Waldegaard and Andruet 2.43; 3, Andersson 2.47; 4, Alen 2.50; 5, Fischer 3.00.

our centre spread

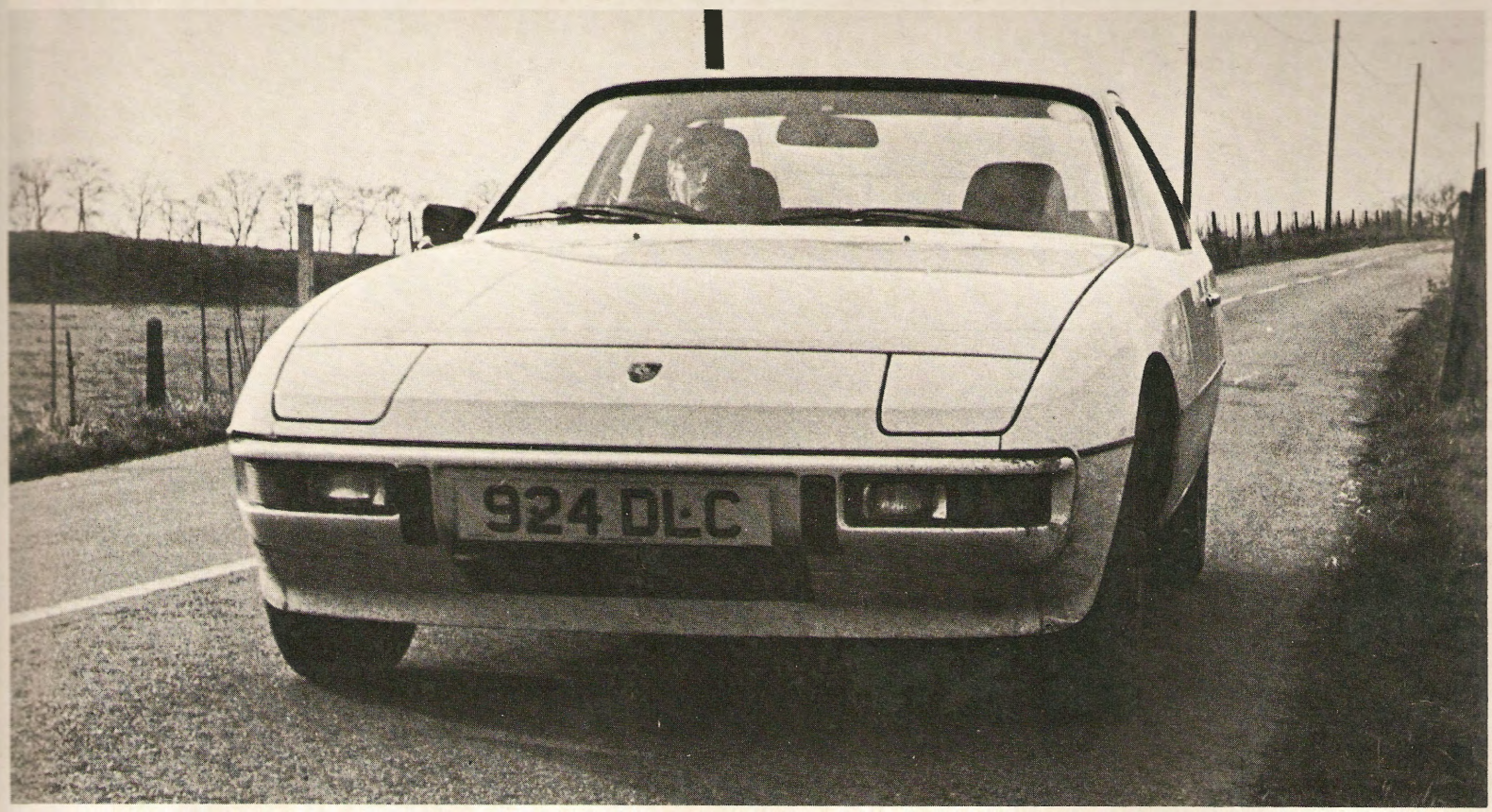
The ability of the lightweight Fiat 131 Abarth to withstand the rigours of a long distance rough road rally was doubted as recently as last week in Portugal by other teams. Yet Fiat's performance in Morocco last year and in Portugal last week was most impressive.

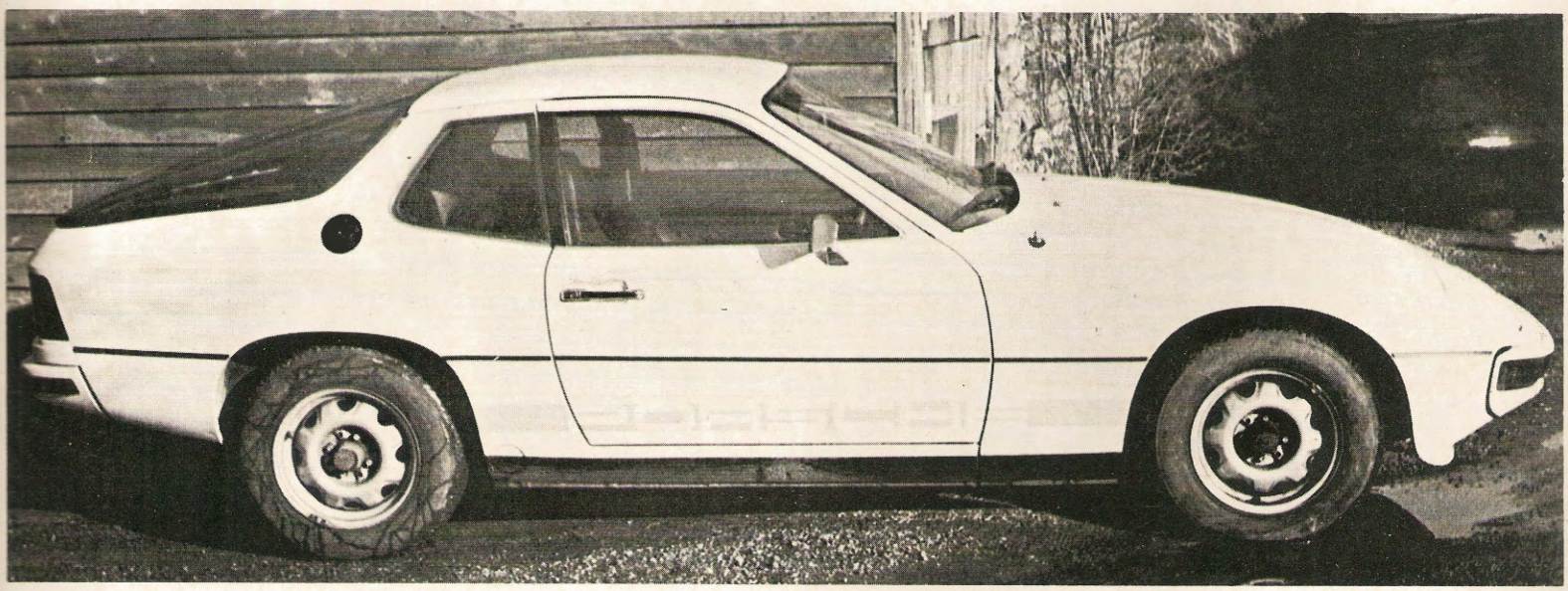

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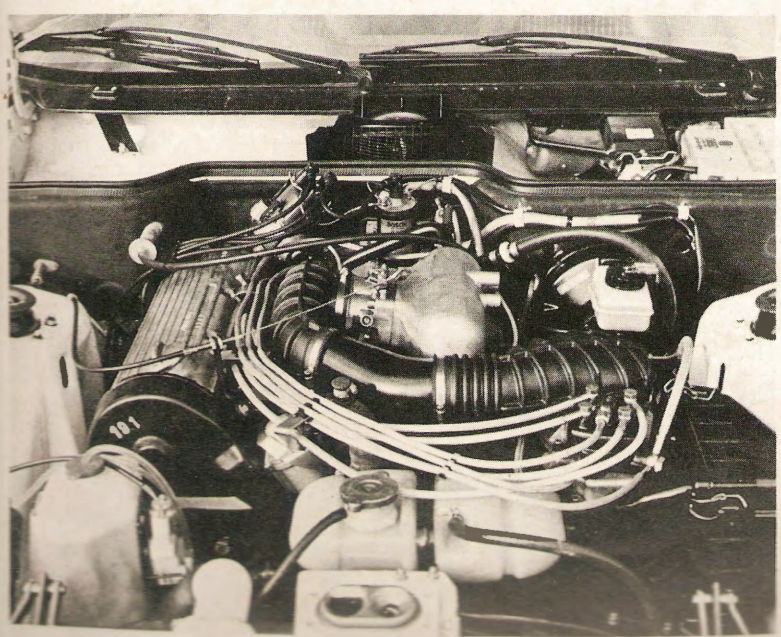

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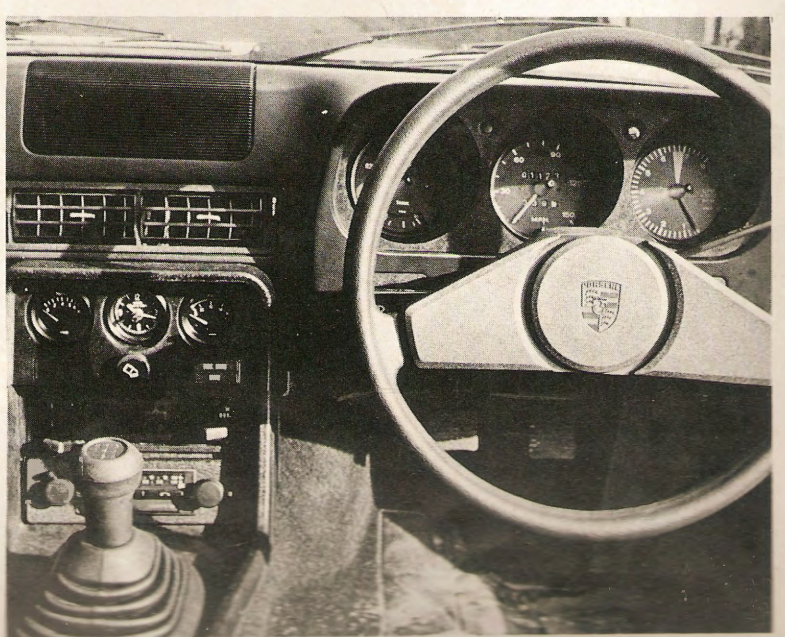
road test

by John Bolster









Porsche 924: discreet head turner

As the first of the new front-engined Porsches, the 924 creates a great deal of interest and crowds tend to collect round it when it is parked. People have for so long associated the name with rear-engined, air-cooled cars and it is almost as though they cannot credit that the 924 is a real Porsche. The engineers from Stuttgart do not believe that the mid-engined chassis has any future for a road-going sports car, but they dislike conventional front-engined, rear-drive cars because most of them have poor weight distribution.

Accordingly, the transmission aggregate has been parted from the engine and dropped between the rear wheels, giving a 50-50 weight distribution and a high polar moment of inertia. This is a complete volte-face from the views of Dr Ferdinand Porsche, who designed the mid-engined Auto Union, and the arrangement of the 924 places the main masses where they were in the rival Mercedes-Benz of that period! Be that as it may this is a sensible method of getting some weight over the driving wheels and it is already employed with success in the Alfa Romeo Alfetta.

In fact, the layout of the two cars differs in an important respect, for the Alfetta carries its clutch on the nose of the transmission housing, while the 924 keeps it on the flywheel. This means that the propshaft adds to the spinning weight of the centre plate, so, to reduce inertia, a shaft of incredibly small diameter has been adopted. Such a shaft would naturally tend to whirl, so a rigid tube has been fixed between the engine and the transmission housing, carrying ball-races to steady the shaft at the calculated nodal points; furthermore, universal joints are thus eliminated.

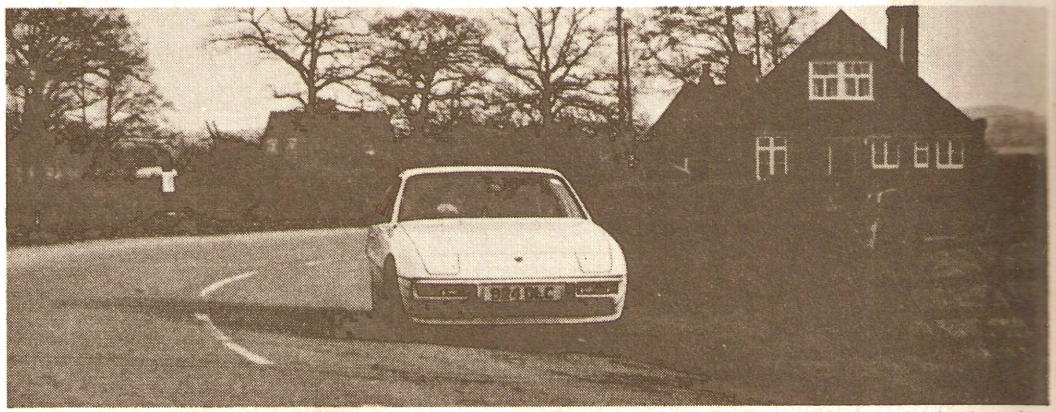
The engine is the 2-litre Audi unit which, in fuel injection form, develops 125 bhp. The transmission is that of a front-drive car, moved to the rear, where even the original bell-housing is retained, which simplifies mounting but steals some luggage space. The front MacPherson strut suspension has the usual VW-Audi geometry, but the rear end is independent, without the VW dead axle, a semi-trailing arm geometry with transverse torsion bars being chosen for the driven wheels.

A body shell of very clean aerodynamic form has been designed, the so-important front end showing how it should be done, with the air inlet beneath the bumper and a smooth nose enclosing the retractable headlamps. The bumpers, coloured to match the car, could not be neater and are certain to be widely copied, while the smooth wheel arches, without any flaring, are another important aerodynamic feature.

The large rear window rises on gas struts to give access to the luggage boot, which is rather shallower because of the bulky transmission. A pull-out blind conceals the suitcases from view. The rear seats are really only suitable for children because of the restricted leg room, and the top of their squab can be folded forward to give a larger platform.

An attractive interior has comfortable front seats and well-arranged controls, with a nicely placed gearlever pivoting on the aforementioned transmission tube. The handbrake lever lies horizontally on the right, a position much less common than it once was, but well out of the way. The all-round view is quite good, especially straight to the rear, though there is perhaps a little obstruction from the rear quarters. The forward view is good for a tall driver, though the scuttle might seem a shade on the high side for a short one.

The interior seems surprisingly spacious and there is none of the booming that tends to promote headaches in so many compact coupés. As is usual with Bosch fuel injection, the engine starts at once from cold and does not tend to stall when warming up. The weight-distribution assures excellent traction and wheelspin is no problem, even on wet roads. The gearchanges go through most pleasantly and may be very fast if desired. There are only four gears, but top is high enough to be almost an overdrive and the fast third may be used a good deal with advantage.



Facing page, top and centre: the body is clean and aerodynamic with neat air inlet beneath the front bumper and a smooth nose; bottom left: the two-litre engine is neatly installed; bottom right: the attractive interior.

The maximum speed of 125mph is excellent for a power output of 125bhp, proving that the clean aerodynamic shape pays dividends. Perhaps more important is the beneficial effect it has on fuel economy, for one usually averages a full 30mpg, even with quite a bit of motoring above 100mph. As the car weighs just over a ton, the 0-60mph time of 9.4s is also a little better than might be expected. Incidentally, the bonnet is quite staggeringly heavy and it would be a good idea to make it of aluminium.

Remarkably high cornering power is a feature, indeed the speed through curves is so impressive that it's hard to find the limit. The handling characteristic is normally neutral and though a bit of understeer may be provoked on slow bends, the final state is normally for both ends to start letting go together. The 924 is stable on wet roads, but the cornering speed is then reduced, of course. Driving as hard as one safely can on the road, there is a great reserve of roadholding and this is a very safe car.

The steering is light except when the car is almost at a standstill, the lock being exceptional, with a very small turning circle. The steering has plenty of feel, with normal castor return action, except when full lock is approached. At that point, reversed castor is felt and the steering tends to go on to full lock, but this is immaterial as one would not turn so sharply above a crawl.

The brakes are powerful and free from fade; though the pedal feels slightly soft in a static position, it is found to be both responsive and progressive. The handbrake is quite effective and the horizontal lever is convenient to apply.

The engine is free from the objectionable low-speed rumble that some four-cylinder units exhibit at low speeds. It is fairly quiet in the middle ranges but becomes rather noisy when really pressed. Much more to be criticised is the amount of road noise which is fed into the body shell. There is tyre noise on many surfaces and some thumping from the suspension over bumps, to which the whistle of the wind adds its quota at high speeds.

This is an expensive car and its looks and performance are up to that standard, but there is a lack of refinement which one does not expect. A £7000 car should have a touch of magic carpet about it and it is in this respect that the 924 betrays its newness; depend upon it that Porsche will not be satisfied for long and I hope to have the pleasure of eating my words.

This is an unusual car and the ride is also unusual. On suburban roads it gives the impression of having rather hard suspension, which may be a little too "competition" for some owners. On the other hand, it does soak up really big pot-holes (like the ones on my drive this winter!) with remarkable ease, and so it's probably a question of damping. The 924 had less than 1000 miles on the odometer and though I was assured that fast driving would cause no harm to the engine, the suspension and dampers may well have been stiff.

The pop-up headlamps are mounted on a sturdy tubular structure that holds them rigidly in place. They give a fine spread of light but perhaps lack ultimate penetration for high speeds, though there are two small driving lights in addition. The heating and ventilation work well and are easily controlled.

The Porsche 924 is a sporting coupé of useful performance and excellent fuel economy. Though its appearance is quite discreet, it certainly turns the heads of passers-by. If it is to remain in the price bracket which it occupies at present, one might ask for a little more refinement, but the first front-engined water-cooled Porsche must be news. Judging by the long warranty and infrequent servicing, the manufacturers have considerable faith in this new kind of product. ■

Specification and performance data

Car tested: Porsche 924 2+2 coupé, price £6999.

Engine: Four-cylinders 86.5 x 84.4mm (1984cc). Compression ratio 9.3 to 1. 125 bhp DIN at 5800rpm. Single belt-driven overhead camshaft. Bosch K-Jetronic fuel injection.

Transmission: Single dry plate clutch on engine flywheel. Small diameter enclosed propeller shaft to rear-mounted 4-speed synchromesh gearbox with central remote control, ratios: 0.97, 1.36, 2.125 and 3.60 to 1. Spiral bevel final drive integral with gearbox, ratio 3.44 to 1.

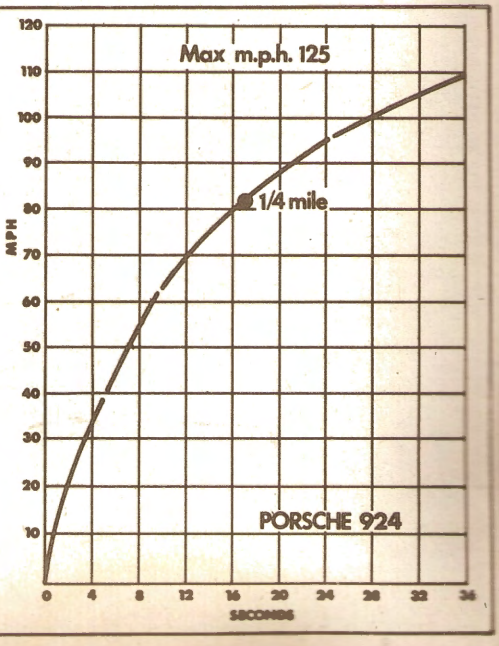
Chassis: Steel monocoque chassis. MacPherson independent front suspension. Rack and pinion steering. Independent rear suspension by semi-trailing arms and torsion bars. Servo-assisted dual-circuit disc/drum brakes. Bolt-on steel wheels, fitted 165 HR 14 tyres.

Equipment: 12-volt lighting and starting. Speedometer. Oil pressure, water temperature, and fuel gauges. Voltmeter. Clock. Heating, demisting, and ventilation system. 2-speed and intermittent windscreen wipers and washers. Flashing direction indicators with hazard warning. Reversing lights.

Dimensions: Wheelbase 7ft 8.7in; track 4ft 7.9in/4ft 6in; overall length 13ft 9.35in; width 5ft 5.2in; weight 1 ton 2qr.

Performance: Maximum speed 125mph. Speeds in gears: third 96mph; second 62mph; first 37mph. Standing quarter-mile—17.2s. Acceleration—0-30mph 3.0s; 0-50mph 7.2s; 0-60mph 9.4s; 0-80mph 17.4s; 0-100mph 29.8s.

