Autosport

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Another Ford-dominated RAC

Full report of Waldegaard's victory □ Group 2 review

Autosport

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A successful engagement

Even before the many thousands of spectators were planning their visits to the Lombard RAC Rally last week, public interest in international rallying was at an unusually high level. Getting the message across to the general public as opposed to the enthusiast has always been one of rallying's major problems, but this year the sport's somewhat vague efforts to do so have been given a valuable boost by the commitment of the Ford Motor Company and Fiat SpA.

Although Ford had considerably less money to spend than their counterparts at Fiat, since the Safari the Competitions Department at Boreham has never flagged in its bid to wrest the World Rally Championship from Italy. During 1977, Ford have had the greater share of victory spoils in the classic events, having won the Safari, Acropolis and Thousand Lakes before ending a dramatic season with their sixth successive victory on our own Lombard RAC Rally.

In the end, Ford lost the title chase by a scant four points, defeated by superiority of budget, numbers and technology, and by bad luck and one or two questionable decisions in the final stages of the series. Nevertheless, it gives us pleasure to congratulate Ford not only on their remarkable run of RAC successes, but also on catching the imagination of the public with an exciting season-long engagement.

To Fiat, congratulations are also due. Having won a tough battle for which they had not bargained at the beginning of the year, they came to the RAC in strength, even though they had that battle already won, and had no need to risk defeat in a rally that favoured Boreham. Both sides have contributed greatly to the growth of international rallying this year, and it has been a privilege to witness a splendid struggle.

The comingmen

This week, as expected, Didier Pironi signed to drive the second Elf-Tyrrell 008 next year, which will be his first in Formula 1. The French have thus taken a further step towards achieving the domination of Grand Prix racing envisaged by the Elf petroleum company and by Renault, to which we referred in this column a few weeks back.

There has never been a French World Champion; indeed, since the inception of the World Championship in 1950, France has produced a mere handful of great drivers. Make no mistake, this situation is about to be reversed. French drivers now outnumber other nationalities in Formula 1 and, if none of these succeeds, Elf and Renault have plenty more waiting in the wings. (And for the first time in the 28-year history of the World Championship, there will be three French *marques* competing in Grand Prix racing next year.)

The French government, which owns all of Renault and most of Elf, will succeed in its aim, for we have left it too late to establish a similar driver 'schooling' system in Britain. However, it will never be too late to follow the French lead; yet again we ask, who will back British motor racing?

cover picture

The Lombard RAC Rally, final round of the World Rally Championship, was a triumph for the Swedish ace Bjorn Waldegaard at the wheel of this British Airways sponsored works Ford Escort RS1800. No sooner had Britain's biggest motor sporting event entered the forests than Waldegaard began to show his superiority, and he ran out the winner of Ford's sixth successive RAC by a comfortable margin. Photo: Hugh Bishop.

next week

The troubled arena of sports car racing discussed in our annual review of Group 5 and Group 6 World Championship events—Graham Robson remembers the great days of the Gulf London Rally—The annual Grovewood Awards are presented in London—BMW 728 on test—Special Supplement: The 1977 Castrol-AUTOSPORT Rally Championship.

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

Ferraris very quick in Michelin trials

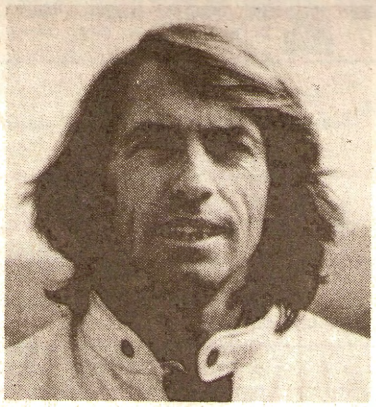
Niki Lauda's first test session with the Brabham team, at Vallelunga the week before last, seems to have been a great success. Last week, we reported that the Austrian had got round in 1m 6.69s, more than a second quicker than his best Ferrari time there. Although he was unable to better this time on subsequent days at the Rome circuit, he was generally delighted with the car, in true Lauda-style trying all kinds of tweaks and different tyres, even several different engines.

The day after the Brabham team left, however, Ferrari arrived with a couple of 312T2s for Carlos Reutemann and Gilles Villeneuve. The French-Canadian was the first to go out, last Thursday morning, and he spent two or three hours experimenting with different wings, shock absorbers and so on.