Fuel consumption: 27 to 35mpg.

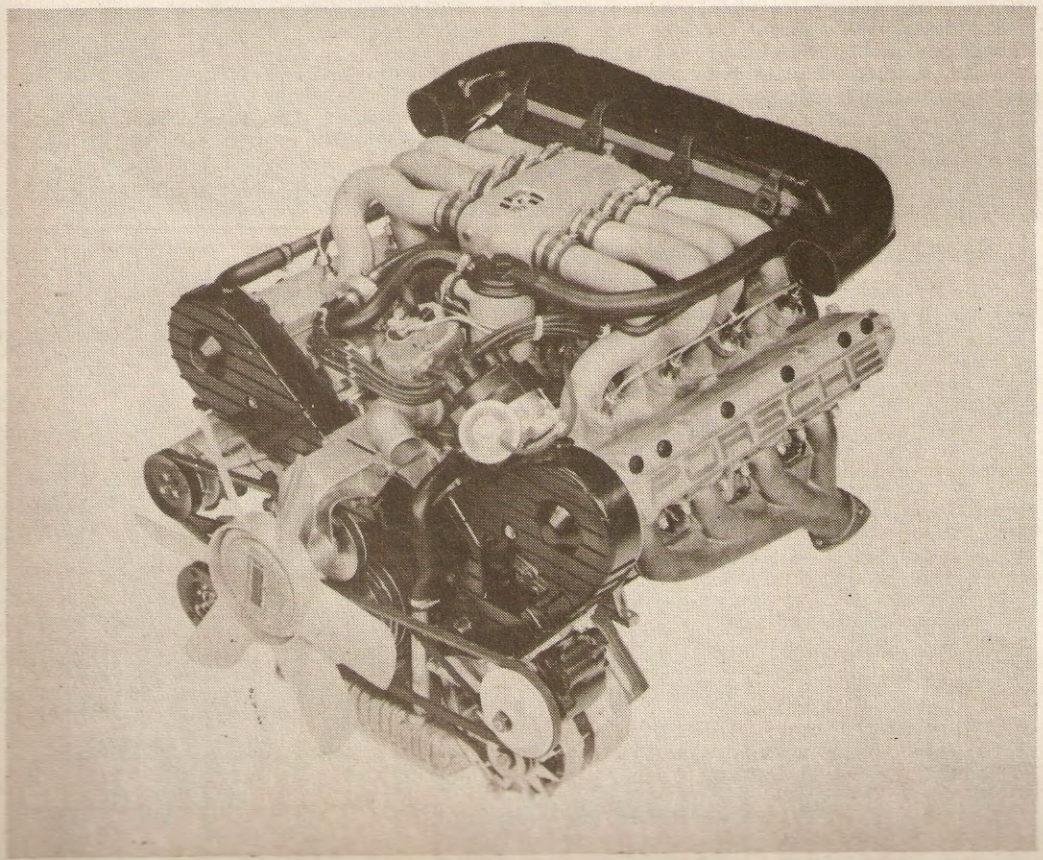


by John Bolster



Above, the new Porsche 928 and, below, the 4.5-litre V8 engine with K-Jetronic fuel injection and a power output of 240 bhp.

New 928 almost defies comparison



For several years, there have been vague rumours on the Continent that Porsche were working on a 4½-litre V8. Now, the car is a reality and I have examined it, discussed its technical details with the engineers responsible and, best of all, I have driven it.

The new car follows the design principles laid down for the 924, the first front-engined Porsche. It has a high polar moment of inertia and a 50-50 weight distribution, achieved by mounting the short, light-alloy engine between the front wheels, and the combined gearbox and final drive assembly at the rear. These two main units are united by a steel tube, as in the 924, and the engine flywheel carries the new 2-plate clutch. An automatic transmission will be available later on, aimed especially at the American market, and in this case the torque converter will be in the transmission housing.

During the technical discussion, I remarked that Dr Ferdinand Porsche had been the great protagonist of the car with a low polar movement, his Auto Union having anticipated modern racing car design. The answer was that Auto Unions are splendid, provided you have enough Rosemeyers to drive them! This is proved every time it rains during a Formula 1 race.

The light-alloy engine is a 90 deg V8, with side-by-side connecting rods and a 5-bearing counterbalanced crankshaft of enormous rigidity. The valves are in the same plane, inclined to the cylinder axis to give squish-type combustion chambers. There is a single overhead camshaft on each head, operating the valves directly through bucket tappets with hydraulic compensation. The camshaft drive is by toothed belt, tensioned by a spring-loaded and damped jockey pulley, while gear drives are avoided as far as possible in this engine.

Electronic ignition is employed, the distributor taking its motion from the front end of the left camshaft, the belt-driven fan having its speed limited by a viscous coupling. The Bosch K-Jetronic Fuel injection system feeds directly downwards into the inlet ports. A DIN output of 240bhp is obtained at 5250rpm and the engine will run for 20,000km before an oil change is required; incidentally, the battery needs no topping up. The engine almost designed itself, for the V8 configuration was the only one that would fit between the front wheels; a flat-eight would prevent the wheels from being steered because of its considerable width.

The 5-speed gearbox naturally has Porsche-type synchronisation. Unusually, fifth is not an overdrive, this being the direct drive, with the other speeds geared down. It calls for a "high" final drive of 2.75 to 1 and a limited-slip differential is employed.

The galvanised steel body shell carries a 6 year guarantee, the bonnet and doors being aluminium, as are the bolt-on front wings. There are no visible bumpers, these being covered by flexible polyurethane panels. Some most convincing films were shown of the 928 having accidents with certain other cars, the Porsche proving the winner in every case. These bumpers are a brilliant design exercise, but suffice it to say that they are as effective as they are beautiful, the potential saving to the owner's pocket being considerable in modern city traffic. The body is a 2+2, but the rear seats can be used by adults if the front seats are not adjusted too far back.

Designed largely in the wind-tunnel, the body is of low-drag form. The cooling air is admitted through an entry beneath the front bumper and the clear aerodynamic shape needs no air-dam or spoilers to mar its lines. The headlamps normally lie on their backs in suitable depressions, both these and the windscreen being cleaned by dual pumping systems. First, a small pump supplies a very concentrated solvent to loosen grease and tar, followed by the normal washing action of a larger pump; the rear window can also be washed and wiped.

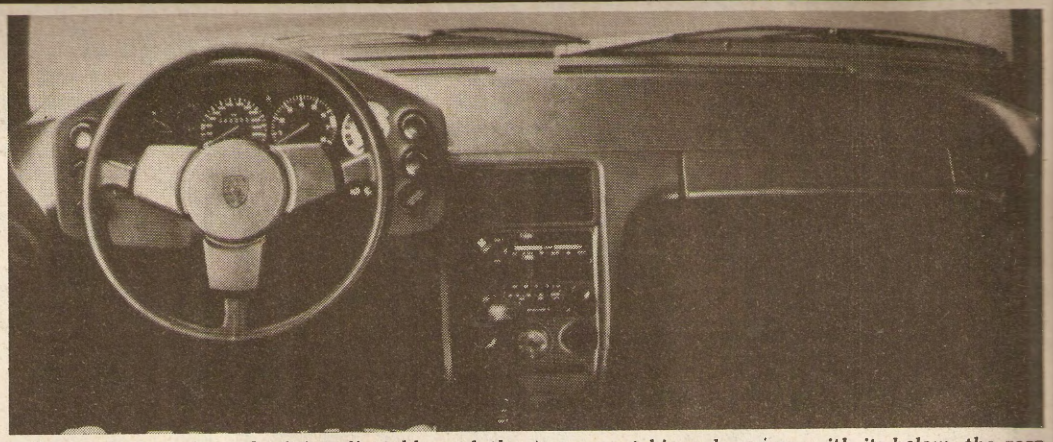
Wishbone-type front suspension has negative-scrub geometry and an anti-roll bar. The rack and pinion steering has power assistance of most sophisticated design, giving maximum feel of the road and reduced help at high speeds. The independent rear suspension has short lateral top links and a semi-trailing lower wishbone, with an anti-roll bar. However, this lower member is of a composite construction of some complexity, the arrangement having been named Weissach-axle.

What the Weissach-axle does is to avoid an effect commonly called "tuck-in", when the throttle is suddenly closed in the middle of a corner. This is the cause of many accidents, because it is fundamentally a condition of instability as it has an over-steering equation. Most cars have a rear-end toe-out on the overrun and what the Weissach-axle does is to substitute a very small and controlled degree of toe-in. Under these conditions, this is of an under-steering character and therefore one of stability. It will be understood that, whereas a racing driver may actually exploit a momentarily unstable condition, in road driving it is highly undesirable when an emergency causes the power to be shut off in the middle of a curve. With the Weissach-axle, the Porsche engineers have tamed their extremely potent car so that it will never demand the extremely rapid reactions that the ordinary driver does not possess.

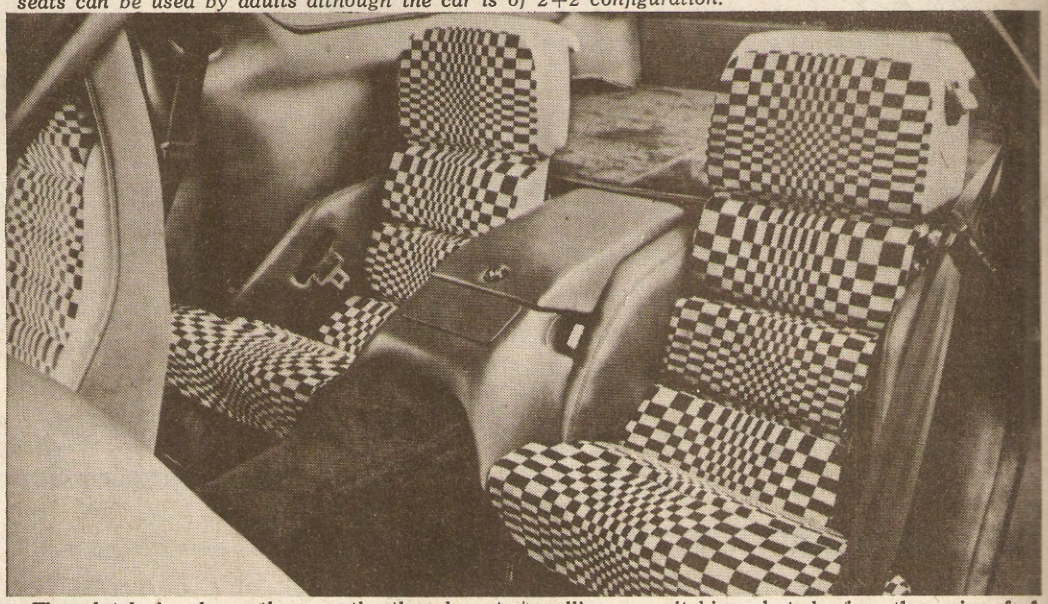
The servo-assisted brakes have ventilated discs and floating calipers, with warning lights to indicate pad wear. The design ensures that heat is not transmitted to the brake fluid and auxiliary rear drums are provided for the horizontal hand-brake level that lies just inside the driver's door. The light-alloy wheels carry low-profile tyres and "my" test car had an inflatable spare that would not at present be legal in England.

Road impressions

The drivers' seat is very comfortable, giving good lateral location. The height of the steering wheel is adjustable and the binnacle containing the instruments moves with it, so that the dials are never obstructed. There is a good all-round view but the rounded bonnet is of somewhat indeterminate shape; at first, I found it difficult to determine my clipping point accurately on corners. Leaving Nice, I soon made for the mountains, where corners of every sort abound.



Above, the steering wheel is adjustable and the instrument binnacle moves with it; below, the rear seats can be used by adults although the car is of 2+2 configuration.



The clutch is pleasantly smooth, though not particularly light to operate. The close-ratio gearbox has first left and back, with the other speeds in a normal H gate. A very strong action characterises the limited-slip differential and the traction is fantastic, the car simply leaping off the mark. Once one is used to the fairly long travel of the gearlever in both planes, the gear-change is found to be extremely easy and light in action. The box is, in fact, typically Porsche, the long movements being required by this particular form of synchromesh.

The car is very high geared and in normal driving one has no need to rev the engine at all. An extremely high standard of refinement has been achieved, the engine being flexible down to almost zero revs. Driven moderately, the power unit is almost totally silent, though some small sounds can occasionally be heard from the transmission. Curiously enough, these do not appear to emanate from the rear of the car but from the front, so no doubt they are telephoned up the tube uniting the two units. In any case, this is a very quiet car, road noise being notably well subdued and wind noise moderate, even at 140 mph.

Although it is possible to drive at quite spectacular speeds without fully extending the big engine, I could not resist entering the 6000 rpm band. There was literally no vibration and the exhaust note, though very subdued, took on a musical tone more like a V12 than a V8. Porsche have got it just right, for it's a most inspiring sound to the enthusiast but does not weary the less fervent disciples of the sport.

The steering has probably more genuine feel of the road than any previous power-assisted setup. It never feels noticeably light, yet the driver scarcely puts forth any real effort. The cornering power is phenomenally high, the silent luxury car suddenly feeling like a competition machine when flung into a bend at an unlikely velocity. The response is generally neutral, with a little more understeer as the driver tries harder and harder. As for the Weissach-axle, it ensures that an unpremeditated deceleration in the middle of a bend does not throw the car off its line.

Regarding the ride, it's not of a soft or floating character but outstandingly level, the 928 never rolling or pitching, but having the crisp feel of a true sports car. Yet, the comfort is remarkable and no bumps disturb the occupants. It proves that the luxury of the rich man's carpet and the responsiveness of the competition car are no longer incompatible.

This is a smooth and silent car, built for those who can afford the best. Yet, knowing my friends at Porsche as I do, I cannot imagine that its racing potential will go unnoticed. Observe the compact, streamlined shape and guess how much power the V8 will give when tuned! For the present, however, let us welcome a road-going sports car that almost defies comparison. ■



Specification and performance data

Car tested: Porsche 928 2+2 coupé.

Engine: V8 90° 95 x 78.9mm (4474cc) 240 bhp DIN at 5250 rpm. Compression ratio 8.5 to 1. Singe belt-driven overhead camshaft for each head. Bosch K-Jetronic fuel injection. Engine front mounted.

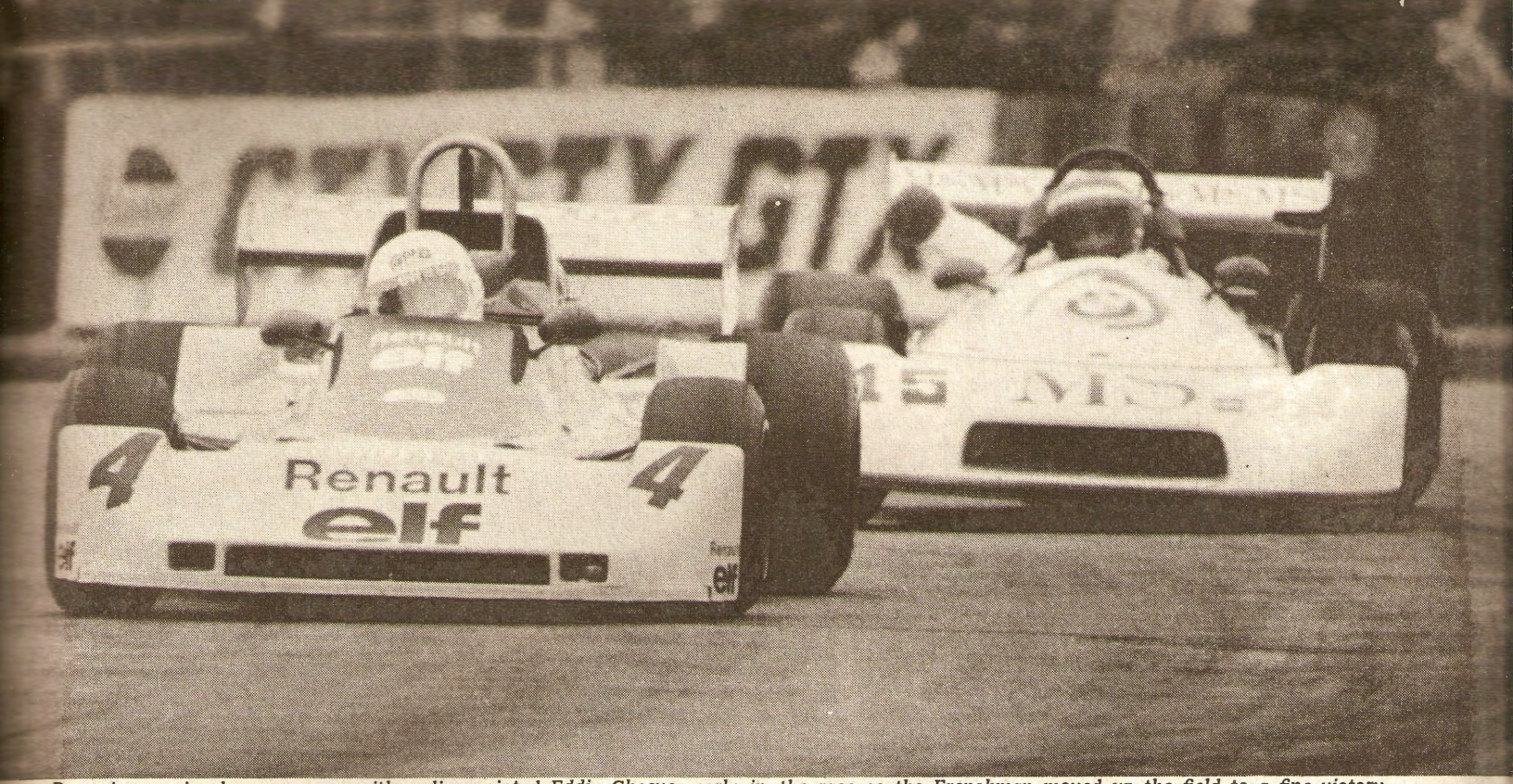
Transmission: Dual dry-plate clutch on engine flywheel. Rear-mounted 5-speed synchromesh gearbox with central remote control, ratios 1.0, 1.34, 1.82, 2.47, and 3.60 to 1. Final drive ratio 2.75 to 1.

Chassis: Galvanised steel monocoque with shock absorbing Polyurethane covering on concealed integral bumpers. Independent front suspension by coil springs, wishbones with negative scrub geometry, and anti-roll bar. Power-assisted rack and pinion steering. Independent rear suspension by coil springs, transverse upper links and semi-trailing lower wishbones with controlled toe-in (Weissach-axle), plus anti-roll bar. Servo-assisted dual diagonal circuit disc brakes. Bolt-on light-alloy wheels, fitted 225/50 VR 16 tyres.

Dimensions: Wheelbase 8ft 2.4in. Track 5ft 0.8in/4ft 11.6in. Overall length 14ft 7.1in. Width 6ft 0.3in. Weight 1 ton 8.5 cwt.

Performance: Maximum speed 143 mph plus. Speeds in gears, fourth 119 mph, third 88 mph, second 65 mph, first 43 mph. Standing kilometre 270s. Acceleration: 0-62 mph 6.8s.

Fuel consumption: DIN 13.0 litres/100 km (maker's figures).



Rene Arnoux in close company with a disappointed Eddie Cheever early in the race as the Frenchman moved up the field to a fine victory.

Who was the right one?

Rene Arnoux's victory but Patrick Neve's day—Excellent second place for Ray Mallock—Eddie Cheever " jumps " start—new Renault engines give trouble—Michel Leclere, Cheever take pole times —Keke Rosberg threatens. Report: BOB CONSTANDUROS. Photography: DAVID WINTER

It was a day of mixed fortunes when the European Formula 2 championship opened under the guise of the new Daily Express International. Having his first ever Formula Two race in March's Atlantic-chassised BMW-engined 772P was Patrick Neve and it was the young Belgian who took off at the start of the race and just walked away from the opposition. Michel Leclere followed but even he, the previous F2 winner at Silverstone, could do little about the flying Belgian and retired after 35 laps with a suspected broken valve spring in his Renault engine. Rene Arnoux in the works Martini then inherited second place having overtaken a flying Ray Mallock but just eight laps from the end, Neve hove into the view of the Woodcote grandstand, slewed sideways in the corner and headed straight for his pit with a loose wheelnut. Off came the wheel and on went a new one, but by then Arnoux was on his way to what even Martini team manager Hughes de Chaunac called a lucky victory. Mallock in second place showed what we can expect not only from the new B40 Chevron and Brian Hart's latest 420R, but also from the man from Roade in whom Creighton Brown has shown tremendous faith. Neve still salvaged third but the rest were either some way back or, in the case of Cheever, penalised, but that's a longer story. Over 12,000 watched this first F2 race of the year, and even though not all the promise of the season was forthcoming, they saw an interesting event.

ENTRY & PRACTICE

For the third time in its history, the *Daily Express* International Trophy race became a Formula Two race with the demands of the Formula One Constructors' Association that there should be only one non-championship Formula One race in Britain each year. Therefore the International Trophy had to take on a new guise and despite their disastrous F2 venture in 1975, the BRDC plumped for the opening European F2 round of the season to take on the title.

The date of March 5/6 had its problems: the next round wasn't for over a month so that if people wanted to give the first round a miss, they had lots of time to prepare for the second. Furthermore, the date was fairly early in the season as well and many competitors complained of lack of testing, but the season has to start somewhere.

For the 47 lap race, there was a very healthy entry received of 42, of whom 26 would start, but the problems of non-qualifiers were soon alleviated as 14 didn't turn up. The team changes of Maurizio Flammini and Keke Rosberg left gaps in the AFMP Euroracing with March GB and Toj teams respectively, so that accounted for two non-appearances, and Flammini didn't turn up in the Chevron that he was due to race. Only one Ferrari engine managed to find its way into Scuderia Everest's Ralt chassis, that of Gianfranco Brancatelli, so there was no Lamberto Leoni, and a number of Italians simply didn't arrive: Sandro Presenti Rossi, Gaudenzio Mantova, Sosimo Turizio and Alfonso Giordano. Although Giancarlo Martini's Everest Martini-Renault MK22 turned up, neither of those for hillclimber Jimmy Mieusset nor Xavier Lapeyre were ready while John Morrison blew up his Lola's engine during unofficial practice and Harald Ertl preferred to devote his finances to his F1 season.

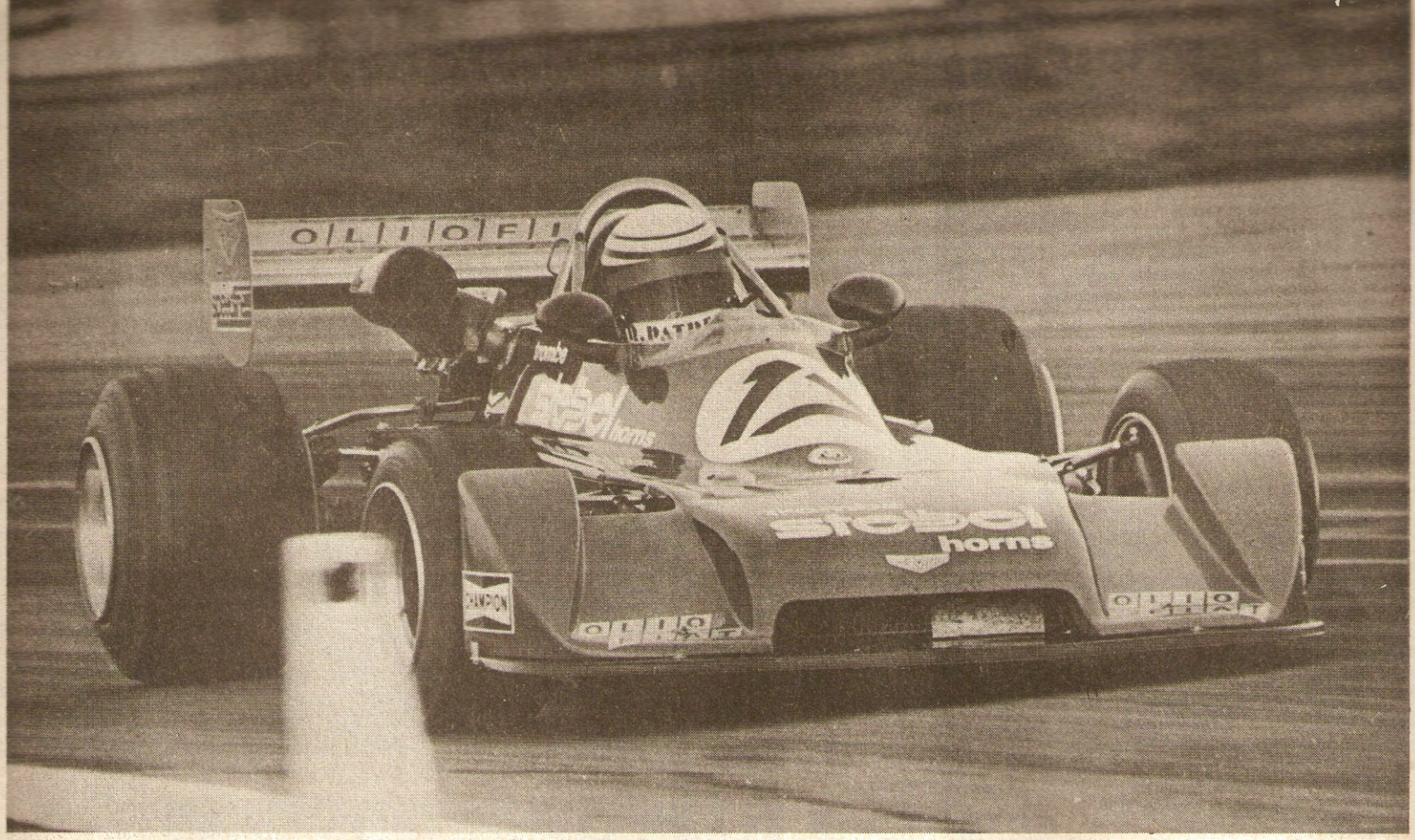
Much more important than that was the crowd that did turn up. They included the Elf Renault team, the Kauhsen team now in charge of the championship winning Elf Switzerland chassis, Ron Dennis' Project Four team and both the AFMP Euroracing and works March teams. There was one Holbay Abarth engined Lola, a Ferrari-engined Ralt was there for all to peruse, and Brian Hart's new version of the 420R was available in limited numbers.

Practice was over two sessions on Saturday, one in the morning and the other after nearly all the other classes had practised in the afternoon. On the previous Friday there had been testing, and the previous Wednesday—in fact many teams had had the opportunity to do all their development testing in the previous two days, but that's too late to experiment.

During the very early laps of practice, Patrick Neve simply charged around in the Atlantic-chassised, BMW-engined March 772P and when his time was announced, that of 1m 22.09s, good enough for eleventh on a Formula One grid, no one thought it could be bettered. Neve was driving the March with real professionalism, obviously realising the potential of the drive as well as the unique car. Robin Herd was in charge of the car, and Paul Rosche of BMW was keeping a close eye on the engine. When Brian Henton sprayed oil around the track in the first session, and Freddy Kottulinsky and Roberto Marazzi did the same in the afternoon, it seemed that Neve was safe on pole.

But late in the session, when the track was quite clear Eddie Cheever went out in his Project Four Ralt-BMW RT1 and whipped around to a 1m 21.98, 13/100ths quicker than his morning time. Michel Leclere in the new Kauhsen chassis with '76 Renault engine obviously waited for the flying Ralt and together they circulated for a brace of laps before Cheever ran out of petrol. But Leclere had the bit between his teeth and just four laps from the end of the session, took a 1m 21.85s to Cheever's 1m 21.98s. It was quite a surprise, but important for Leclere to establish his challenge

▶



Riccardo Patrese showing a fine turn of speed in the Chevron-BMW B35 that he raced instead of his new Chevron-Ferrari.

F2 EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP **1**
SILVERSTONE

continued

after all there are plenty of young lions in the Formula this year, and he had to show them who's boss.

This then was the story of pole position and the front row. Neve was therefore stuck and left on the second row with Ray Mallock for company. Leclere's pole time was actually in a different car to that used by Jean-Pierre Jabouille last year in that it was a new car basically built up in France, then built up properly into the race car in Willi Kauhsen's workshops in Aachen, which are almost completely staffed by English race mechanics. To make the car more stable on bumpy tracks, there's a 12 centimetre spacer between engine and gearbox which obviously lengthens the wheelbase. It all seemed to work well anyway, and the Frenchman had no problems apart from a slightly damaged splitter.

Eddie Cheever was back looking fit and healthy from rigorous BMW training in St Moritz and obviously pleased to be back in racing. However, he wasn't too pleased to be pipped by Leclere for pole which he really did want. He was eager to start the season off right, but expected a lower top gear to help in the race. Ron Dennis' Project Four team had reworked both Ralts quite considerably and the team were well organised as usual. The engine bay had been modified for easy engine changes and Project Four had spent some four weeks on modifications.

So much for the front row. Neve was stuck on the second row after a very professional performance in the F2 March, a formula new to him. Even Robin Herd was surprised at the speed of the car which they slowly developed throughout the two days to excellent effect.

Beside the hard-trying Neve was Ray Mallock, a heartening sight this for the locals as their hero from Roade adapted himself really well to the new Chevron B40 and the latest product from Brian Hart. "I'm amazed by what the car can do, I'm turning later and later into Becketts. It's obviously an extremely good car," he said, while team patron Creighton Brown was mourning the 1976 season which now seemed such a waste of time. Mallock caught up in the second session when he got the gear ratios sorted out.

The third row was headed by yet another hard charger who was unfortunate not to be higher on the grid. Keke Rosberg had been taken back into the Fred Opert team to drive a Chevron-Hart B35 after bidding farewell to the German Toj team, and between Fred, Keke and mechanic Dick Bennett, all of whom had worked well together in the recent Tasman Atlantic season, it seemed that the professional Keke could really do well. However, after setting the third fastest time in the first session, 1m 22.73s, and looking as though he really was shifting, the man that all the ladies go for went off on the oil from Freddy Kottulinsky's Ralt 15m into the second session. He was nearly collected as he sat in Becketts catch fencing by young Pironi who went off very shortly afterwards. The damage wasn't too serious, but it would mean that Keke wouldn't be able to improve his time. His Hart engine was one of the Mk 2 versions, not the very latest as in Mallock's chassis.

Also setting his time in the first session, alongside Rosberg, was Ingo Hoffman in the second Project Four Ralt. While Cheever's Ralt showed the colours of Italy's biggest cigarette producer MS, Hoffman's was emblazoned with Safari, a bitters manufacturer from Brazil. Hoffman's first session time of 1m 23s stayed because he had all sorts of brake and tyre problems in the second session and spent too long in the pits for a good time.

The first of the Elf Martinis headed the fourth row, that of Arnoux—why so slow was the big question? They were expected to be the aces, especially Arnoux. The basic problem was lack of revs in top gear, they took too long to build up. Overnight the mechanics checked everything on the car, electrics, injection, the lot. The Mk 22 was fine itself, but the very latest Renault engine, which has detailed changes from last year, was giving the trouble. However, next morning the trouble was mainly cured and in the warm-up, things were better on Arnoux' car, if not on team-mate Pironi's.

Beside Arnoux' 1m 23.14s came Bruno Giacomelli in the first of Sandro Angeleri's March-Hart 722. The car featured a new rear end to take the latest Hart, and the Silverstone F3 champion settled in rapidly after a spark box problem in the morning meant only two laps of practice. But in the afternoon, after a damaged throttle linkage was cured, Bruno flew round in 1m 23.24s showing instant adaptation.

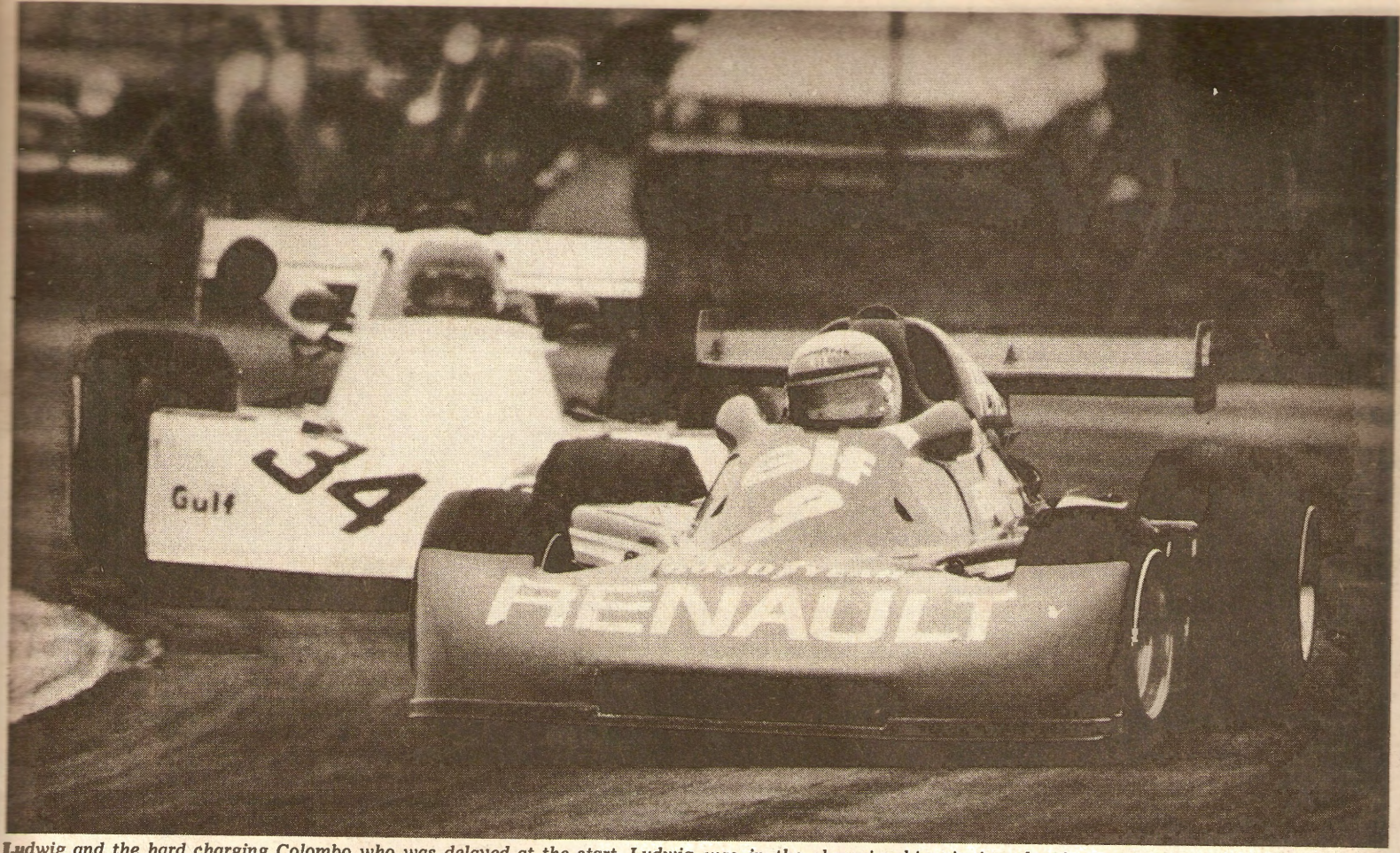
Heading row five should have been Brian Henton in the Netherton and Worth Boxer that he'll be taking to Europe this year, complete with brand new Hart engine. The Boxer was changed considerably from last year with lots of rear-end work, a new track and suspension, and a slightly longer wheelbase with a spacer between engine and gearbox. Henton flew around really well in 1m 23.25s in the morning, but midway through the session, an oil pipe cracked and the oil flowed out before Brian noticed. The bearings suffered and it was a matter of finding another engine. Sadly, the new Harts don't exist in quantity and there simply wasn't another to fit, so Brian became a non-starter and Brian Lewis, team patron was left to drive his pram for the weekend.

It was Giancarlo Martini then who had a gap alongside him. Martini is driving a Martini (as in Tico, not Giancarlo) complete with Renault engine. It was very different to a March he said, and he'd need lots of practice in the car. Renault engineers were keeping a close watch on the

THE GRID

Eddie Cheever Ralt-BMW RT1 1m 21.98s	Michel Leclere Kauhsen-Renault 1m 21.85s
Ray Mallock Chevron-Hart B40 1m 22.51s	Patrick Neve March-BMW 772P 1m 22.09s
Ingo Hoffmann Ralt-BMW RT1 1m 23s	Keke Rosberg Chevron-Hart B35 1m 22.73s
Bruno Giacomelli March-Hart 772 1m 23.34s	Rene Arnoux Martini-Renault Mk22 1m 23.14s
Giancarlo Martini Martini-Renault Mk22 1m 23.30s	*Brian Henton Boxer-Hart PR276 1m 23.35s
Didier Pironi Martini- Renault Mk 22 1m 23.56s	Riccardo Patrese Chevron-BMW B35 1m 23.41s
Klaus Ludwig Kauhsen-Renault 1m 23.98s	†Gianfranco Brancatelli Ralt-Ferrari/Dino RT1 1m 23.77s
†Alo Lawler Lola-Swindon BDX T462 1m 25.03s	Alberto Colombo March-BMW 772 1m 24.12s
Freddy Kottulinsky Ralt-BMW/Heidegger RT1 1m 25.18s	Marc Surer March-BMW 772 1m 25.08s
Bob Evans Wheatcroft-Hart R26 1m 26.18s	Norman Dickson March-BMW 772 1m 25.98s
*Bernard de Dryver March-Hart BDG 778 1m 27.39s	Wink Bancroft Chevron-Hart B40 1m 26.71s
Willi Deutsch March-Hart 752 1m 27.60s	Derek Cook Chevron-Smith BDG B27 1m 27.56s
Iain McLaren Chevron Swindon BDX B35 1m 30.31s	Val Musetti March-Swindon BDX 762 1m 27.71s

* did not start †Pushed off grid



Ludwig and the hard charging Colombo who was delayed at the start. Ludwig was in the championship-winning chassis used last year by Jabouille.

engine, and Scuderia Everest were running the car. Martini set a 1m 23.3s.

Heading row six was the European Formula Three champion Riccardo Patrese still with Strebel sponsorship. While the Trivellato team have their Chevron-Ferrari B40, it had only just been completed, so the F2 debutant was driving the ex-Francia B35 chassis with BMW power in which he set a 1m 23.41s.

Beside him sat another F2 debutant, Didier Pironi in the second Elf Martini on 1m 23.56s, Pironi also being troubled with engine bothers like Arnoux. They actually changed Pironi's engine but it was really bad so he didn't look too competitive at this time.

A row further back was Gianfranco Brancatelli, yet another F2 newcomer debuting the new Ferrari V6 Dino engine in F2, or rather re-debuting it. The Dino is an everlasting story, but with former F1 Ferrari development engineer Giulio Borsari in charge, it would seem to be a very conscious effort. The installation of the engine in Everest's Ralt was only finished at 1am on Saturday morning, so that the dark Italian's comments of "new car, new engine, new circuit" were quite sufficient explanation of a 1m 23.77s. "The engine is good but not fantastic," he said of its expected 315bhp, "there's also a little problem in the chassis in that there's understeer which suddenly changes to oversteer." The big installation problem of the Ferrari engine concerning the sump is still to be reviewed, as Borsari said, it's fairly deep.

Beside Brancatelli sat Klaus Ludwig, entering his second season with the Willi Kauhsen team but now in the French Elf chassis. He had the actual championship-winning car, that of Jabouille, and set a 1m 23.98s but had a problem with an upright in the second session.

Alberto Colombo on row eight was the only man in the 1m 24s, driving an AFMP Euroracing March-BMW 772. The BMW mill wasn't the best, the team are waiting for their Hart engines to arrive. Colombo was one of three drivers to have March wheels of too small diameter which the Goodyears kept rolling off which was rather too exciting for all. Bernard de Dryver and Norman Dickson were the others.

Alo Lawler in a brand new Lola came next on 1m 25.03s, getting used to the car before Marc Surer, the Swiss former F3 driver in his March-BMW 772, Freddy Kottulinsky (Ralt-BMW/Heidegger RT1) and Norman Dickson (March-BMW 772), all in the 1m 25s with Kottulinsky having the main trouble when he ran his bearings after an oil pipe came off. Dickson had trouble with his metering unit. Bob Evans shared the row with Dickson, a great disappointment for all this, for Bob had a fairly elderly Hart engine in the Wheatcroft which wouldn't pull, and the handling and springing was really difficult to sort. However, he certainly tried hard for his 1m 26.18s. Farther back was American Wink Bancroft in the second Opert Chevron, this a B40, who had all kinds of problems including fuel pressure disappearance, and then came a whole batch of problems: Bernard de Dryver whose Hart BDG wasn't too good and had all sorts of troubles; Willi Deutch had a loose flywheel in one session and the gearbox bearing seized in another; Val Musetti and Scot Iain McLaren just found their cars wouldn't pull; and Derek Cook persevered with his Chevron B27.