Accompanying the Ferrari transporter to Vallelunga was the Michelin van, complete with the company's competitions chief, Pierre Dupasquier. Of Goodyear there was no sign. In the course of his morning session, Villeneuve got down to 1m 6.80s, mighty close to his predecessor's Brabham time. Immediately Carlos Reutemann went out in the other car, and soon the Argentine was down to 1m 6.10s!

These times were set on the normal Michelin SX-38s. After a quick break for lunch, Lole went out again, this time on SX 3-38s (which are of a different construction). The result was the truly remarkable time of 1m 5.83s! Several other compounds and constructions were tried during the day, and Villeneuve finally got his times down to 1m 6.25s, so Gilles is obviously really beginning to come to terms with the Ferrari.

Ferrari are now definitely set to do the whole of next season on Michelin tyres, as we hinted a few weeks ago. Ten days ago, the Italian company was officially released from its Goodyear obligations—the contract strictly had another year to run.



Laffite—happy with revised Ligier.

Stewart—back in the cockpit.

Ricard testing

Thanks to its habitually mild winter weather, Paul Ricard has been a busy place recently. Down there last week were the McLaren and Ligier teams.

With Ferrari's decision to switch to Michelin tyres, it seems that we could well be in for a return to the compound war of a few years ago. Certainly Goodyear have not been standing still, and there were several different compounds available at Ricard last week.

On the stickiest of these, James Hunt's McLaren M26 finally got down to the fantastic time of 1m 8.2s. The quickest time he could do with 'normal' tyres was 1m 9.6s, which graphically illustrates the difference between 'stickies' and race tyres. Patrick Tambay, driving the McLaren for the first time, also went extremely quickly on the soft tyres, putting in a couple of laps at 1m 8.9s.

The Frenchman was ecstatic about the car. "Perhaps it doesn't brake quite as well as my Ensign did", he said, "but the handling is close to perfection. It feels a very safe, well-balanced car. This is a fantastic chance for me, to be able to work for a truly professional team. I believe that the M26 will still be one of the best cars next year, and that James will win enough races with it to get back the World Championship".

Interestingly—and another pointer to the effectiveness of soft compounds—the previous fastest lap around the Ricard short circuit was set by Emerson Fittipaldi in his McLaren M23 days, at 1m 9.8s.

Jacques Laffite put in several days of testing with the Ligier-Matra JS7—an unusual way of spending your honeymoon, we thought! The French programme has only recently been confirmed, of course, for Gitanes took a long time to give the go-ahead for next year.

The car was revised in several ways. There have been many engine modifications and Laffite was extremely pleased with the results. The front suspension was also new, and Jacques was eventually lapping regularly in 1m 9s, confident there was quite a bit more to come.

Pironi confirmed at Tyrrell

As expected, confirmation has come through that Didier Pironi will indeed drive for Ken Tyrrell next year. (See Maurice Hamilton's feature on page 8). For the first time, therefore, the team, which has always received very substantial backing from Elf, will have two French drivers, Patrick Depailler being number one, of course.

For some time Ken has had a high opinion of the 25-year-old Parisian's ability. "I was president of the judging panel for Pilote Elf, the competition for young racing drivers in France, when Pironi won in 1972. I have followed the progress of all the competition winners and Pironi, in my estimation, has been the most impressive," says Tyrrell. "His win in the F3 race at Monte Carlo this year was outstanding. He raced against and convincingly defeated the best F3 drivers in what I regard as the most important F3 race of the season."

Ken reckons that Pironi will take about six months to settle into Formula 1, but thinks that his ability will begin to show itself in the second half of next season. "The introduction of the special 'development' Cosworth engines, available for only one driver in each team, has prompted me to establish a definite system of driver seniority in the team. I have avoided this situation ever since we started F1 racing in 1968, but new circumstances demand a revised approach in management of the team."

The brand-new Tyrrell 008 was tested for the first time last week at Silverstone. It was a bitterly cold day and the purpose of the session was simply to shake the car down. Everything appeared to work as it should but Patrick Depailler made no attempt to go quickly. Afterwards he said he was delighted with the general 'feel' of the new car. Testing will continue this week at Paul Ricard, where Pironi is expected to have his first drive.