There were two other problems. Roberto Marazzi should have been just behind Kottulinsky in the Lola with Abarth/Holbay power, but blew both engines in the course of the two days, and de Dryver non-started when his head gasket went in the morning warm-up session.

RACE

Even as the grid formed up, there were more problems. There were gaps where De Dryver and Henton should have been, but then Brancatelli was pushed off with a large pool of oil under the Ferrari engine and a mixture of oil and water inside it, and Alo Lawler went the same way with an electrical problem. Willi Deutsch's March was being examined in close detail while Keke Rosberg made a visit to the pits to warn the Opert team that his run would be short: the clutch was on its way out.

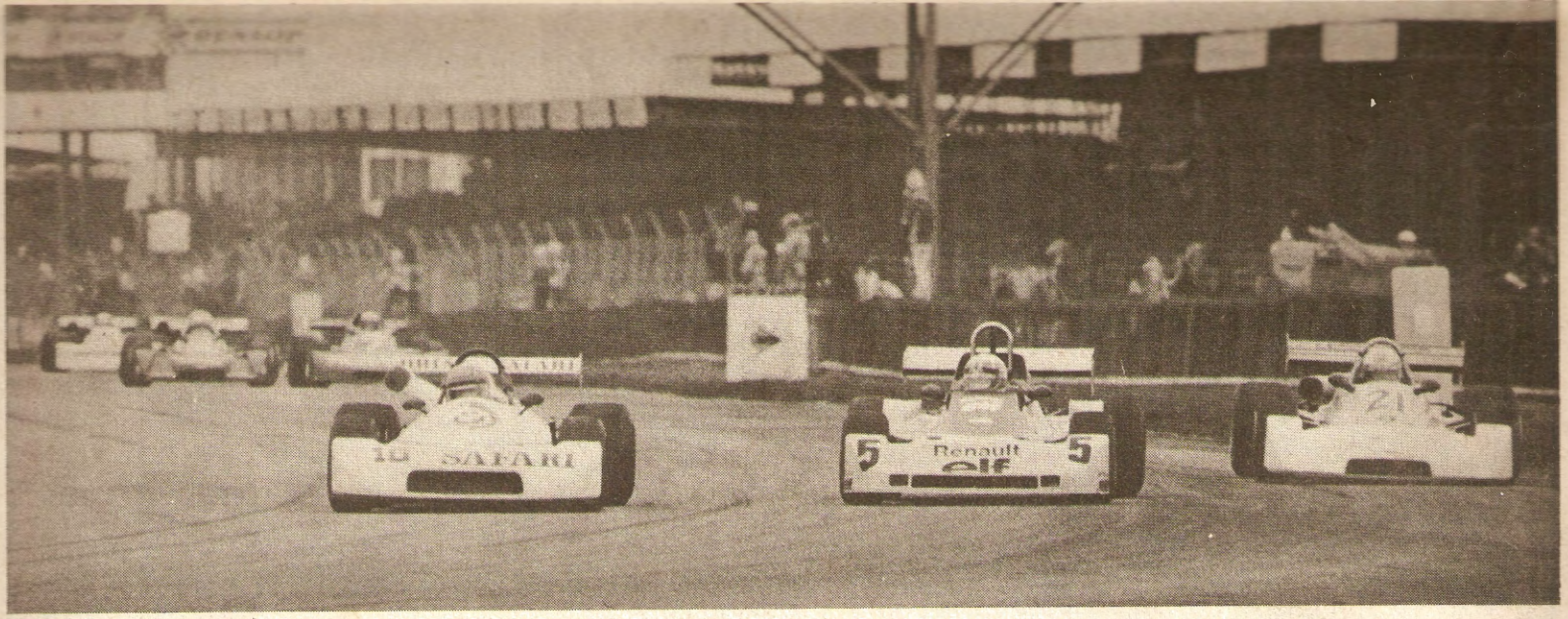
Thus when the grid formed under the overcast skies for the 47 lap event, there were 22 cars. The startline procedure was changed from a rolling start to forming up on a dummy grid and then forming up on the proper one for 10s on the wave of a green flag. However, when the green flag was waved, Cheever was off like a scalded cat down to Copse while everyone else waited on the real grid. Cheever, like some others, thought there was still a warm-up lap to go, but he was the only one to take off. As he slowed, realising the errors of his ways, the lights turned green and the rest set off behind him. Leclere was thinking that they'd probably call Cheever back for the real start, so he wasn't really ready for the start and it was Neve who got the jump on everyone with Leclere next, then Mallock and Cheever chopped in as they went round Copse. Deutsch broke his gearbox on the startline, so that was his lot while Colombo assured himself of last place as he'd fitted a long first gear for the rolling start, and then decided to use lots of rev for the revised start. He sat there with his wheels spinning as everyone went by, and then the engine died when he went off, so he was at the back of what was now a 21-car field.

At the end of lap one, it was Neve out in front from Leclere, Mallock, Cheever, Arnoux, Martini, Giacomelli, Hoffmann and Pironi before the rest. A lap later, Neve had 1.4s on Leclere, but this was early days. The young lions, Cheever and Arnoux were busy fighting out fourth spot behind Mallock in third and behind the following Martini, Giacomelli was to retire with no clutch after an impressive if brief showing. Hoffmann has his hands full in seventh with Rosberg and Pironi right behind him while Ludwig completed the top ten being challenged for the place by Patrese.

At the front Neve was quietly pulling out the hundredths of seconds which were to give him a nearly 3s lead by ten laps. Leclere in his blue Elf looked secure and Mallock wasn't far behind. However, Arnoux was by the dispirited and penalised Cheever on lap eight at Copse in a determined move and, while Eddie hung on, the next move for the Martini-Renault driver was on Mallock. Martini was going really well in his Martini with Hoffmann and Pironi next up, now alone as Rosberg pulled off at the ten lap mark with his clutch finally useless.

The white March continued to pull away at the front as the race went on. There was no stopping it. Leclerey seemed powerless, the gap just increased, very slowly, but surely. It grew to 4s by lap 20 and it was on that lap that Arnoux finally got Mallock. His move had been the same as Neve's, just slowly creeping up—the gap between the Martini and Chevron remained at exactly 1s for several laps but in just one lap Arnoux closed up dramatically on Mallock and was by. Cheever was in fifth on the road, but knew of his 1m penalty so Martini was looking good for that position. It never came about though for the oil pressure took a dive and so did Martini —for the pits, after a good showing.

Behind Martini in seventh position on the road was Ingo Hoffmann but on lap 12, as early as that, the engine started misfiring. Sometimes it was dreadful, popping and banging, sometimes relatively healthy, but it took its toll and by lap 20, the following Pironi had caught up and gone by. Patrese was to follow him too, and if things got much worse for Ingo, Ludwig and Colombo, now fully recovered and healthy, weren't far behind. This lot, plus Kottulinsky, were the



Ingo Hoffmann (Ralt) on the left, Didier Pironi (Martini) in the middle and Keke Rosberg (Chevron on the outside: the up and comers looking for a line.

F2 EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP INTERNATIONAL TROPHY 1

continued

only cars on the same lap as the leaders, Iain McLaren had given up the struggle with his engine, and Bob Evans, dealing manfully with an obviously mishandling car, was put out of his misery with a jolt when a bolt holding the rear-shock absorber sheered on the Wheatcroft at Club—not a pleasant corner for anything to happen—and he headed for the pits.

The next 10 laps to 30 just saw Neve increasing the lead again. It went out from 3.7s to 7.6s in those 10 laps, but even so, it wasn't thought to be too great. Perhaps there was something wrong with the Leclere Kauhsen-Renault but it wasn't manifesting itself. The gap just widened. Back in sixth on the road, behind the leader, Arnoux (slowly pulling away from Mallock still, but only by hundredths) and Cheever, came Pironi, with Patrese right behind. The two F2 debutants were going well, but one was to show his inexperience. Patrese's visor started misting up and he was having to back off to clear it every now and then. This then allowed Hoffmann to close back up again, and Colombo was closing too. In the 10 laps, there was just one retirement, that of Bancroft who'd been running with Norman Dickson. The Californian's weekend of ill-luck wasn't changing for a header pipe came right off and Wink parked the Chevron.

As they went past the 30 lap mark, there were two things noticeable. Leclere was dropping from the ever-flying Neve. The engine note began to change and the gap was out to 10s, and equally, Arnoux was closing. Then it started making nasty noises, the engine note was raucous: it wasn't going to continue like that for long. Finally on lap 35, with Arnoux just under 4s behind, Leclere pitted from his second place. The mechanics changed the black box and the battery, but it didn't make any difference, a broken valve spring was suspected, so Michel left the blue Kauhsen car at Maggots—that's as far as he got.

It wasn't a good time for the Kauhsen team, for at the same time, Ludwig pitted from being the final unlapped runner in tenth on the road. He couldn't get any gears and after some adjustment, he retired. In two laps both cars had gone. Leclere's demise left Neve in command by over 20s from Arnoux, the tidy Mallock who was still charging along now in third, Cheever was some way back on the road in fourth without his penalty, and even farther back was the bunch led by Pironi. At various times he had Patrese or Hoffmann on his tail, with Colombo not far behind and this looked to be the only battle left. Hoffmann was doing wonders with his misfiring car, pressurising when he could and the engine didn't misfire too badly and easing up when it was popping and banging. Marc Surer was the first of the lapped in ninth position, but he got a slow puncture which dropped him three places, albeit temporarily.

So it absolutely looked to be Neve's victory, a fine first-time-out run. But with just eight laps to go, he went into Stowe and found the car wobbly. He thought it was a slow puncture, but at the chicane, the car slid sideways and he saw the wheel leaning over at an angle. Fortunately he too was at an angle, heading towards the pit road and that's where he went. One of the nuts was loose so that it necessitated a quick change and back out, but while he had a cushion to Arnoux, the little Frenchman soon ate that up and went into the lead. Mallock went by too, then Cheever and out came Neve. The bit was between his teeth in an amazing way—he tore out and two laps later smashed the F2 lap record with a 1m 21.85s which would have put him on pole position for the race. Two laps before the end, he took Cheever and was hauling in Mallock by 2.6s a lap but the gap was too much, and when the flag heralded Arnoux's first victory of the season, and the fine second place for Mallock, Neve was 3.29s behind.

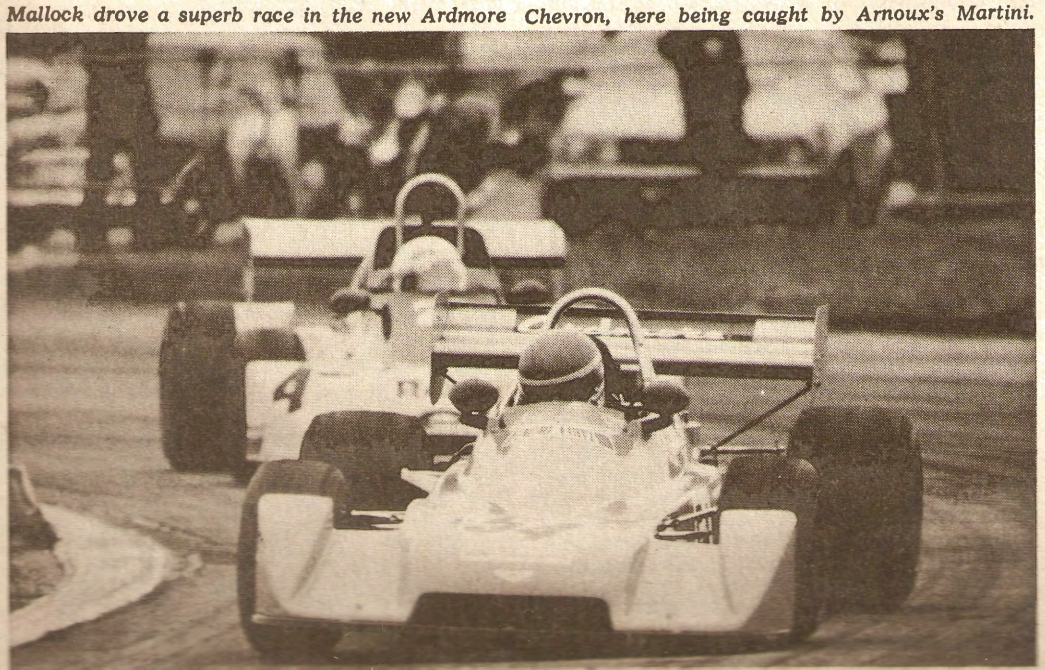
In all this, Pironi had gone off the road at Stowe when being pressurised hard by Colombo, he just got a rear wheel on the dirt and the car took over, not doing any serious damage, but heralding instant retirement. Thus, behind Cheever on the road, Hoffmann brought his amazing Ralt—still misfiring from what was probably the ignition box—while Colombo and Patrese had also had praiseworthy races even if slightly further back. Cheever lost out due to his minute penalty and came home in seventh place, the final unlapped runner while Kottulinsky and Surer were one lap further back.

"We were lucky," confessed Hughes de Chaunac afterwards, "but everyone needs a little luck in racing," and Ray Mallock, having shown his mettle on the race track, certainly had some in the scrutineering bay afterwards. The Chevron was right on the weight limit, rather too close for comfort.

29th Daily Express International Trophy race
European Formula 2 championship, round one
Silverstone, March 6

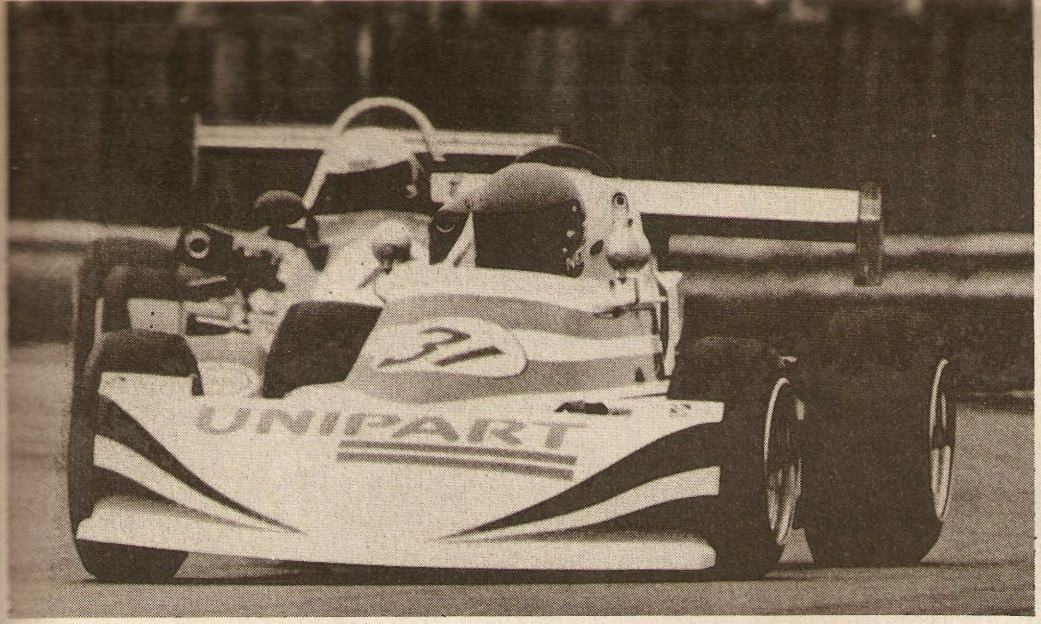
47 laps, 137.80 miles, 221.75 kms
1, Rene Arnoux (Martini-Renault/Gordini MK22), 1hr 5m 45.52s, 125.74mph, 202.35kph;
2, Ray Mallock (Chevron-Hart B40), 1hr 6m 0.32s;
3, Patrick Neve (March-BMW 772P), 1hr 6m 3.61s;
4, Ingo Hoffmann (Ralt-BMW 772), 1hr 6m 23.37s;
5, Alberto Colombo (March-BMW 772), 1hr 6m 23.37s;
6, Riccardo Patrese (Chevron-BMW B35), 1hr 6m 25.27s;
7, Eddie Cheever (Ralt-BMW RT1), 1hr 7m 6.47s; 8, Freddy Kottulinsky (Ralt-BMW/Heidegger RT1), 46 laps; 9, Marc Surer (March-BMW 772), 46 laps; 10, Norman Dickson (March-BMW 772), 45 laps; 11, Derek Cook (Chevron-Smith/BDG B27), 45 laps; 12, Val Musetti (March-Swindon/BDX 762), 44 laps.
Fastest lap: Neve, 1m 21.85s, 128.96mph **(record).**

Mallock drove a superb race in the new Ardmore Chevron, here being caught by Arnoux's Martini.



Rene Arnoux — winner.





Tiff Needell and Geoff Lees fighting it out for third place in the opening Vandervell F3 round.

Hello goodbye Dolly

Stephen South overcomes Unipart challenge to score the year's first F3 win—Fine drive by Lees—Report : QUENTIN SPURRING.

Although overshadowed in practice by the remarkable performance of the Triumph Dolomite engines in the Unipart Marches of Ian Taylor and Tiff Needell, Stephen South found superb form for the opening round of the Vandervell Formula 3 Championship on Sunday. South took his unsponsored, one-year-old March-Toyota into the lead at the start and was never really threatened, carving a quarter of a second off the lap record during a smooth, fast, and very professional drive. Taylor, his newer car handling badly, came in second, while Geoff Lees in the works Chevron B38 overcame a poor grid position and Needell to claim a hard-earned third place. Following the four British drivers to the flag came German Bertram Schafer (Ralt-Toyota) and American Danny Sullivan, giving the new Argo a most promising debut.

F3 BRITISH CHAMPIONSHIP — VANDERVELL TROPHY — **1**

ENTRY & PRACTICE

Although the entry for the opening round of the Vandervell series was strong on quality, numerically up to par, and downright rich in terms of new cars, there was a general air of unreadiness about it. A mere handful of teams had been able to test to their satisfaction, if at all, during England's recent wet spell. With the new Chevrons having problems with the latest F3 rear wing regulations (which bring the wing 20cms further forward), qualifying was all about Ralt and March, and there were seven of Ron Tauranac's products to take on eight machines from Bicester.

Three of the Ralts were brand new, and three others were brought up to the latest spec. The latest car features a revised rear suspension and rear wing assembly, plus new bodywork which, said the Ralt drivers, contributed anything up to an extra 200 revs down the straight. But there was no Ralt with a Triumph Dolomite engine, and that was what was needed last Saturday. For even with the new found straightline speed of the Ralts, no one had an answer to Ian Taylor in the Unipart March 773.

The 1973 Forward Trust Champion gave notice to all that he is back in F3, and in a very serious frame of mind about it. Lapping 0.19sec under Bruno Giacomelli's lap record, in 1m 29.67s, Taylor took a Triumph-powered F3 car to its first pole position, and was closely followed by his new team-mate, Tiff Needell (1:30.02). Holbay are keeping very mum about exactly what has been done to the Dolomite engine over the winter, save to confirm that the unit now has a longer stroke. The result is a definite advantage at the top end, and during qualifying the Unipart duo were passing cars at will on the long run down to Stowe, sometimes even dispensing with a tow. The display demoralized all the opposition, except for Stephen South.

South, entering a third season of F3 with his financial resources stretched to the limit and beyond, restated the Toyota/Novamotor case in no uncertain terms, splitting the Dolomite-powered cars with a sub-record lap in 1:29.83. South handled his March 763 in style, but no one gave him the ghost of a chance come race day.

Alongside Needell on the second row was the fastest Ralt, a new face in the cockpit. John Nielsen is a 21-year-old former Danish Formula Ford Champion who campaigned a GRD in F3 last year in Europe. His Ralt, painted a turgid brown, was brand new, and he had never seen Silverstone in his life, so his 1:30.41 marked him as very much a man to watch this year. Two more Ralts, both last year's models with the 1977 revisions, made up the third row, Ian Flux's familiar Ockley-sponsored car (1:30.64) and that of revitalized Australian Paul Bernasconi, who surprised all but himself with a 1:30.97. Bertram Schafer, who has abandoned BMW power to follow the Toyota herd and took delivery of a new Ralt during the week, split an oil line in practice and spun on his own oil into the catchfencing at Stowe, but the German repaired the car in time to start from the fourth row (1:31.00). He shared it with American James King in the first of the works 773 Marches (1:31.03), the latest model featuring a stiffer chassis and revised bodywork.

With Patrick Neve so effectively behind the wheel of an F2 car, King's compatriot Danny Sullivan was entrusted with the debut of Jo Marquart's new Argo, having done what testing has been possible at Snetterton. Despite a lack of straightline speed, he qualified this pretty car ahead of the best-placed Chevrons (1:31.15).

These were the works cars of Geoff Lees (1:31.37) and Swede Eje Elgh (1:31.43). The problem with the new B38 F3 car was that the nose shape was creating too much downforce at the front to be counteracted by the repositioned rear wing, producing chronic oversteer. Having gained permission to run his car with the F2s in their race morning warm-up, Lees elected to readjust it and race with much of the splitter removed in the hope that he had thus achieved a good balance. Elgh stayed as he was, and started from the sixth row with the updated Ralt of Geoffrey Brabham (1:31.45).

Mario Ferraris with the second works March (this one fitted with F1-type "skirts") had also had no testing and had a problem in practice with his tyres, which for some reason were chunking. Timed at 1:31.56, the F3 debutant shared row 7 with Patrick Bardinon, now in a new Ralt (1:31.74). Bardinon is sponsored this year by the Paris-based Skin Service concern which, thankfully, is not what it sounds: it's a leather cleaning firm. The Trivellato team were the first to take delivery of a B38 Chevron, for "Beppe" Gabbiani, who had even tested in Italy: but he was unable to match the times of the works drivers (1:31.85). Both the 773 Marches of Sandro Angeleri's Euroracing team, driven by Brazilian Mario Pati (1:32.12) and, in the absence of Federico van der Hoeven, by Swedish F3 Champion Conny Ljungfeldt (1:33.02), were disappointingly far down the grid. They were split by Derek Warwick in his new Warwick Trailers entered Chevron. Even European Formula Ford Champions must get used to driving with wings and racing tyres: considering the B38's wing problems, Warwick's 1:32.93 was a respectable effort.

One of the winners of last September's Tourist Trophy Group 2 race, Belgium's Pierre Dieudonné, was next up in Dr Joseph Ehrlich's venerable ES6 (1:33.18), alongside Dutchman Jan Lammers, finding F3 hard work in the unimpressive, although modified, Hawke DL18 (1:33.57); a new car should be ready in May. Derek Daly managed 1:33.59 with Derek McMahon's new Chevron before a bent valve ended his practice; he was able to borrow a rather tired engine from fellow F3 debutant Don Farthing for the race. Ivor Jones's colourful British Islands Racing March 743 was timed at 1:33.84, while Farthing himself with his ex-Hayje '76 spec Ralt, Belgian Pascal Witmeur (Modus M1), John Bright in the untried Wheatcroft and Barrie Maskell (Dastle Mk12) qualified well off the pace. The ex-FF man had a particularly fraught time getting his Wheatcroft on to the grid: first, the team had to do an all-nighter on Thursday fitting an engine borrowed from Dr Ehrlich after their own power unit was delayed and then they fitted the Atlantic car's radiators on the sides, only to find that they were classed as "coachwork" and that the car was now too wide. The rads were repositioned on the rear wing strut for the race, but Bright had to qualify untimed.

The BRDC organizers had decided that the F3 cars should have a rolling start, as was planned for the F2s. The decision to revert to a standing start for the main race came too late to change the arrangements for the F3s, although the prospect of a start on the move was not popular among the drivers.

Was anyone going to catch the supremely confident Taylor?

RACE

After a lap behind the Triumph TR7 pace car, the start was as messy as had been feared, and as the pack bore down on Copse it was South who emerged in front to lead Taylor, Bernasconi, Needell, Nielsen, Flux, Schafer and the works Chevrons of Lees and Elgh. Nielsen, unfortunately, failed to last the lap, forced to pit with a fuel pipe blockage; he later continued, but the engine had gone off and the Dane was unable to reveal his true pace.

Inch by inch, South consolidated his advantage over Taylor, while Bernasconi continued his practice form by establishing his Ralt firmly in third place, and Lees quickly disposed of Schafer and moved up to challenge Flux. The ex-FV man was driving really well: having discovered at the start that his throttle return spring was almost useless, he was having to bring the throttle back with his foot. Just as Lees made his lap 6 move at the Woodcote chicane, the throttle stuck open and Flux spun, letting the Chevron through into fifth place. Halfway round the next lap, Flux's throttle jammed wide open midway through Stowe and he got on to the brakes and steered for the catchfencing, incurring little damage.

South now moved dramatically further ahead in the lead, and Taylor knew why. During practice, he had never run for more than six laps consecutively; now, with the tyres at full operating temperature, the pole man realised that he had on too much rear wing. The Unipart March was understeering badly, and Taylor found himself having to drop a gear in the fastest corners.

Team-mate Needell had his wing a couple of notches further down, but even so was being given a real old-fashioned F3 monstering by Lees, the B38 obviously now in better shape. On lap 10 Bernasconi lost his fine third place with a spin at Becketts, continuing to the pits

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continued

to check out the car; the Needell/Lees duel became even more urgent, and there were Englishmen in the top four places.

It seems likely that Bernasconi lost it on dirt thrown on to the track by the leader, who put a wheel over the edge and dug his nosecone into the earth. The torn splitter slowed the leading March, but not enough for the hampered Taylor to make much impression, although the Unipart car did now begin to inch closer. The crowd's attention was firmly focused on the third place battle, however. Having scrabbled alongside Needell at Stowe a little earlier, Lees finally managed to pass the Dolomite-powered car on the *outside* of the same corner with three laps to go. As South came in a delighted winner, still with almost 2secs in hand over Taylor, Lees had little trouble holding off Needell for third place another 12secs behind.

In an effort to find more speed down the straight, Sullivan had removed the rear wing tab on the Argo, resulting in spectacular oversteer in the fast corners. But the American kept the car on the island and followed Schafer home for sixth place, never having mounted any kind of a challenge to the German, although Schafer had been unable to test his Ralt following the Saturday repair job, and found the car oversteering and badly balanced.

Elgh initially split these two, but fell back to participate in an entertaining dice for seventh place with Geoff Brabham. On the penultimate lap, Brabham locked up everything in sight and smoked by the Chevron coming into the chicane.

After Bardinon had left the fray at Becketts in a big way, badly damaging his new Ralt, Dieudonné had no trouble taking ninth place ahead of Daly's Chevron, which had been driven up the field very nicely. Next came the three ill-handling cars of Ljungfeldt, Gabbiani and Warwick, followed by Lammers (with a minute docked for omitting the chicane) and Bernasconi. Bright, the unimpressive Witmeur and Ferraris, who had a couple of spins and a pitstop to check his March, completed the list of finishers.

King had his March up into eighth place when he dropped it at Becketts, wiping off the nose, while Pati had an early spin there in the Euro-racing car and was working back up when a spin and a collision damaged his nosecone and deranged his gear selectors. Jones (11 laps) and Farthing (only two) both stopped out on the circuit, and Maskell spun the Dastle off the road at Club.

It was perhaps the most entertaining event of the day, and amid the various midfield dices it was easy to overlook the dominant performance of Stephen South, who staved off the Dolomite onslaught for one more race. South broke the lap record three times during a most impressive drive: where are you, sponsors?

Vandervell International Formula 3 Race
Silverstone, March 6
Vandervell Formula 3 Championship, round 1
20 laps—58.64 miles

1, Stephen South (March-Toyota/Nova 763), 30m 9.8ls, 116.64 mph;
2, Ian Taylor (March-Triumph/Holbay 773), 30m 11.0s;
3, Geoff Lees (Chevron-Toyota/Nova B38), 30m 23.1s;
4, Tiff Needell (March-Triumph/Holbay 773), 30m 23.82s;
5, Bertram Schafer (Ralt-Toyota/Nova RT1), 30m 32.8s;
6, Danny Sullivan (Argo-Toyota/Nova JM1), 30m 36.07s;
7, Geoffrey Brabham (Ralt-Toyota/Nova RT1), 30m 44.03s;
8, Eje Elgh (Chevron-Toyota/Nova B38), 30m 44.83s; 9, Pierre Dieudonne (Ehrlich-Toyota/Nova ES6), 30m 58.41s; 10, Derek Daly (Chevron-Toyota/Nova B38), 31m 2.68s; 11, Conny Ljungfeldt (March-Toyota/Nova 773), 31m 4.32s; 12, Beppe Gabbiani (Chevron-Toyota/Nova B38), 31m 8.39s; etc.
Fastest lap: South, 1m 29.63s, 117.76 mph (record).



Nose to tail through the Silverstone chicane bounce Capris of Craft and Spice.

The Spice of life

Capris take early lead in Group 1 race—Craft unlucky—Renault and Alfa challenge Avenger—Report: ANN BRADSHAW.

"He would have won if he had kept going" . . . "We've had it there four times and then been beaten." So went Chris Craft's sad story as told first by Gordon Spice and then Craft following the first round of the Tricentrol British Saloon Car Championship at Silverstone on Sunday. It was a distraught Chris who had done battle royal with Gordon for 17 nail biting laps only to be robbed of that elusive victory by a gearbox stuck in top. The two Capri drivers had shown the crowd what they had learnt in 1976 about pedalling these cars round the airfield circuit. Lap after lap they had both dived for the same line round corners, entered the chicane like two carriages of an express train and disappeared down straights like Siamese twins joined by their door handles. Yet one always felt that Craft had the upper hand.

What a marvellous start to the season for a championship that, only two weeks ago, looked doomed to obscurity, another nameless series. Then along came Tricentrol like a fairy godmother carrying a bag of gold. They adopted this orphan that had managed to upset all its other foster parents and gave it their name. The happy ending to this story is that the sponsors, too, are happy. Tony Mayes of Tricentrol is already thinking in terms of taking up the three year option and his next step is to consult the drivers on how they can all make it a good championship.

But the fine performance by Craft's Hammonds Sauce Group and Spice's Gordon Spice Group Capris must not overshadow the supporting roles played by 25 other hopefuls. Fine drives to honours in Class B went to Tony Dron in his Dolomite Sprint and in Class C to Peter Hilliard in his Alfetta. However, Class D was where much of the action was found. Barrie "Whizzo" Williams has always been noted for playing to the crowd, but on Sunday he gave one of the best performances of his life. Aided and abetted by Brian Muir's Renault 5TS and Bernard Unett's Avenger he put fun back into the sport. How these three saloon aces kept their cars on the road while performing antics that stunt men would find difficult can only be surmised at. All that one can hope is that no spectators tried those tricks on the way home.

ENTRY & PRACTICE

It's the year of the Capri, seven 3-litre versions surviving practice to make the grid. It would have been eight but for a dropped valve in the engine of Win Percy's Samuri/Bradshaw car during Friday's unofficial practice. With no pistons for the spare engine the car was a very early non-starter. New for the Capris this year are a brake balance bar, high ratio steering rack (which should be good for Brands Hatch), a cold air intake and a front spoiler bringing an equally new extra 2s per lap. Gordon Spice took pole on his last practice lap with 1m 47.42s, Tom Walkinshaw's record from last year being 1m 49.30s. He was happy with his basically unchanged car but would have liked longer to test the new Racing Services engine that had been hurriedly fitted on Friday following problems testing in the wet at Croft. Second and third fastest were also Capris: Vince Woodman in his team Esso Uniflo car on 1m 47.44s and Chris Craft on 1m 47.45s. It was obviously useful to have a year's experience of these cars under your belt.

Two class B cars occupied the second row of the grid. Dron's Dolomite, with the addition since last year of Weber carburetters, a close ratio four-speed gearbox and ventilated disc brakes, was on 1m 47.55s, while Gerry Marshall's DTV/Blydenstein Magnum was on 1m 48.29s. The times were all too close for anyone to rest easy.

Row three saw the eagerly awaited Tom Walkinshaw BMW 530i sandwiched between the Capris of Colin Vandervell and Stuart Graham. Tom had suffered, along with most other competitors, from lack of dry testing. He looked rather despondent after initial laps, commenting: "It is all right in a straight line, it stops okay, but it doesn't handle." He then went off on Friday night to spend a few hours in the smallest room in the house scratching his head and managed a 1m 49.22s. Stuart Graham was the first Capri newcomer on the grid. He is still getting acclimatised to the car but, with his driving skill and Ted Grace building the car, he should be optimistic.

Jeff Allam had sent his own men to Blydensteins to build his Magnum and he sat on the fourth row of the grid alongside Freddie Jacks in the ex-Walkinshaw Capri. Both men have taken the step from Production Saloons to Group One and seem to be adapting very quickly.

Mike Wilds, in his first season in tin tops, was on the fifth row with a Dolomite. He had had practice problems with the tie bar pulling out and the discs falling in half and was hoping for a happier race. With him on this row after unhappy practice was 1976 Belgian Group One champion Michel de Deyne in his Opel Commodore. It is a private deal and he can only afford two or three races in this country even though he prefers racing here to racing on his home ground. In practice his diff broke so he was forced to race with a short diff and high profile Michelins, instead of the long diff and low profile Dunlops. Keeping the two men company was Wendy Markey, who will be doing part of the championship as her car's engine will soon be changed and she will take her Mazda RX3 off to ETC rounds.

The first of the Alfa Romeos shared the next row of the grid with 1976 Champion Bernard Unett in his Mopar Avenger. This was Derek Lawrence's Mario Deliotti 2-litre Alfetta. Bernard

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The spice of Life

continued

seemed to have the small class sewn up after only six practice laps, recording 1m 57.76s—his record standing at 2m 03.06s. The opposition were expecting problems but *this* in a three-and-a-half-year-old car about to do its last race was quite silly.

Row seven had age and experience on its side. Jon Dooley (Alfetta) just one of a team of four Alfas entered by Napolina Alfa Romeo Dealer Team, Barrie Williams, Alfa GT Junior, and Brian Muir, Renault 5TS. Jon had his problems in practice with his engine cutting out, a shortage of power and a need for stiffer suspension. He is confident that the car has potential, but shares Stuart Graham's view that the season has started too soon. Barrie's car was raced last year by Peter Hilliard and this year has three sponsors — Gerry Marshall, who will be entering it under Marshall-Wingfield, with *Mayfair*, owns the front, Tony Hennin, of Autoextra, the back, and Barrie's dad, of Bromyard Engineering, the middle. Barrie said it handled beautifully but felt like he was towing a caravan around, with Gerry in the back supping ale — I suppose he knows the definition of handling beautifully. Brian Muir, of course, had his baptism in Martin Thomas's Renault last year (though he never actually raced it) and proved it then to be a very quick car and was very happy about his prospects.

Next came an unhappy Peter Slade hoping that the carburetter problems causing his Mazda RX3 to cut out round corners would soon be cured. With him was Rex Greenslade in an Alfasud, not too disappointed at getting only 2m 02.09s as he is waiting for an lsd and close ratio box. Alan Curnow's Mini 1275 sat on row nine alongside an unhappy Stuart Patterson in his Capri. Stuart had blown one engine in practice and was plagued by other niggling problems all weekend.

Reminiscent of last year, there were only two cars in Class C. Gone are the lonely Toyotas and in their place are the Alfetta of Peter Hilliard and the VW Golf GTI of Richard Lloyd. Peter was last on row nine with 2m 04.55s and Richard was first on row 10 with 2m 05.44s in a Golf he bought just over a week ago as a road car. He realised it had potential and sent it off to Don Nelson, of Bridge Motor Works, in Leicester. In the short time available only slight modifications could be done and the engine had to be left standard. Knowing that there is a lot more to come out of this very attractive car, for which Richard is hoping to get Vladivar Vodka backing, he is very happy about its performance.

Alongside Richard, getting used to driving again after a four-month rest, was Malcolm Wayne in an Alfasud. Bringing up the rear on row 11 were a brace of new Renault 5TSs for Susan Tucker-Peake and Charles Sawyer-Hoare who had no less than six sponsors for his car. Clive Richardson should have been on the grid with another Alfasud but a puncture in practice took him into the catch fencing and he was unable to qualify.

RACE

After getting over the initial shock of being led into Copse for the first time by Gerry Marshall, Chris Craft and Gordon Spice got on with the job of leading the race and entertaining the crowd. There was the usual jostling for positions on lap one but when the pack came screeching into Woodcote for the first time it was Craft's brown Capri in command. In hot pursuit came Spice, Marshall, Dron (trying to prove his boast that he is the best driver in the world), Vandervell, Walkinshaw and Woodman. No sooner had they passed the pits than the next helping of fun and games began. Williams and Muir both wanted the same line through the chicane. Muir won so Williams straightened out the curve. This was just a first lap prelude to the pattern the race was to settle into. Speeding up on the tail of Williams and Muir was Unett who had started from the back of the grid after last-minute dramas when the water pump had to be changed, and by lap three he had caught and overtaken them. However, this was no repeat of last year. For the next few laps the three of them thrilled the crowd with close dicing antics — the form of racing that can only be enjoyed by drivers who trust each other's ability. But



The debut of the new VW Golf GTI.

when replaced after the water pump change had only its top bolts secured and it had consequently swung into the fan. The Williams/Muir battle continued until lap 17 when Muir slowed dramatically with either plug lead or pushrod problems — only close scrutiny of the engine will tell.

Further up the field there were several private battles developing. Gerry Marshall, following his gearbox seizure minutes before the start when his men had changed it in a record 18m, had pitted with a puncture and rejoined the race in 19th position but fourth on the road right behind Vandervell. He stayed there for the rest of the race, harrying the Capri, although this was by no means a new situation as they are old foes from last year. Gerry's only trouble with being so close to the Capri was that he was losing his brakes as the air could not get to his car. Close behind this pair of do or die aces came Jeff Allam in hot pursuit of Freddie Jacks.

Meanwhile the casualties had started. On lap three Michel de Deyne broke his fanbelt and overheated and on lap five the BMW's fuel pump seized. However, the BMW's potential has shown and Walkinshaw is certain that, with the right Dunlops and more development, he can be in contention by Easter. Peter Slade had also given up the battle with his Mazda and joined the early retirements. Vince Woodman was to go on lap 12 when his engine dropped a valve.

Commentators and spectators alike thought that Dron's Dolomite was due for retirement, but the flat-sounding engine was due to a bad camshaft. The car finished strongly and now that Ralph Broad has found the desired reliability he is going for more power. Lap 12 nearly saw the Greenslade Alfasud in the banking as he got it all wrong coming out of the chicane and passed the pits looking very out of control on the grass.

As the battles intensified the lap records began to drop, Spice and Craft taking it in turns in Class A, with Craft setting the seal on it at 1m 46.28s, 99.32mph. Gerry Marshall took the Class B record and left it at 1m 47.11s, 98.55mph. No one could touch Win Percy's 1976 1m 53.60s in Class C, the best Peter Hilliard could do being 2m 00.24s, 87.78mph, while in Class D Bernard Unett saved himself by setting a new record at 1m 58.09s, 89.38mph.

By lap 16 Craft really looked set for the deserved win that Gordon Spice had predicted before the race, but it was not to be. At the end of lap 17 it was Spice's white car that came powering through Abbey Curve by itself with Craft limping into the pits. It was just left to Spice to keep ahead of Vandervell, who had more than his hands full keeping Marshall at bay. Following them at a discreet distance came a lonely Stuart Graham who had learnt just how much work he had got to do on his car before they all meet again on March 20.

Tricentrol British Saloon Car Championship, round 1
Silverstone, March 6, 20 laps

1, Gordon Spice (3.0 Ford Capri II), 35m 54.17s, 98.00mph; 2, Colin Vandervell (3.0 Ford Capri II), 36m 00.09s; 3, Tony Dron (2.0 Triumph Dolomite Sprint), 36m 24.06s; 4, Stuart Graham (3.0 Ford Capri II), 37m 11.16s; 5, Jeff Allam (2.3 Vauxhall Magnum), 37m 26.77s; 6, Gerry Marshall (2.3 Vauxhall Magnum), 19 laps; 7, Stuart Patterson (3.0 Ford Capri II), 19 laps; 8, Wendy Markey (2.3 Mazda RX3), 19 laps; 9, Derek Lawrence (2.0 Alfa Romeo Alfetta), 19 laps; 10, Jon Dooley (2.0 Alfa Romeo Alfetta), 18 laps.

Over 2300cc: 1, Spice, 98.00mph; 2, Vandervell; 3, Graham; 4, Patterson. **Fastest lap:** Craft, 1m 46.28s, 99.32mph **(record).**

1601cc to 2300cc: 1, Dron, 96.66mph; 2, Allam; 3, Marshall; 4, Markey; 5, Lawrence; 6, Dooley. **Fastest lap:** Marshall, 1m 47.11s, 98.55mph **(record).**

1301cc to 1600cc: 1, Hilliard, 86.22mph; 2, Lloyd. **Fastest lap:** Hilliard 2m 00.24s, 87.78mph.