Above left: Karl Kempf's magic box at Silverstone last week—amazing that a plain ordinary cassette should play a part in it! Above right: A pensive Depailler sits in 008. This monocoque is so shallow! *Below: Patrick drives the car for the first time.*

JYS quick!

Our resident Ricard spy thought he was seeing things last week. Just for a second he could have sworn that he saw a white helmet with tartan band sticking out of the McLaren M26. Then, later on, the same apparition was seen in the Ligier. . . .

He wasn't seeing things. It *was* Jackie Stewart's helmet in the two cars, and it *was* the great man himself wearing it. JYS was making a film, and it seems that this involves his driving several current Formula 1 cars. This week, for example, he was due to drive a Ferrari 312T2 and the Tyrrell six-wheeler!

So how did the old man go, four years after his retirement? According to our Monsieur X's unofficial stopwatch, Jackie got the Ligier round in 1m 11.3s! Makes you wonder what he could do with a bit of practice, doesn't it?

Philips to back F2 Thruxton again

The BARC held their championship prizegiving in the Martini Terrace atop New Zealand House in London last week, when it was announced that the club's primary annual event, the Easter Monday Formula 2 international at Thruxton, will again be sponsored by Philips Car Radio in 1978.

Philips, who first sponsored this meeting last April when Brian Henton scored that resounding all-British victory with the Netherton & Worth Boxer-Hart, will be awarding a series of 'special product' prizes on the basis of performances during qualifying as well as in the race itself; final details have yet to be announced. Their financial assistance is of course greatly valued by the BARC, whose F2 meeting cost £47,000 to stage this year. Philips are also to sponsor the club's Formula Ford 1600 series (see *Sports Extra*).

Next year's Philips Car Radio Formula 2 meeting falls on Monday, March 27, with practice as usual on the previous Saturday, March 25. One of the supporting races will be a round of the British Saloon Car Championship. The club has already printed booking forms, which show that pre-booked race day general admission is only £2.50 (or £3 on the day), and that all grandstand seats are also very reasonably priced. Send an SAE to Formula 2 Booking Office, Thruxton Circuit, near Andover, Hants, and they will send you a booking form.

More BP Formula 3

Les Thacker of British Petroleum was at the BARC's prizegiving in London last week to present Derek Daly with the spoils of his 1977 BP Formula 3 Championship victory, which included a fine oil painting of Derek's Chevron B38 leading Stephen South's March 773 by Dennis Lascelles.

Thacker confirmed that BP would again be backing the BARC's Formula 3 series in 1978. The previous BP F3 titles have been won by Gunnar Nilsson (1975) and Rupert Keegan (1976).

BP Formula 3 Champion Derek Daly receives his oil painting in London last week. The BARC's John Wickham and commentator Neville Hay look on.

Toyota make F3 awards

This year's newly crowned BP Super Visco Formula 3 champion, 24-year-old Dubliner Derek Daly, spent last weekend in Germany. Contrary to rumours, he *wasn't* visiting BMW's Competitions Department in Munich. He was, in fact, attending the Jochen Rindt Racing Car Show in Dusseldorf where, last Saturday, Toyota (Germany) were presenting the awards in this year's Toyota Cup.

Taking the top award was Sweden's Anders Olofsson who, in his privately run Ralt RT1, has, with nine wins, won more races than any other driver in Formula 3 this year. Anders's hopes of moving into Formula 2 next year don't look too good at present so he is resigning himself to yet another season of F3, possibly with a Chevron.

Taking the runner-up slot behind Olofsson was European F3 champion, Piercarlo Ghinzani. As expected, this Italian will be moving into F2 next season "either with a March-BMW or even a March-Ferrari". An interesting combination.

Daly came third overall and collected a cheque for £2000 into the bargain. "It's a pity I couldn't qualify for the British series as well, but being Irish, I'm not regarded as one of you lot", commented a nevertheless happy Derek.

Fourth overall, and also in attendance, was Sweden's Eje Elgh while fifth and also in the money, was Italian Elio de Angelis. However, Elio was unable to be there as he was down at Fiorano putting in many laps with Pino Trivellato's Formula 2 Chevron-Ferrari, a team he is expected to be with next year.

Edwards—the Gallantry Medal.

Guy gets his medal

Guy Edwards was at Buckingham Palace on Tuesday to receive the Queens Gallantry Medal for his part in the rescue of Niki Lauda at the Nürburgring last year.