Up to 1300cc: 1, Williams, 86.81mph; 2, Greenslade; 3, Muir; 4, Tucker-Peake; 5, Wayne. **Fastest lap:** Unett, 1m 58.09s, 89.38mph **(record).**

FORMULA FORD

Royale start to the season

Last year's fantastic FF1600 season was dominated by cars from the Hawke and Royale stables, so it was no surprise last weekend, in the absence of any competitive Southend cars, to see the Royales at the head of the field. In the Brush Fusegear final, which closed the meeting, the top six places were all taken by the Rory Byrne-designed cars, with 18-year-old Tom Wood a clear winner after David Heale (Reynard) had fallen off at Copse on the last lap.

Two heats were run on the Saturday afternoon, and in the first of these the South African Trevor van Rooyen was totally dominant in his works Scorpion Royale RP24, winning by 7½sec from former Silverstone Novice Champion David Heale. Heale was in fact on pole position and had hoped to offer more of a challenge to the confident van Rooyen, but a blowing head gasket put paid to that. David Sears qualified his Van Diemen RF76 on the front row also, but his Scholar engine refused to fire on the grid and he was well out of contention after a late push-start. A distant third place was taken by an improving Colin Shaw, whose Crossle 25F just finished ahead of Bob Lambert's Hawke DL15, David Wigdor's Image and Derek Buckton's Hawke DL12 after a race-long battle.

Sensation of the second practice was Nigel Mansell, who recorded a time some 1.5s faster than everyone else in his McKecknie-backed Javelin. He was, however, destined not to start due to a transmission failure (*Sports Extra*), so it was left to a sextet of Royales and the lone Van Diemen of Bryan Household to fight for the honours. John Village (RP24) flew through from the third row to second place, but then dropped well down the field when a plug lead

and won well, despite a last ditch effort from the local driver Peter Morgan, both in RP21s, with Richard Trott (RP24), Paul Smith (RP21) and Household a little farther back.

At the start of the final, Wood did exactly as he had done at the start of his heat and made a superb getaway, veering immediately over towards the inside of the track from his outside position in order to take the best line for Copse, and cutting off the advances of both Heale and van Rooyen as he did so. By the end of the first lap, though, the South African had made his move: "I was really trying through Woodcote, to drop the rest." Unfortunately he clipped the kerb and then missed his change to third gear, blowing the engine and leaving the race wide open.

Messrs Wood and Heale soon broke away from the main pack and diced hard until the latter was pressured off at Copse on the final tour, leaving Wood to an impressive victory in his Ken Myers car. The battle for third was the same as in the second heat, although Household retired with a loss of power and left Morgan to pip Smith and Trott on the line. Village showed promise by storming up to sixth place from the 12th row of the grid, but then slowed slightly with a badly understeering car and let David Toye's oil-spraying RP21 into fifth.

JEREMY SHAW

Brush Fusegear Formula Ford 1600 Championship round—heat 1 (7 laps): 1, Trevor van Rooyen (Royale-Minister RP24), 12m 32.46s, 98.19 mph; 2, David Heale (Reynard-Rowland 75F), 12m 39.92s; 3, Colin Shaw (Crossle-Rowland 25F), 13m 5.10s. **Fastest lap:** van Rooyen, 1m 46.10s, 99.48 mph.

Brush Fusegear Formula Ford 1600 Championship—heat 2 (7 laps): 1, Tom Wood (Royale-Scholar RP21), 12m 42.22s, 96.94 mph; 2, Peter Morgan (Royale-Davron RP21), 12m 42.49s; 3, Richard Trott (Royale-Minister RP24), 12m 43.71s. **Fastest lap:** Paul Smith (Royale-Rowland RP21), 1m 46.47s, 99.14 mph.

Brush Fusegear Formula Ford 1600 Championship round—final: 1, Wood, 21m 25.35s, 98.54 mph; 2, Morgan, 21m 32.14s; 3, Smith, 21m 32.30s; 4, Trott, 21m 32.45s; 5, David Toye (Royale-Minister RP21), 21m 41.88s; 6, John Village (Royale-Ford RP24), 22m 42.07s. **Fastest lap:** [illegible]

Starting procedure changes — read regs

We would warn competitors to look closely at both their regulations and final instructions following a rule change concerning starting procedure. It now appears that a club may adopt or ignore a rule that says that every driver has to switch off his engine when stopped on the grid. In the past this has meant that a driver who knew that his starter motor was defective still had to switch off his engine in the knowledge that it may not start again, and that he may be left in the perilous position of having 20 or so cars bearing down on him as the flag drops.

However, the RAC have waived this rule of having to switch off the engine, and clubs may implement it or not, as they desire. The BARC have decided that they've had enough of startline shunts, so that a driver doesn't have to switch off the engine on the startline. However, neither the BRDC nor the BRSCC are waiving the rule, and the necessity to switch off the engine still applies. Peter Browning's comment was that it's written in the regulations that a car must have self-starter and feels that such a regulation should actually be proven by that starter working.

As for the individual regulations concerning the smaller clubs, it's up to the driver to study the regulations.

Videan's Gremlin

Making a last minute substitution with his newly acquired Porsche Carrera replacing the Granada of the previous weekend, Kevin Videan and Jim Bowie took full advantage of some very fast sections to power their way to take the Gremlin Rally, run by Brecon MC in South Wales last Saturday night.

Videan, always a man to appreciate power, really wound up the ex-Piggy Thompson car during a fine night but even so Ted Cowell and Colin Francis are kicking themselves for they threw the event away on the last three controls when seemingly they relaxed slightly and Videan was through like a flash.

Once again the Fiat 131 of John Bloxham and Richard Harper featured well, was in the first four on each of the four selectives, but drowned out for 16 minutes when in the top three and finally finished out of the points.



Kevin Videan — Porsche.

With 105 starters, the second round of the *Motoring News* Championship was run in mild weather with most of the roads dry. However the less well known roads were very slippery and some people came to grief unexpectedly.

In the early stages Cowell and Francis opened out a slight lead in their RS2000 but early retirements included Eric Davies/David Jones and Howard Davies and Phil Jones, both their Escorts succumbing to radiator problems.

With the selectives contained in the first part of the night, Peter Wagstaff and David Starr featured well in their RS 2000 with two firsts and a second on the four stretches all linked. The other two fastest crews were Peter Gerbez and Dennis Osborne who failed to get into the top 10 eventually and Cowell.

Videan was not really in the hunt early on, presumably getting used to the car but on the long straightish parts of the route he made up time. On one of these fast bits Steve Courtney and Peter Watts had a moment when they lost a rear wheel at speed but they managed to pull the Escort up without incident.

Another crew going well at this stage were Geoff James and Brian Goff in another Escort and they were very well in contention until the last few stages when they ran into brake fade and finished well down. Chris Coburn and M Coleman in the Viva were another crew to be well in contention but they suffered alternator problems and a puncture added to their misery.

Bloxham and Harper maintained a top half dozen spot until the middle third of the rally when they blasted into a ford far too quickly and paid the penalty to the tune of 16 minutes.

1, K. Videan/J. Bowie (Porsche Carrera), 58m 43s; 2, T. Cowell/C. Francis (RS2000), 60m 44s; 3, P. Wagstaff/D. Starr (RS2000), 64m 39s; 4, G. Parker/A. Thomas (RS1700), 67m 36s; 5, R. Beecroft/J. Millington (Escort), 68m 37s; 6, A. Murphy/B. Hill (Escort), 69m 16s. **Semi-experts**: B. Jones/B. Davies (Escort Sport), 86m 6s. **Novices**: L. Rogers/P. Hartnell (Escort), 2F 105m 38s.

Sponsorship for Knockhill rallycrosses

Tannery Shops, a company who have two shops specialising in leather and lambswool products are sponsoring the Scottish rallycross championship to be held over seven events at Knockhill. Tannery Shops have two bases, one in Edinburgh and another within their large factory at Kinghorn Loch whence the skins are sold.

There will be three classes in the 750MC (Scotland) organised series, one for rallycars and the others for rallycross cars divided at 1300cc. Points will be awarded in each class from 10 for the winner to eight for second, six for third, down to one for eight. The overall champion will be the person who gains most points from any six of the seven rounds. If there are less than five cars in a class the class results will be tabulated on the next class above.

Each round will be decided by three runs per round with the best two times being added together to find the class winner. The champion will receive £100 and second gets £75 with £50 for third and £25 for fourth and at each meeting there will be £25 for each class winner. Entry to the championship will be by registration which will cost £2 per competitor. The man to contact is P. J. Summers at 37 Lister Place, Ninewells, Dundee DD2 1UX, tel: Dundee 642554.

Sports 2000 Lolas sell

Among the new Lola Sports 2000s are those for John Brown, Michael Ostroumoff, and Rod Gretton. Brown of course is last year's Formula 4 champion and enters the fray with sponsorship from his own John Brown Wheels concern. Ostroumoff is a former classic sports car driver and has sponsorship from Esso while Rod Gretton is also going Lola with Century Oils sponsorship it seems. He's a former production sports car driver who ran a team of TVRs in the top class of prodsports.



Left to right: winner Brian Streeter, Will Gollop and Trevor Reeves set off from the start.

Mini day at Lydden

In faintly sunny, and even slightly dusty, conditions Trevor Reeves and Richard Painton dominated last Sunday's second round of the TEAC/Lydden rallycross series in their Minis with Trevor's 1500cc Dove Group version just defeating Richard's 1300cc Vaughan-engined Ripspeed one, despite slight braking problems.

Following the very wet winter it might even be pleasant to relate that the course was firm and rutting badly in places so that the cars were frequently to be seen flying through the air — so maybe it was appropriate that a Dove won.

Both practice and qualifying runs now seem necessary to determine qualifiers for points-scoring runs, with the four fastest from the former joining the best 14 from the latter — why cannot rallycross be an easily comprehensible sport? Championship runs opened with wins for Reeves over Gordon Rogers' Mini, Dimi Mavropoulos in the only fast Escort to arrive (the others being readied for the Dutch series next week) and Painton. The pace quickened in the first of the second runs as Will Gollop's Saab 99 diced hard with Bill Rushton's Mini for second behind Reeves. After a hectic start, during the course of which the Mini of John Wright, John Welch's aide-de-camp, reared on to two wheels, Rogers won the next one from Wright and Bruce Rushton's Escort. Painton then had another win, albeit a close one from Mavropoulos and Dick Griffiths' Mini.

The third set opened with a truly classic Mini battle between Painton, Rogers and Wright, won by Painton from Wright after Rogers retired with a lap to go. Derek Scarrow's Mini claimed the following one, Mavropoulos's concentration wandering at the start when he was unready for the green. Gollop then took the final set of four points from Geoff Thomas's VW.

The supporting event final was initially led by the Minis of Brian Pearce and Barry Hathaway, but after both retired Colin Slaughter's reliable Skoda took the honours from Kevin Marelli, enjoying his first outing in anger in the ex-Redjep racing Escort.

The championship final saw the Minis of Painton, Reeves, Rogers and Wright up against Gollop and Mavropoulos. Dimi retired early on leaving Richards to narrowly head Trevor and Will equally closely pursued by Gordon just behind. However, all changed during the course of the second tour with Reeves grabbing the lead at the hairpin and third and fourth men retiring. Trevor held the lead of the very rapid race to the finish with Wright a strong third behind Painton.

1, Trevor Reeves (Mini), 14; 2, Richard Painton (Mini), 13; 3, John Wright (Mini), 8; 4 (equal), Dimi Mavropoulos (Escort), Gordon Rogers (Mini) and Will Gollop (Saab 99), 7.

TEAC/Lydden points positions after two rounds: Rogers, 21; Dick Griffiths, 16; Reeves, 14; Painton, 13; Gollop, 12; Geoff Thomas, Colin Richards and Brian Kippax, 9.

Patriotic

Red, white, and blue seem to be the colours for prodsaloons this season — with four red, white, and blue Manitou LE BMWs, Jock Robertson's blue Mayfair Opel, Peter Hall's blue ICS Opel, Alan Minshaw's red Opel, Malcolm Kay's red, white, and blue Capri, and Tony Lanfranchi's immaculate as yet unsponsored blue BMW.

Super Saloons live

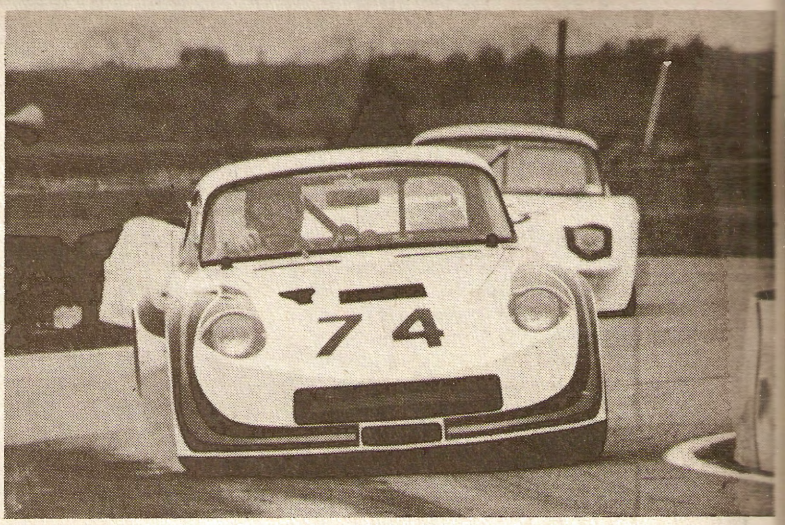
Super Saloon Drivers' Association chairman Mick Hill contacted us this week to report that there *will* be a Super Saloon series in 1977 after all — despite the move of its sponsor, Tricentrol, to the RAC's Saloon Car Championship.

Eight dates are already finalised, with individual sponsorship for each round. Hill says that prize money will be paid down to 20th position — so that every finisher will receive at least £10 — and that the aim is to pay £500 per round. Most rounds are accounted for and the remaining are under negotiation.

Hill particularly wished to convey his association's gratitude to Peter Browning of the BRSCC and Jimmy Brown and Jack Sears of Silverstone for their help in making the races possible.

Prospective competitors are asked to contact Mrs Joan Pope, who has been made responsible for block entry bookings, if they wish to enter. Her address is Cookman's Farm, Ragged Hall Lane, St Albans, Herts.

The dates are: April 24, Silverstone; May 15, Croft; May 28, Donington; June 5, Brands Hatch; July 9, Castle Combe; July 24, Mallory Park; August 28, Oulton Park; October 8, Donington. Two more rounds to be advised.



John Bury, winner of the Modsports/Prodsports event, leads Jon Fletcher's Elan through the chicane.

Grampian TV supports hillclimbs

The Scottish Hillclimb championship joins golf, skiing and shinty as those sports currently supported by surely one of the most enviable sponsors around today, Grampian Television. Their support will enable the organisers to meet rising costs and will provide a handsome set of trophies for perpetual use.

Grampian cover the area in which all the events take place so their support is naturally useful. The series consists of eight qualifying rounds held at Kinkell, Rumster, Fintray and Doune. There are twelve classes and awards are also made to overall champion road car champion and best newcomer.

● The opening round of the BRSCC Debenhams Escort Challenge didn't take place last weekend at Croft, but the series is due to start this weekend at Mallory Park. The cancelled Croft round will now take place at the same circuit on July 10.

Rowland's FF2000 mill

Philip Bullman's debut win in the Lord's Taverners FF2000 Championship opener was also a debut win for a revised Rowland engine, the company's first serious move into the formula.

A delighted Denny Rowland said that these engines are now on offer to all competitors and that Hawke had already ordered a second on the strength of Bullman's victory. Rowland have laid down to build 60, of which around half will go to Jim Vermeulen in Holland.

Bullman's car, incidentally, was as immaculately turned out as was his FF1600 of last season — the car which won him the MCD award for the best turned out car, presented at the BRSCC's dinner dance.

● The Association of South-Eastern Motor Clubs are having a busy 1977 season with five championships including one for rally drivers and navigators, an autocross series, autotest, grass event and speed championship.

Evans' superb debut

The BRSCC (N) attracted a fair crowd and a good turnout of competitors for the northern season opener at Croft on Sunday. John Bell won the first Renault 5 Elf Challenge round in the Mancunian Fenderbender 5TS but the now much quicker Renaults were overshadowed by a first class field of Troy Tyre and Auto Centre Championship Special Saloons from which Jim Evans, out for the first time in the AET Engineering Skoda-FVC, scored an 0.2s victory from his old Escort Turbo, now in the capable hands of Jimmy Robertson. Cameron Binnie (Royale RP21) fought off the race-long attentions of the Tate Formula Ford pack and Andy Barton was just a second outside the outright course record on his first outing in his Chevron B35.

A dozen Renault 5s were sharing the track with three Escort Sports which had became refugees from the cancelled Debenhams round. The latter were led all the way by Basil Wainwright's BRMB Radio Opposite Lock car and back in fourth overall John Bell kept clear of Richard Hassell who was taken on the last lap by Neil McGrath (Harding's Autos). Behind the latter pair another last lap place change benefited John Ridehalgh at the expense of Doug Bassett (Millwood Bros). Former Renault man Mick Hill finished second overall in the Hartford Motors Escort.

The Special Saloons were the talking point of the day and, after overcoming initial fuel pressure problems, Jim Evans made up on the faster parts of the course what the AET Skoda was losing on the tighter bits to the Escort Turbo, to win. Tony Sudgen took a good third with the outwardly unchanged but newly suspended and BDX-powered Brook Hire Escort. Racing had commenced with a joint Skipton Finance Prodsports and BRSCC Modsports affair which, after the uncharacteristic retirement of Jon Fletcher's now 1760cc Elan, provided an easy win for John Bury's Elan. In the Skipton Finance section Chris Meek's Lotus green and yellow-liveried Dealer Team Lotus with Kismet Europa gradually pulled away from Colin Blower's TVR 3000M. Despite the presence of three of the impressive-looking new Hawke DL17s the Tate FF1600 round fell to Cameron Binnie's Royale RP21 ahead of the usual battling mass out of which emerged the "old firm" of John Simpson (ex-Graham North Royale RP21) and Mick Starkey in the venerable ATS Merlyn. Despite the Chevron's apparent desire to go straight on at some corners there was no challenge for Andy Barton in the *Libre* finale. Behind him John Muirhead fought grimly with his Wallmain U2 Mk16 before he had to give best to Bob Rollo's March 73B/75B and Dave Muter's Lotus 69.

Skipton Finance Production Sports Car Championship and BRSCC Modified Sports Car Championship round for Richard Sutherland Trophy (10 laps). Overall: 1, John Bury (1.8 Lotus Elan), 13m 04.0s, 80.36mph; 2, Garry Wilson (1.5 Austin Healey Sprite), 13m 17.4s; 3, Gordon Howie (1.5 MG Midget), 13m 17.6s; 4, Chris Meek (1.6 Lotus Europa), 13m 40.4s. **Prodsports Class A:** 1, Meek, 77.93mph; 2, Colin Blower (3.0 TVR 3000M); no other starters. **Fastest lap:** Meek, 1m 19.4s, 79.35mph **(establishes record). Class B:** No starters. **Class C:** 1, David Dalton (1.3 MG Midget), 64.17 mph; 2, Victor Johnson (1.3 Austin Healey Sprite); 3, John McAffrey (1.3 Austin Healey Sprite). **Fastest lap:** McAffrey and Johnson, 1m 36.4s, 65.35mph **(establishes record). Modsports over 2000cc:** 1, Fred Cliffe (3.8 Jaguar E), 76.23mph; no other starters. **Fastest lap:** Cliffe, 1m 20.2s, 78.55mph. **1501cc to 2000cc:** 1, Bury; no other finishers. **Fastest lap:** Jon Fletcher (1.8 Lotus Elan), 1m 14.2s, 84.91mph. **1151cc to 1500cc:** 1, Wilson, 79.01mph; 2, Howie; 3, John Read (1.3 Austin Healey Sprite). **Fastest lap:** Howie, 1m 18.2s, 80.56mph. **Up to 1150cc:** 1, Ron Kirkman (1.1 Davrian Mk 7), 73.39mph; no other starters. **Fastest lap:** Kirkman, 1m 23.0s, 75.90mph.

BRSCC Renault 5 Elf Challenge round and Ford Escort Sports (10 laps). Overall: 1, Basil Wainwright (Sport), 15m 14.2s, 68.91mph; 2, Mick Hill (Sport), 15m 30.0s; 3, William Burke (Sport), 15m 55.2s; 4, John Bell (5TS), 16m 25.2s. **Renault 5TSs:** 1, Bell, 64.67mph; 2, Neil McGrath; 3, Richard Hassell. **Fastest lap:** Bell, 1m 35.8s, 65.76mph **(establishes record). Escort Sports:** 1, Wainwright; 2, Hill; 3, Burke. **Fastest lap:** Wainwright, 1m 30.4s, 69.69mph **(establishes record).**

Tate Formula Ford 1600 Championship round (12 laps): 1, Cameron Binnie (Royale-Minister RP21), 15m 07.0s, 83.35mph; 2, John Simpson (Royale-Barbram RP21), 15m 07.8s; 3, Mick Starkey (Merlyn-Scholar Mk 20A), 15m 11.4s; 4, Alan Stringer (Crossle-Chevvy 30F), 15m 25.2s; 5, Philip Tingle (Hawke-Scholar DL15), 15m 40.0s; 6, Bill Bescoby (Hawke-Scholar DL12), 15m 40.8s. **Fastest lap:** Simpson, 1m 14.0s, 85.14mph.

Troy Tyre and Auto Centres Special Saloon Championship round (10 laps). Overall and over 1300cc: 1, Jim Evans (2.0 Skoda-FVC), 12m 15.2s, 85.69mph; 2, Jimmy Robertson (2.8 Ford Escort Turbo), 12m 15.4s; 3, Tony Sugden (2.0 Ford Escort BDX), 12m 29.6s; 4, Doug Emms (6.1 Chevrolet Camaro Z28), 12m 35.0s. **Fastest lap:** Evans, 1m 11.6s, 87.99mph. **1001cc to 1300cc:** 1, Graham Wood (1.3 Mini-Cooper S), 76.89mph; 2, Ian Rogerson (1.3 Ford Escort BDA); no other finishers. **Fastest lap:** Wood, 1m 20.4s, 78.36mph. **Up to 1000cc:** 1, Ian Forrest (1.0 Chrysler Imp), 75.84mph; 2, Cliff Watts (1.0 Hillman Imp); 3, Tristan Batch (1.0 Mini-Cooper S). **Fastest lap:** Forrest, 1m 20.6s, 78.16mph.

BRSCC Northern Formule Libre Championship round (11 laps): 1, Andy Barton (2.0 Chevron-Barton BDG B35), 12m 07.2s, 95.30mph; 2, Bob Rollo (1.6 March-BDA 73B/75B), 13m 02.4s; 3, Dave Muter (1.6 Lotus-Barton BDA 69), 13m 02.8s; 4, John Muirhead (1.6 Mallock U2-Holbay Mk 16), 13m 03.2s; 5, Warren Booth (2.0 Lotus-BDA 69), 10 laps; 6, Peter Shand (1.6 Elden-Scholar Mk 10C). **Fastest lap:** Barton, 1m 02.2s, 101.28mph.

Weaver's rapid rebuild

James Weaver's appearance in the first Townsend Thoresen round of the season was only due to many hours of hard labour. On the previous Wednesday Weaver was down at Brands with the works car of Bernard Devaney. However, Devaney's car lost its clutch so the Irishman jumped into the Ashtune car of Weaver which the former Hawke employee had built himself. However, another driver spun in front of the pack and Devaney had no alternative but to hit him. The Weaver car was written off so James sadly returned home and after a couple of days of very hard work and help from Hawke, had built up a new car which he debuted on Sunday at Brands. However, it wasn't too good and he stopped during the final after spinning off at Paddock.

Happier times for Weaver — with the Hawke staff and his first car.





Jim Evans' impressive Skoda on the way to its debut win in front of John Robertson's Escort.

Fine northern Saloons

Sunday's Troy Tyre and Auto Centre's Special Saloon race at Croft drew an entry which compared very favourably with the alleged *national* championship round at Brands. Pride of place (and victory) went to the impressive new AET Engineering Skoda of Jim Evans. This machine uses much from John Cole's old Chevron in its make-up and at present features an FVC engine, without turbo. However, the latter will eventually give way to a turbocharged FVA unit. The car hadn't turned a wheel until Sunday but after initial low fuel pressure had been rectified it ran extremely well considering its unsorted state. It is very fast indeed on the quicker bends but lurches rather disconcertingly on tighter turns.

Two ex-Nick Whiting cars were present but Doug Niven was an early retirement with the Escort BDG after clipping the chicane and suffering a puncture (cause or effect?). Hill-climber Bryan Newby had his first ever circuit race under the Cliffe Motors (Sherburn) banner with the ex-Mass/Whiting lhd Cologne Capri and finished an excellent fifth after losing a little time in the early stages when the engine proved reluctant to run on all six. Bryan was one place behind Doug Emms whose ex-Wiggins Teape Camaro should have been on the front of the grid but, after it proved recalcitrant, started from the back and thundered through to fourth place spectacularly.

Extra prizes for saloon men

The Special Saloon register are making special efforts this year to ensure that their newcomers and regulars are well rewarded for making an effort themselves.

At selected meetings, committee members will select the best prepared car of the meeting and an annual winner will be chosen from one of the daily winners.

They are keen to encourage novices to their formula; such members should take note that they must apply to be considered for the Newcomer of the Year award. They should apply to Jeff Ward, 30 Danvers Road, Leicester to register. During the season result sheets should be sent to establish their form. From these applicants the committee will select the annual winner who will receive £50 and a trophy. There will also be a trophy for the second and third place men.

● The Mini 1000 Leyland Challenge round due to be held at Donington on April 17 is now rescheduled for Brands Hatch on April 24 due to the late opening of the Derbyshire circuit.

International drag outing

Taylor Startup International in co-operation with Queensway Travel are this year running a six day trip to the Mantorp International Funny Car meet in Sweden from July 27 for the July 29/30/31 dates. Travel is by scheduled airlines and there are factory visits and travel is arranged once in Sweden. The cost is £195 per person plus race entry. Details may be obtained from either Taylor-Startup International at 94 Chiltern Road, Dunstable, Beds or Queensway Travel, 141 High Street, Epsom, Surrey.

East Anglian autocross

Three well known East Anglian clubs have combined to run a series of autocrosses in the area this year. The series will be of seven rounds and run by the Peterborough, West Suffolk and Dereham MCs. The overall winner will receive £50 cash and class winners £10 each. There will be class divisions at 875cc, 1000cc, 1300cc, 1650cc, rally cars and specials.

Spencer starts right

Geoff Spencer began the defence of the BTRDA Production Car Trial Championship in fine style last Sunday when he wiped the floor with the opposition at the first round of the 1977 series, run by Shenstone and District CC at Weeford, near Lichfield.

On an eight section course, run four times, Spencer, in his Cooper S dropped only seven marks to return an index of 17.83% which left him miles ahead of the other class opposition.

After the first tour of the sections had proved too easy the clerk of the course tightened things up somewhat and competitors started to drop marks. At lunch Spencer had dropped six of his seven and he went on to show his superiority in the afternoon with just a single further mark against him while his rivals dropped marks at regular intervals.

Shenstone member Carl Price took the Mini class on 34 marks with Ray Waddington in second spot four marks behind while Brian Midgley was third on 42 marks.

Roger Bricknell came all the way up from Cornwall to show his prowess with his Anglia Estate in Class II and he scored a comfortable win against the Skoda brigade who were led by Stephen Courts. Bricknell dropped 32 marks to Courts' 47 while R Taylor, in another Skoda, was third a further nine marks behind.

Lunchtime leader in the sports car class was Malcolm Brown with his usual Sprite and he led Jim Loveday (Midget) by four marks with Mike Hinde (Elan) a further one mark behind. But Hinde got it together in the afternoon and went on to take the class on 38 marks with Brown dropping back to second on 42 marks and Loveday third.

Northerner Ken Waddington was the star of the small-engined rear-engined class dropping 66 marks to win the class in his Imp by five marks from Brian Pearce while David and Robert Carr were third in their shared family saloon but seven marks off the pace.

Overall: G Spencer (Cooper), 7 marks lost.
Class winners: C Price (Mini), 34 marks; R Bricknell (Anglia Est), 32 marks; M Hinde (Elan), 38 marks; K Waddington (Imp), 66 marks; J Ludford (Imp), 62 marks. **Ladies:** Mrs Gail Warrington (Mini), 59 marks.

Mansell hits the FF scene

The star of practice in the Brush Fusegear FF1600 race at Silverstone last Saturday was a twenty-three year old ex-karting champion named Nigel Mansell. Having only entered the competitive world of FF1600 last June he is still relatively inexperienced yet his antics last year in an old Hawke DL11 were so impressive (he won five out of eleven races) that he has been asked by John Lipman to run his "works" Javelin JL5 for this season. The car at present is fitted with his Alan Smith engine from last year and backing comes from the famous name of Alan McKechnie.

Nigel simply flew during the short practice session and soon recorded a time that no one else came within 1½ seconds of all weekend. Unfortunately though, at the end of the session he was negotiating the chicane at the same time as Peter Morgan's Royale RP21 when the car suddenly snapped to the right and into the retaining wall, rubbishing the nosecone and the right front suspension. Some demon work by Bill Bray, Robin Webb and friends saw the car back together again in time for the second heat but Nigel never took up his pole position, a drive-shaft having snapped literally in two on the warm-up lap.

The team were desperately disappointed not to be able to translate the practice form into results but with everything back together again, should well be a force to be reckoned with at Oulton Park next weekend.

● Bob Davies from South Wales has been co-opted on to the RAC Speed Events Committee and will look after the interests of rallycross competitors.

The Journal continues

The very successful *The Journal* North East ANECCC Autocross championship continues again this season in the north east of England with a 20 round series which starts on April 3 with a round by the Ryton MC. There's a prize fund of £1500 available and anyone wishing to enter this competitive series should write to Pauline Olds at 12A Hedgley Road, Denton Burn, Newcastle upon Tyne 5, tel: 0632 674304. The dates and individual organisers of the rounds are as follows:

April 3, Ryton MC; April 10, Berwick and DMC; April 24, Cramlington MC; May 8, Cumberland SCC; May 22, Hexham and DMC; June 6, Journal—Town Moor; June 19, Hawick MC; July 10, Tynemouth and DMC; July 24, Hartlepool and DMC; July 31, Border Ecosse; August 7, Alnwick MC; August 14, South of Scotland; August 29, Kirby Lonsdale; September 11, Hadrian MC; September 18, Berwick and DMC; September 25, Cramlington MC; October 2, Workington; October 9, Hexham and DMC (final); October 16, Tynemouth and DMC; October 23, Ryton MC.

Ward looks for cash

Winner of the FF2000 consolation race at Brands on Sunday, Ashley Ward was driving one of Frank Bradley's old Elden Mk 18s updated to Mk 22 spec when he gained his victory but should have his own new car for the Race of Champions meeting. His fastest lap on Sunday was just 1.2s slower than championship round winner Philip Bullman's but he was in the consolation race due to a deflating tyre in practice. Now the problem for Ward is to find the running costs to continue the championship season for he just needs some sponsorship to continue.

● Last year's 750F champion Chris Hague is following his predecessor Kim Perry into Formula Ford this year.

Talbenny expands

Exciting news from Wales this week is that Pembrokeshire MC has a new sprint course, and plans are afoot to arrange a rallycross course on the same site.

Following the breakdown of negotiations with the landowner of the sprint venue at Talbenny, officials of the club have reached agreement for a new course, extremely close by and using another part of the former airfield.

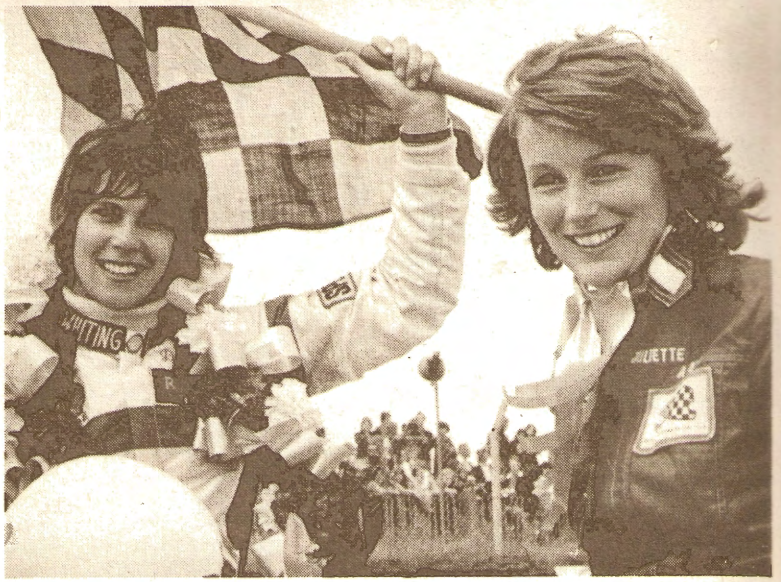
This will be known as Talbenny II and the approximately 2500yds course will be about 30ft wide most of the way round. It is shaped rather like a Wellington boot with the longest straight of about 500yds up the back of the boot. The course measures approximately 1.4 miles and the usual two laps will comprise one run.

As the course has yet to receive the blessing of the RAC the club has abandoned plans for a meeting in April and are planning the first event for June 10.

President of the club, Richard Davies said "Motor sport is alive and well in Wales and we are delighted with the new course.

"During the next week or so George Warren will be coming down to advise on the rallycross course and we are very hopeful we shall be able to stage a big event before Christmas. We are planning on having a course of about three quarters of a mile and, hopefully, it will be approximately 50% tarmac and 50% grass".

Speaking of the sprint course Mr Davies added "With the long straight we think we shall provide plenty of high speed entertainment and I expect the Formula 5000 boys will relish the possibility of getting up to near maximum speed."



Announced on Tuesday was a tie-up between Juliette Slaughter (right) and Divina Galica. Divina is meant to be driving both a Surtees TS19 in G8 and a Lola in Sports 2000, but as they clash we understand that Juliette, a former prod saloon driver, will be taking over the Lola driving seat when Divina can't make it. Juliette may also have a Renault 5TS drive as Divina is now the only Ford-contracted racing driver in the country.

Ketters keeps points again

Freelance motor racing journalist Mike Kettlewell is again keeping tabs on all the MCD and RAC motor racing championship points this year. The series involved are the Tarmac, ShellSport International, Lord's Taverners FF2000, Townsend Thoresen FF1600, RAC FF1600. *Kent Messenger* FF1600, British Sports 2000, SKF Steel Clubman's, Tricentrol RAC British Touring, Century Oils Special Saloon, Hitachi Special Saloon and British Radio Production Saloon championships.

Anyone wanting regular bulletins posted on the Monday following each round can obtain them for £5.94 (inc VAT) for the first championship and £3.51 for each additional one. Prices for less frequent bulletins are available upon request.

Mike's address is Mill House, Station Road, Eastville, Boston, Lincolnshire, PE22 8LS. Tel: New Leake 377.

Friswell and Bremner: RoC reserves

Among the names who are on the unofficial reserve list for the Brands Hatch Race of Champions Lord's Taverners FF2000 round are Rod Bremner, the DJM Formula Ford champion of 1976, and Geoff Friswell.

Bremner is negotiating for Formula Atlantic in the States and Canada and was fairly close to securing a sponsor when we last heard. Now he wants to see if he can also do the FF2000 races in this country. It seems likely that he'd race a Delta for the Horseless Carriage Company.

Friswell was contesting the FF2000 rounds last year in a Hawke DL14 but has gone to G8 this year, and his car is now in the hands of Grahame Tilley. However, he still

BOC continue

Following the end-of-year sponsorship of Wilmslow based driver Barry Pigot, BOC Saffire of Skelmersdale are continuing their sponsorship for this year. Their intention is to promote the Saffire range of gas welding equipment.

Last year Pigot took several wins and fastest laps in the Royale RP21 but this year is changing to a Hawke DL17 with which he'll contest all the major championships. His first appearance in the car is at Mallory Park this weekend.

Capital

Followers of Capital Radio and Brands Hatch race meetings may have noted the similarity in sound between the voices of Breakfast Show presenter Graham Dene and Brands "voice" Mike Smith. Smith interviewed Dene during Sunday's Capital Day and it was very, very difficult to work out who was talking to whom.



Robin Hood and his merry men.

Robin Hood go 2 car

The Robin Hood racing team appeared at Brands on Sunday very much revitalised with not one but two cars in the pipeline if not at Brands. Nick Foy continues with the coachbuilders and there should be a second car appearing shortly for Australian Mike Quinn who failed to join Ken Hensley Racing recently.

Robin Hood Racing was started last year under the patronage of B. J. Hood with support from his coachbuilding firm, Robin Hood Coachbuilders. This year the two car team has additional support from Pitter Transport of Southampton and there's more from Shell.

The two drivers are 25-year-old sailmaker Nick Foy and 25-year-old Australian Mike Quinn who finished third in the Australian FF championship and has come to follow in the steps of the Perkins brothers. They have two new Reynard 77s with bodywork designed by Mr Hood and engine preparation is being carried out by Newbridge Racing Developments and Nelson Engine Services.

The idea is to contest both FF2000 championships this year, and go for

Cortinas and fog feature

A lot of fog, particularly in the second half, caused problems for many of the 58 crews contesting last Saturday's Reddings Trophy Rally run by Middlesex County AC in central Southern counties but there were no serious accidents.

A feature of the night was the placing of two Mk 1 Cortinas in the first half dozen, that of 1975 winner Dave Sherwood and Doug Smith finishing runner-up to Garry Thorpe and Mike Wise in their Mexico.

The winners dropped 36m 50s to claim their first win on the event while Sherwood and Smith ended up on 42m 59s. Peter Johnson and Tony Pattie were third in another Mexico on 43m 40s, with John Geering and Mick Briggs coming into fourth place in their Magnum on 45m 0s. The fifth placed crew were Clive Hall and Andy Thorburn in their Escort on 48m 25s and sixth was the other Cortina driven by Phil Hemes and Mike Cook which ended the night with penalties of 50m 25s. The experts class went to Ken Martlew and Peter Cracknell in their Davrian Imp on 75m 49s and the novices award winners were Capt G Blythe and L/Cpl M Chadwick in their Land Rover on 8F 96m 10s.

Winstanley's Sport

David Winstanley appears this weekend in an Escort Sport which is being sponsored by Withers of Winsford. Winstanley is a former *libre* driver and writes a feature in the *Warrington Guardian* every week which goes out to the world at large, or in that area anyway. He's going to be driving all sorts of weird machinery in a variety of motor sports events and has been well publicised for his efforts. Further ideas are required by him to make the column interesting, and those interested should write or ring

A Chappell in Gloucester

Back in December Lee Chappell showed his affinity for the hills of the West Country when he finished second in the Gloucester Trial. On Sunday he went one better when he beat all the established stars to triumph in the Colmore Trial organised on the old Shell Hill by the SUNBAC, aided as usual by Rent-a-Hill. The event was a qualifying event for both the RAC and Samperit/BTRDA Championships.

On their arrival the drivers were greeted with warm sunny weather, rocky hills and lots of trees. Ten sections had been laid out which were tackled three times each. The combination of rocks and trees proved hard on the cars and, of the 37 starters, five retired before the end. Particularly fortunate was John Benson who rolled his car but was able to carry on after a damage inspection and not only finished third but won the award for the best 1300cc car.

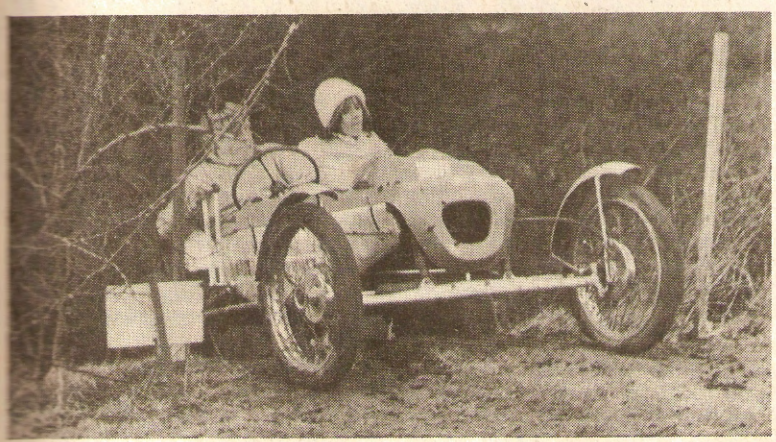
After the first round at lunchtime, it was a surprised Tony Harrison in the lead. Tony has been away from the scene for a while but soon showed that he had lost none of the knack. Sadly he could not maintain the pace and after his score of 23 he posted a disastrous 41 in the second round and could only salvage seventh place at the end. Ivor Portlock was another who, after an initial good showing dropped back towards the end to eighth place.