At the beginning of the week, Edwards confirmed that ICI would be backing him again next year, and that he would be running a two-car team.

BMW's 1978 plans

BMW Motorsports competition plans for next year are expected to be announced at their annual press conference which will be held in Munich in just over a week's time.

Much interest will surround their Formula 2 plans for next year, especially now that Renault have pulled out, leaving the way virtually clear for them to regain the series they lost to the French two seasons ago. Opposition from Ferrari is an unknown quantity at present while there is every chance that Brian Hart, with his suitably updated 420R alloy-blocked engine, may have two, or even three front-runners, who will present a stern challenge to the expected BMW supremacy.

The works March-BMW team is expected to be announced as a three-car attack headed by Bruno Giacomelli and supported by Marc Surer and Manfred Winkelhock, the last two being members of this year's BMW Junior Team.

Winkelhock, last year's national VW Scirocco champion, has very little experience of single-seater racing, although he tested Giacomelli's 772P car at Donington a couple of months ago.

The second half of the BMW attack looks likely to be handled by Ron Dennis under his Project racing banner. Having run with Ralts this year, stories abound that Dennis will be running Marches once again, for BMW Junior Team member, Eddie Cheever, and his team-mate from this season, Brazilian Ingo Hoffmann.

We hear rumours that no fewer than four works G5 BMWs are to be run. It is said that Ronnie Peterson and Gunnar Nilsson will share the 320i turbo (which proved so shatteringly fast in its European debut at Brands Hatch), and that there will be three normally-aspirated cars for Anders Olofsson/Bo Emanuelsson, Eddie Cheever/Bruno Giacomelli and Marc Surer/Manfred Winkelhock.

Rees leaves Shadow

The situation at Shadow is a little hazy at present, but Alan Rees has definitely left the team to join Jackie Oliver. Rees's longtime assistant, Jim Eccles, has been appointed Team Manager and tells us that Shadow will definitely continue in F1 next year, beginning in Argentina. Eccles is currently looking for a couple of experienced mechanics. Applicants can contact him at 0604-54351 during the day or at Towcester 50267 in the evenings.

Japan GP postponed

The organisers of next year's Japanese Grand Prix have asked, yet again, for the date of the race to be changed.

This year, if you recall, the race was organised by the Japanese Automobile Federation, and they requested a postponement from the original date, April 17 to October 23, when the race was, in fact, run. This year's event made a loss of close to £100,000, and is to have new organisers next year, the Tokyo Broadcasting System.

They have requested exactly the same change. Next year's race is scheduled to be run on April 16 (conveniently close to Long Beach), but the TBS would like October 22. This request is certain not to go down well with the F1CA. By the end of October, all the drivers, mechanics and team personnel are travel-weary, and the long haul out to Tokyo is the last thing they want to face at season's end. Apart from anything else, running the race at the end of October merely lenthens by two weeks an already over-long season.

Holland to race down-under

Despite a significant increase in prize money, the initial line-up of drivers for next year's four-race Australian Rothmans series for Formula 5000 cars is somewhat disappointing.

Rothmans initial announcement of international drivers comprises John Cannon, Graham McRae and Keith Holland, together with expatriate Australians Warwick Brown and Bruce Allison. Vern Schuppan is expected to drive one of the Ansett Team Elfin cars alongside designer Garrie Cooper, but that is the extent of the international commitment at this stage.

Prize money for each round is now AUS$28,000, $10,000 more that this year's series, with the money being paid down to 12th place. The winner's purse is $8000 with $5000 for second and $4000 for third.

The series will start at Sandown Park, Melbourne, on February 5, followed by Adelaide on the 12th, Surfers Paradise on the 19th and Oran Park, Sydney, on the 26th.

Hasemi in Theodore?

Who drives the Theodore? Current rumours suggest that the new car, designed by Ron Tauranac and backed by Teddy Yip, will be raced, initially, by Masahiro Hasemi, the Japanese driver who proved startingly swift in the Kojima at last year's Japanese Grand Prix, qualifying seventh and recording the fastest lap of the race. It is said that Hasemi will drive the car in the first five Grands Prix of the season, after which 'the situation will be reviewed'.

£110,000 for Hill appeal

When the Graham Hill Appeal Fund was launched, 18 months ago, its aim was to raise money for the building of a Rehabilitation Centre at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital at Stanmore. It was here, of course, that Graham recovered after his terrible accident at Watkins Glen in 1969.

The response to the Appeal has been fantastic, to the extent that the target has been far exceeded, the sum raised sufficient not only to build the unit, but also to fund it for three years. At a dinner at the Guildhall on Wednesday evening, Bette Hill was due to receive a cheque for more than £110,000, on behalf of the hospital.

RAC G1 schedule

Sponsorship for the RAC's British Saloon Car Championship for Group 1 cars is to be announced within the next couple of weeks, but in the meantime the RAC has issued the schedule, which includes a dozen championship rounds. There will be no round at the British Grand Prix meeting next year, apparently:

1978 RAC British Saloon Car Championship: Mar 19, Silverstone; Mar 24, Oulton Park; Mar 27, Thruxton; May 1, Brands Hatch; May 29, Silverstone; Jun 25, Donington Park; Jul 2, Mallory Park; Aug 6, Donington Park; Aug 28, Brands Hatch; Sep 10, Thruxton; Oct 7, Oulton Park; Oct 21, Snetterton.

Briefly . . .

● Rumours in the French press suggest that 35-year-old Giacomo Agostini, for so long the king of motorcycling, may be seen in a works F2 March-BMW in 1978.

● Beppe Gabbiani, that wild but very quick young Italian, will be graduating to Formula 2 next year. He will drive a Chevron for the Trivellato team, and his F3 place is to be taken by Siegfried Storh, the Formula Italia champion this year.

● Seen testing the Lola-Abarth F2 car at Snetterton last week was the very promising Bruce Allison.

● Fred Opert has decided that he would like to run a Chevron in next year's BP Formula 3 Championship. What he is looking for now is a driver. . . .

● NASCAR changes for 1978. Buddy Baker is leaving the Bud Moore Ford team, where he will be replaced by Bobby Allison. Baker himself is moving to the M. C. Anderson Chevrolet team, in place of Sam Sommers.

● At the recent Ontario NASCAR race, A. J. Foyt was in excellent spirits, and said that he would have two new USAC cars and two new NASCAR stockers for 1978. Maybe he won't be cutting back quite as much as we thought.

● Jim Stacy, whose Dodge recently won the LA Times 500 at Ontario (driven by Neil Bonnett), may well run two cars in certain NASCAR races next year. Partnering Bonnett at the Daytona 500 in February may well be Gunnar Nilsson, who really enjoyed his first taste of oval racing in the recent IROC race at Michigan.

● Doug Shierson, the March distributor in the States, has just taken delivery of the first 1978 March 78B Formula Atlantic car, and Howdy Holmes has been testing it for him. Interestingly, the car is equipped with side-pods—not seen on Giacomelli's car at Donington. Is this a tweak Robin was trying to hide until next year?

● David Purley and Don Bishop have both been co-opted on to the 14-strong BARC Council following the recent resignations of Peter Gaydon and Michael Norris-Hill. Purley has been a BARC member throughout his racing career, while Bishop is the chairman of the BARC's South-Eastern Centre, and has been one of the team responsible for the highly successful Gurston Down hillclimb.

Confused victory for Grice's Torana

The 12th and final round of the Australian Touring Car Championship provided a chaotic ending to the series at the long and bumpy Phillip Island circuit on November 20.

The plans and tactics of most teams were thrown into confusion by the high rate of tyre wear and failure, and even the official lap scorers were afflicted by some hours of doubt after the event.

Bathurst third place-getter Peter Janson (Holden Torana) was given the winner's trophy immediately after the race and did all the right things for the television cameras, but immediately afterwards Allan Grice (Torana) claimed that he had won.

After a couple of hours, officials of the Phillip Island Auto Racing Club saw it that way too, despite the fact that Grice had picked up a 60secs penalty for refuelling on the grid between the warm-up lap and the start of the 500kms race.

The race lead changed at least seven times, with early leaders Bob Morris and Peter Brock both retiring their Toranas (Morris with a broken harmonic balancer and Brock with electrical troubles). Marlboro-Holden Dealer Team driver John Harvey led for a while before being ousted by Moffat-Ford Dealer Team number two driver Colin Bond, whose Falcon punctured while in the lead only a couple of laps before the finish.

Eventually, Janson was placed officially second, Jim Richards (Falcon) third, Harvey fourth, Bond fifth and Wayne Negus in the second M-HDT car sixth.