Lee Chappell took the lead that he was to maintain after Round 2 just ahead of Gordon Jackson. He pulled further ahead when Jackson found trouble in the deep ruts towards the end and it was Reg Allen who came through to second place with a good 17 in the final 10 hills. The Championship front runners—Jack Pearce and Julian Fack were just off the pace all day. Maybe it will be better next week when the fraternity gather at Ashday Woods on the Brighouse-Elland road in West Yorkshire for the Damart 4/44 Trial.

But it is Lee Chappell who is the toast of all. His father was the Champion no less than five times. Lee has obviously listened to all the advice and drove steadily without big mistakes all day and reaped the reward. Once again the marvellous training ground of Kent has thrown up a star.

1, Lee Chappell/Lindsay Chappell (Ibex), 61 points; 2, Reg Allen/Janet Brise (Kincraft), 70 pts; 3, John Benson/Sheila Benson (Jabs), 71 pts; 4, Jack Pearce/Brenda Pearce (Kincraft), 73 pts; 5, Gordon Jackson/Tony le Gnas (Ibex), 75 pts; 6, Julian Fack/Meg Marrion (Impunity), 75 pts.

Reg Allen and Janet Brise — second on the Colmore.



Golding takes the incentive

With a very tough initial section of about 70 miles, the RAFMSA really sorted out the entry very early last Saturday night when they ran their Abels Alnite Rally on a route entirely in Norfolk.

In the early stages the eventual winners Charles Golding and Preston Ayres opened out a big lead in their Dolomite Sprint and they went on to complete the 190 miles route with the loss of 53 minutes.

There was a good scrap for second place initially with the Parsons brothers Neil and Chris (Mexico) being harried by Gregor Steel/Guy Cherry (Escort), but both crews were due to finish with fails. The Parsons brothers collected theirs for failing to comply with a Give Way sign while Steel and Cherry missed a passage check.

Second were Timothy Harber and Keith Evans in an Escort who ended up on 68m with John Davie and Brian Wright on the next minute in their Escort TC. Peter Banham and Malcolm Watson drove a Mini pick-up into fourth place with the loss of 83m and the Parsons brothers were fifth on 1F 62m.

Sixth of the 55 starters were Steel and Cherry with 1F 64m and the leading semi-experts were Monty Seaman and Jim Haskins in a Firenza with 1F 78m. In the novice class Kevin Barber and Alan Jones made the long trip from South Wales well worthwhile by finishing 13th and collecting their prize despite 4F 121m. This was their first rally together.

● Due to a venue/entry situation, ongoing from the 1976 season, the BARC East Midlands have decided to cancel the proposed sprint on April 3 at Curborough. At the moment the meeting scheduled for October 9 is in doubt, but further communications will be issued with regard to this one.

● The Aintree Car Club are holding a film clubnight of various local and other films on March 15 at their clubhouse from 8.30 pm. These are apparently very good and not to be missed.

Kleber saga again

The production saloon Kleber tyre saga attempted to continue at the opening British Radio championship round at Brands Hatch on Sunday — when competitors were first told that they *could* run on the tubeless RS.

Further investigation, however, revealed that this was not so and many competitors were seen putting their assorted alternatives back on the wheels from which they had just removed the Klebers.

Worst off was Tony Stubbs, who had two Dolomite Sprints entered, both attired with brand new Kleber RS — and they weren't even allowed in the scrutineering bay.

Household's fine debut

One youngster to show good form at Silverstone last weekend was a nineteen-year-old Lincoln driver called Bryan Household. Last season Bryan won eleven races in the JRRDS series and won the "World Scholarship," his prize being a new Van Diemen RF76 chassis for this year. He also showed promise last year in an old Van Diemen RF74 in the several public races that he contested. For 1977 though he has sold both the RF74 and the RF76 to raise the finance for the more competitive RF77 chassis and will now contest the major championships with a Scholar engine. At Silverstone, he lost out in the scrabble for third place in his heat, finishing fifth, while in the final he was well up in the battle for third place when his engine lost power and he retired.

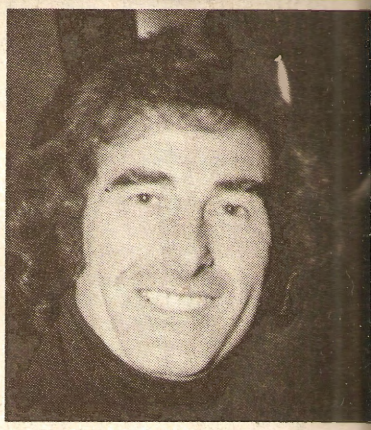
A Fairthorpe winner

Driving his Fairthorpe in fine style, M Kemp was a very comfortable winner last Sunday of the annual. Tyrwhitt Drake production car trial which Maidstone and Mid Kent MC ran on five sites all around Maidstone. Thirty competitors turned out to tackle the 20 sections and the best class battle was among the sports cars where R Ellis (Sprite) headed D Beaumont (Sprite) by a couple of marks. The biggest class was the last, for cars with any mods and running on any tyres and in this D Welch (Sprite), had the day's second lowest total of only eight marks lost beating C Betson's Imp by seven marks.

Overall: M. Kemp (Fairthorpe), 18 marks lost.

Class winners: T. McKeown (Mini), 90 marks; D. Crowe (Escort), 78 marks; R. Ellis (Sprite), 41 marks; W. Durling (Dellow), 5 marks; D. Welch (Sprite), 8 marks.

● Nick Ham, the Saracen works driver was only racing with a hack Scholar engine at the weekend at the Brands Formula Ford race, but should be better off this weekend at Oulton Park when he'll have a new Rowland fitted.



Chris Meek — Esprit.

Meek's lot

What would you think of a Lotus Esprit in modsports? Yes, it could happen because that's what Chris Meek is hoping to have, and it will be prepared by no less than Dealer Team Lotus with sponsorship from Kismet, the garage equipment specialists. And then of course comes the prodsports effort in the Lotus Europa Special which is also being prepared by Lotus and that seems to be continuing.

Meek's girlfriend Valli was presented with a Triumph TR7 at the weekend which she's driving on the road, but it seems that longstanding rumours are true for a TR7 chassis rolled up to Dawson Auto Developments the other day, and should shortly appear on the prodsports grids.

Luscombe by 5s

Only five seconds separated the second and third crews after a fairly tight route last Saturday night in Somerset when Salisbury and Shaftesbury MC ran their Palladwr Rally for 85 crews. A route of 165 miles contained two selectives at the end of the first half.

Winners were Roger Luscombe and Alan Collins from Yeovil in their RS 1600 who ended the night on 30m 11s well ahead of the opposition. Paul Syrett and Geoff Willis were runners-up in their Mini Mascot (the Belgium name), on 33m 22s while last year's winners John Prior and John Grimson were third in their Escort 1800 on 33m 27s.

Fourth were Alan Warne and Ken Bannister in another Escort on 35m 48s and fifth placed John Sampson and Peter Evans used a Mini Cooper S to drop 38m 26s. Sixth were Andy Thompson and Graham Gale in an RS 2000 on 40m 31s.

Semi-expert winners were Bob Jones and Brian Dwelly in a Cooper S on 43m 35s and the top novices were Alan and Peter Johnson in an Escort 1300 on 52m 23s.

● Scrutineers at Brands Hatch on Sunday very carefully examined the first three cars in the Townsend Thoresen, Lord's Taverners and British Radio Production saloon car races and were relieved to find them all legal. It also relieved Clerk of the Course Peter Browning who hopes that the legality message has finally got through.



Syd Fox — development.

Fox gets a Hawke

Syd Fox will be back in an FF2000 Hawke at Thruxton this weekend. The former works Hawke driver who drove for Mac McKinstry and was replaced by Grovewood award winner Tiff Needell is to drive a works development Hawke DL16 in the next two FF2000 races.

Meanwhile Syd's Palliser is being rebuilt totally by Len Wimhurst of Palliser/Wimhurst. The engine has done 16 races without a rebuild and the car has done the same but it will reappear with a Minister engine, hopefully at the Oulton Park FF2000 round.

● Regulations should shortly be available for the Qbourne Tandem Autotest, a round of both the RAC National and BTRDA autotest championships as well as the East Midlands and Midlands Association Championships. It takes place in Derby on May 22 and is organised by the Loughborough Car Club with sponsorship from Qbourne, the Knitwear cash and carry of Ripley. Those interested should contact Graham Nunn on Narborough 5420.

MALLORY PARK

Group 8 racing, like the Phoenix, has risen from the ashes of Formula 5000 and on Sunday at Mallory Park the formula, now known as ShellSport International, must make spectators and competitors alike believe that the sacrifice of the 5-litre bangers was all worth while. It was this time last year when we eagerly waited to see just how the revamped formula would go, but to secure a respectable place in British motor racing it must prove that it is now reliable and competitive.

This opening round shows great promise with variety in the machinery, and quality in the drivers. Such well-known names as Guy Edwards, Keith Holland, Tony Trimmer, Val Musetti, Ray Mallock, Tom Belso, Mike Wilds and Brian McGuire will be there in Formula 1, 2, Atlantic and 5000 cars. Let's hope they can take over where David Purley and others left off last November.

No doubt one of the main attractions at Mallory Park in March must be the welcoming smile of the BRSCC's Edwina Overend—ask any driver why they go to the circuit and they will tell you it is to see her—and, no doubt, this has helped the club assemble over 140 drivers for their five-race programme.

Supporting the Group 8 cars will be the second round of the British Radio Production Saloon Car championship. This is another formula that has had its format changed to good effect. Derrick Brunt must be looking for his second win, but he will be harassed all the way by Tony Lanfranchi, David Taylor, Jock Robertson and Gerry Marshall.

The Debenhams Escorts will have their first race of the season, the original opening round having been cancelled through lack of entries, and the field looks healthy. 1976 winner Wayne Wainwright, will be defending his title with strong opposition from fellow BRMB/Opposite Lock team-mates Basil Wainwright and Martin Hone and other Escort experts such as Geoff Evans, Neil McGrath, Pete King and David da Costa.

Two heats and a final for Formula Ford 1600 cars should see some action when the Dunlop "Star of Tomorrow" novices battle it out on Saturday. These aspiring drivers have yet to show their mettle so any prediction as to who will lead the field would be wild speculation.

The up to 1000cc Special Saloons will also be there contesting the Hitachi championship. The 1000 class includes John Homewood, Fred Game, Cliff Watts and Richard Long while the 850 class is supported by David Enderby, Peter Day and Alan Corbishley. The racing action starts for the Formula Fords at 2 pm on Saturday and for the others at 2 pm on Sunday.

THRUXTON

The Formula 3 circus will be opening the 1977 programme at Thruxton on Sunday when the BARC put on an interesting seven-race meeting with the first round of the BP Formula 3 championship as main race of the day. Heading the 27-strong entry will be Stephen South, who dominated last weekend's Silverstone race, Ian Taylor, Geoff Lees, Tiff Needell, Pierre Dieudonne, Derek Daly, Derek Warwick and James King. Six major Formula 3 teams, including March and Unipart, will be represented and there will be six different chassis racing.

Another impressive entry is that for the first round of the British Air Ferries Formula Ford 2000 championship race. Philip Bullman will be looking to make it two in a row —he won at Brands Hatch last Sunday—but stiff competition is bound to come from Jeremy Rossiter, Rad Dougall, David MacPherson, Adrian Reynard, Stuart Baird and Frank Sytner. There are 35 entries for the race with nine different constructors represented.

A new batch of Formula Ford 1600 drivers have appeared on the scene and they will be taking on such experienced men as Mike Blanchet, Mike Taylor, Roy James, Miki Dee and David McClelland.

The Forward Trust Special Saloon Car championship race promises good overall and class battles, with number one favourite for an outright win surely being Nick Whiting. However, Freddy Smith in a Capri and John Morgan and Tony Williams in Jaguars could give him some opposition. In the 2500cc class Tony Dickinson and Tony Sugden could well have a good battle in their Escorts. The man to watch from the 1300 class will be Alec Poole in the Janspeed-prepared Datsun Sunny, if the driver's and builder's past performances are anything to go by this car should prove very quick.

In the Oceanair Clubmans Sports Car series the 23 class B cars should give this championship a good opening race, and up there in front should be Robert Glass, Guy Woodward and Keith Money.

A full grid of Modsports will be on display for the Steel Tube Services championship race. In class A the impressive line-up includes Robin Gray's Morgan, Mike Fisher's Carrera and Richard Gamble's E Type. Jon Fletcher will be leading class B with his Lotus Elan while the class D supports the very fast Davrian's of Bob Jarvis and Geoff Lynn.

Also on the programme is a *Formule Libre* race. Racing starts at 2 pm.

OULTON PARK

Oulton Park motor racing fans will get their first taste of the racing season this Saturday when the Mid Cheshire Motor Racing Club present a six-race meeting with the second round of the Townsend Thoresen Formula Ford 1600 championship being the feature race. Men to watch in this race will be last weekend's winner Don MacLeod, Mike Blanchet, Bernard Devaney, Roy James and Dunlop novice stars from last year Sean Walker, David Leslie and James Weaver. They will be battling in two heats before the final.

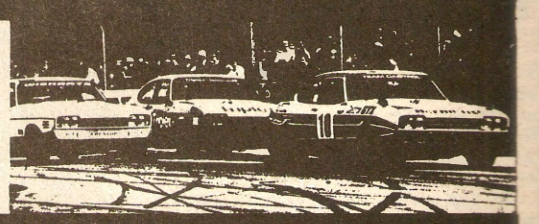
The Century Supreme Special Saloon Car championship cars will also be having their second outing of the season and looking for wins in this will be Tony Dickinson, Tony Sugden and Derek Walker in their two litre Escorts. The 1300 class will be hotly contested by Peter Baldwin and Tony Westbrook in their Minis.

Supporting will also be a Special Saloon race for cars up to 1000cc and a *Formule Libre* race. The action starts at 2pm.

● The Jaguar Drivers' Club are holding a race meeting at Silverstone this Saturday with lots of pleasant, historic machinery, but full details have not been forthcoming.

International events

Date	Venue	Event
Mar 12/13	Mallory Park, England	ShellSport International
Mar 13	Calder, Australia	F5000
Mar 13	Zolder, Belgium	F Super Vee, F Vee, FF, G1-5

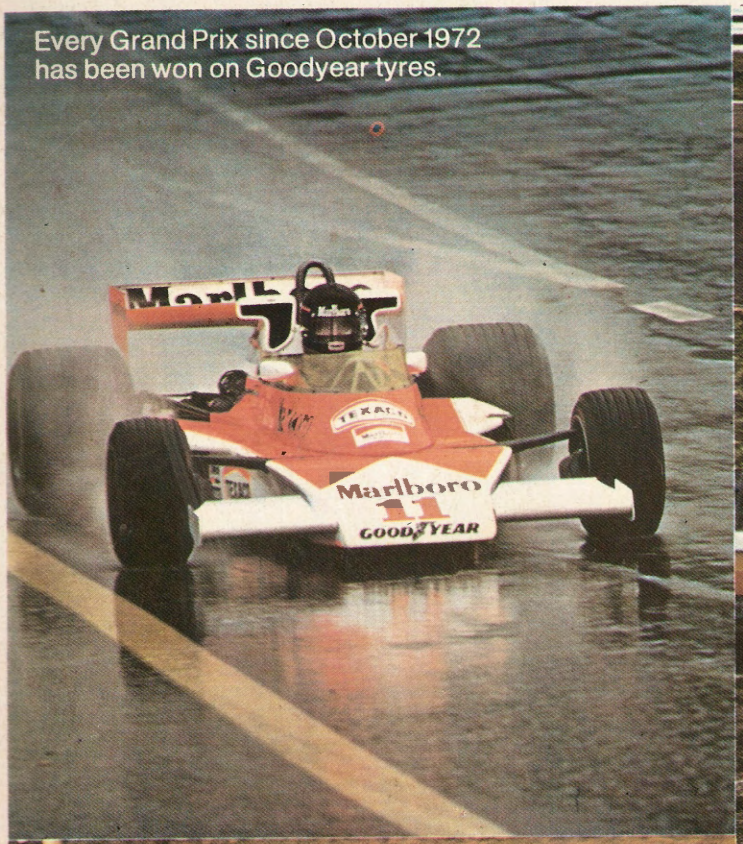


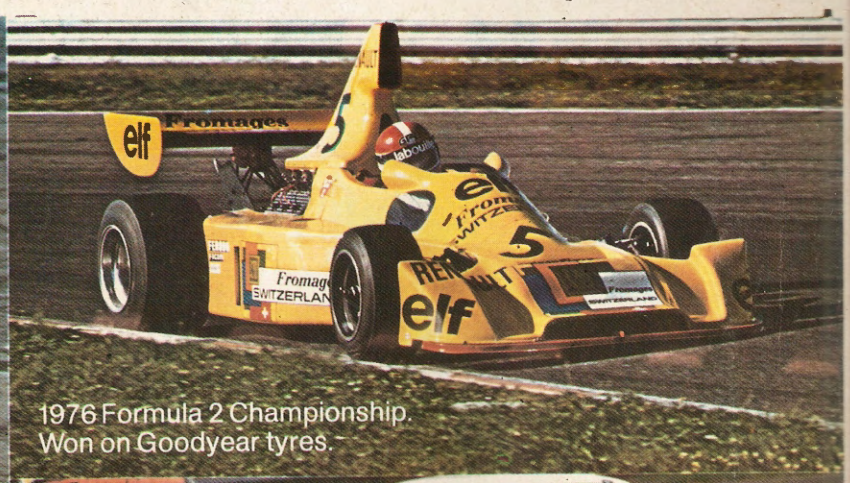
British events

Date	Venue	Event	Status	Club	Start	Details
Mar 12	Oulton Park, nr Tarporley, Cheshire	Race Meeting	R	MCMRC	14.00	Townsend Thoresen FF, Century Oils Special Saloons, F Libre
Mar 12	Silverstone, nr Towcester, Northants	Race Meeting	R	Jaguar DC	13.30	Thoroughbred Sports, Historic Sports, Classic Saloons
Mar 12/13	Mallory Park, nr Kirkby Mallory, Leics.	Race Meeting	INT	BRSCC (MC)	14.00	ShellSport International FF1600, Special Saloons, Debenhams Escorts, Production Saloons
Mar 13	Thruxton, nr Andover, Hants	Race Meeting	R	BARC	14.00	BP F3, FF2000, FF1600, Clubmans, Special Saloons, Modsports, F Libre
Mar 13	Hanson's Haulage Ltd, Huddersfield (MR110/154150)	Rally	R	David Brown MC	08.00	Elcar Trophy Stages Rally
Mar 13	Afonwen, N. Wales (MR116/126/703)	Prod Car Trial	C	Liverpool MC	10.30	—
Mar 13	Hillfoot Farm, Coupar Angus (MR53/225352)	Prod Car Trial	CP	750 MC (Scot)	13.00	March Trial—Dundee Trophy Championship
Mar 13	North Weald Aerodrome, nr Epping, Essex	Autotest	R	Sevenoaks & DMC	10.30	Lorraine Barrow Autotests, RAC/BTRDA Championships
Mar 13	Pitcaple Quarry, Aberdeenshire	Autotest	CP	Aberdeen & DMC	13.30	Pitcaple 13 Autotests
Mar 13	Halton Training Camp, Lancaster (MR97/489643)	Autotest	C	Kirkby Lonsdale MC	11.00	—

Secretaries of the Meeting are requested to send details of all forthcoming events to Miss Linda McRae, Autosport Editorial, Haymarket Publishing Ltd., Regent House, 54/62 Regent Street, London W1A 2HJ

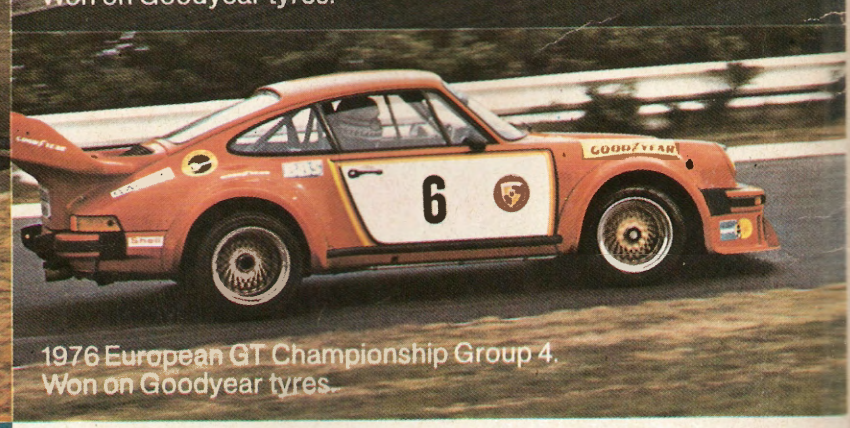
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