Allan Moffat did not contest the race but nevertheless won the championship with 106pts from Bond on 71, Brock 65, Laurie Nelson (V6 Capri) 46, Morris 44, Harvey 40 and Grice 39. Ford Capri won the championship of makes (decided over the four long-distance rounds of the touring car title) with 36pts from Torana on 28 and Falcon and Escort both on 26.

At the same meeting, Alan Hamilton won the final round of the Australian Sports Car Championship in his Porsche 934, but shared the title with John Latham (Porsche Carrera), both having scored 58pts, with no provision in the rules for a countback.

Haywood wins weird IMSA finale

The last IMSA race of the season was run last weekend, on the infield road course at Daytona, and proved to be an event of chaotic incident.

A huge field of around 60 cars rumbled round on the pace lap, led by Danny Ongais's pole-sitting Porsche 934. The Hawaiian took the lead when the green light went on, and some idea of the discrepancies in performance between fast and slow may be gauged from the fact that Daniel began lapping cars on his second lap! In fact, that was as far as he was to get, for the 934 came into smart contact with an errant backmarker, and that was the end of Ongais.

Three laps later, the same thing happened to David Hobbs' BMW 320 turbo, which had qualified fourth. On the next lap, IMSA Champion Al Holbert had a tyre blow on his Chevrolet Monza, which put him out. And by the seventh lap, there were 20 wrecks littering the circuit (including the vehicles of two gentlemen who had contrived to run into each other at the entrance to pit lane!). The officials, quickly grasping that this was all getting a bit out of hand, put out the red flag and the race was stopped, pending clearing the circuit.

On the restart, Hurley Haywood took the lead with his Porsche 934, running away from the field until the 20th lap when . . . yes, you've guessed. Out came the red flag once more. Yet again the track was full of wreckage. This time the race was not restarted, and Haywood was awarded victory (by two laps!) from Kemper Miller's BMW CSL and Phil Currin's Corvette. Phew . . .

catchpole

by Barry Foley

correspondence

the editor is not bound to agree with readers' opinions

The Guv'nor

I am sure that I speak for a great many people involved in motor racing in England by asking you to allow me some space in your columns to welcome Nick Syrett back to the sport.

During the period in which he ran the BRSCC, Nick was not nicknamed the Guv'nor for nothing, as many of motor racing's less savoury notables will remember. He was just the kind of personality who should have been representing the interests of the competitors in recent years. If ever there was a voice of the racing people, it was Nick, and how much we have missed him!

I don't know exactly what Nick is going to do in his new job, but I'm sure we will all be feeling his influence again soon.

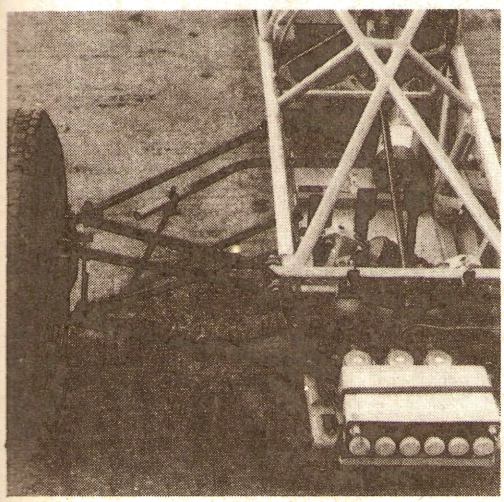
SHEPPERTON, MIDDX. COLIN SALTER

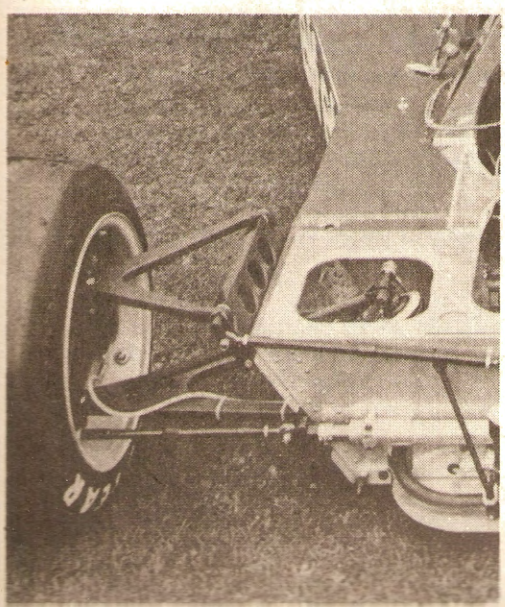
Proving ground

Having read with interest the various articles about the new Tyrrell 008 Formula 1 car, I noticed that the front suspension layout is based on a similar concept to that used on the Getem Formula Ford 1600 car throughout the 1977 club racing season. Your readers might be interested in speculating as to whether Formula Ford, so long a nursery for potential Formula 1 drivers, might now be providing a useful pool of original thought for single-seater design. . . .

Our Getem chassis, too, is very shallow (only 9ins high)—and who knows when the first plywood Formula 1 body might appear?

EUXTON, LANCS. ALAN BRUNNING





Similar in concept: the front suspension geometry of the Formula Ford Getem GBB77 (above) and Formula 1 Tyrrell 008.

Thank-a-Service

As I was unable to take any weekdays off work during the RAC Rally, I would like to thank both the organisers and the GPO for enabling me first to see and, later, to hear about the event.

The stages organised purely for the real fans on Sunday were excellent. I was able to visit Blenheim Park and Donington, listen to commentary and get a fair view of competing cars. The marshals were very courteous, despite the very difficult task facing them.

After I had to tear myself away from the event on Sunday evening, I was able to keep closely in touch through the Post Office 'Dial-a-Result' service, which was even better than last year. Even the difficult foreign names did not seem to pose such a problem this year, although quite a lot of people were driving something called a Fiat 131 Marioform!

Thank you for an excellent event and I look forward to next year's.

MUSWELL HILL, LONDON N10 ALAN YOUNG

Two-hour wait

Having attended the Donington stage of the RAC Rally, I would like to point out a couple of problems which perhaps Mr Wheatcroft has by now realised. The problems are very much allied, namely mud and car park exits.

The mud round the circuit by the end of the afternoon made walking both difficult and hazardous, and getting back to the car park from the rough stage section was a very lengthy business. Once back in the car park opposite the Start/Finish straight I found the problems had only just begun. Cars were slithering and sliding everywhere in an attempt to reach the tarmac exit road. It took me two hours to get on to this road, and speaking later to a friend who had also been in this car park, this was the sort of time it was taking everybody parked in this area, and I was one of the fortunates who did not get bogged down.

May I therefore make two suggestions to Donington? First to try to put some rubble round the outside perimeter of the track, where the most mud occurred; and second to make an exit directly on to the main road from the bottom car parks.

Having pointed out the faults, let me say that otherwise Donington must be one of the best circuits in this country and provided a very good spectator stage for the rally. This is the circuit's first season, and I am sure that these problems will be considered and a remedy found before the next season begins.

WOLVERHAMPTON RICHARD NAYLER

Six-mile trek

As a rally enthusiast who has just returned from visiting the special stage at Radnor, I must write to express my disgust and horror at the way in which spectators were treated at this only daylight stage made public by the RAC for Tuesday morning, November 22.

Rally guides told us to enter the stage at a certain map reference only and not to enter the forest by any other route. This I and many others did, and arriving at the stage entrance at 10.00am we were greeted with a very long traffic jam. There were no marshals on duty at the junction of the stage with the main road, no marshals anywhere except no doubt on the actual stage itself.

By 10.15am we are gradually driving up the stage to the car park that was mentioned in the rally guide. Two miles later traffic comes to a standstill, and everybody parks on the side of the road and prepares to walk to the stage. There were still no marshals directing traffic, no marshals to tell you how far from the stage you were, an no arrows to direct you to the stage. By now it is 10.30am and the first car is due at 11.00am—you still do not know how far away the stage is. After walking a mile or so you come across a hut with Forestry Commission men who tell you the stage is another five or six miles away, by foot only!

Enthusiasts we might be but who the hell do the RAC think we are? If we walked six miles, by the time we got to the stage half the cars would have already been through! Radnor was packed out. When will the RAC see the error of their ways and publish all the special stages of every rally? We spectators can then choose where we want to go and can blame no one but ourselves if we arrive at a stage to find the chaos we found at Radnor.

The RAC and the Forestry Commission make enough money out of rally competitors, so please be fair to us enthusiasts and give us a choice of special stages for every day of a rally. Quite frankly the organising Motor Club of Radnor stage left a lot to be desired—to drive many hundreds of miles as I and some people I talked to did, only to be confronted with the chaos we found and no rally officials to direct you or provide information, is an appalling state of affairs.

We were told not to park on the main road in rally guides, but next year I shall, because it means I can walk across the road to the stage finish and at least see some action, as many people did this year.

I would welcome comments from other enthusiasts who attended Radnor—perhaps the time has come to teach the RAC how to be fair to all.

BRISTOL MICHAEL J. MENHENITT

Super Saloons

May I, through your columns, congratulate the BRDC and Silverstone on the far-reaching decision to reinstate the exciting Super Saloon formula. These powerful cars have been among the most exciting that club racing fans have ever seen and we were very disappointed to lose them. But now they are back and we can see some *real* racing again.

ROYSTON, HERTS. PAUL MCINTYRE

Then as now?

The lead story in AUTOSPORT 25 years ago this week (November 28, 1952), concerned the Mercedes-Benz victory in the gruelling 1934-mile, five-day Pan-American Road Race. The Le Mans-winning 300SL coupes of Karl Kling and Herman Lang took the first two places on the event, Luigi Chinetti chasing the German drivers home in his 4.1-litre Ferrari 'Mexico'. Ill fate struck both the Gordinis, Manzon's car retiring just a few miles from the start while Jean Behra's example, after setting a record speed for the first leg, crashed heavily with serious injuries to the driver. Giovanni Bracco also led the race in his 3-litre Ferrari and, for a while, a close battle raged between the Italian and the two silver cars. Sadly, Bracco's fine run came to an end with transmission problems which left the Mercedes team to an unchallenged win. Lincolns took the first four places in the stock car category while the only late drama was the disqualification of the American, John Fitch, who won the last leg from Kling but was alleged to have received outside assistance. On the national front, the Bristol MC&LCC's Roy Fedden trial was won by E. J. Chandler in his supercharged Chandler Special while Gordon Mosby was victorious in the Yorkshire SCC's Pennine Trial event.

Under the eye of his new patron, *Didier tries the cockpit of the new Tyrrell 008.*

DIDIER PIRONI:

Up before the head

MAURICE HAMILTON talks with the new Elf Team Tyrrell number two.

Didier Pironi hurriedly ate his ham and eggs. He had an appointment to keep. Breakfast was washed down with lemon tea and he glanced at his watch for the twentieth time in as many minutes. "I think I go now," he said as he gathered up his briefcase and paid the bill, before escaping from the rather dubious delights of an English road-side cafe. Pironi is professional and likes to be punctual—particularly for an appointment that would probably be one of the most important in his motor racing career. Ken Tyrrell does not like to be kept waiting.

Pironi is 25 years old but his boyish looks gave him the appearance of a schoolboy about to be interviewed by the headmaster as he knocked on Tyrrell's door. His school reports had been good. He graduated through the orderly ranks of French motor racing schooling and was on the verge of stepping into the Formula 1 world of high finance and cut-throat competition.

Ken Tyrrell first met Pironi at the annual Elf competition at Ricard in 1972. Tyrrell was a judge, Pironi a performer. Didier took top marks in the competition and went on to win the Formule Renault Championship followed by the Formule Renault Europe title. Then he moved into Formula 2 and finished third in the championship in his first year. And, on a spare weekend in May, he popped down to Monaco and totally dominated the Formula 3 classic.

Pironi was born on March 26, 1952, in a suburb of Paris, and it was planned that he would enter the prospering family construction business. However, a visit to a motor race at the age of 12 changed his allegiance from bricks and mortar to cars and motor oil. He had accompanied his cousin, racing driver José Dolhem, and was immediately caught by the magic of motor racing. He decided there and then that he wanted to be a racing driver—much to the chagrin of his parents.

He became Dolhem's mechanic and as soon as he was able, Pironi enrolled at the Winfield school at Paul Ricard. He won the competition in front of a panel of judges chaired by Ken Tyrrell. First prize was an Elf-sponsored Formule Renault Martini—a considerable boost for a young man about to take his first faltering steps in motor racing. But Pironi was soon to learn that success in racing doesn't come easy. You've got to lose first to appreciate what winning is really about. Pironi was the third member of an already overworked team. Success, even in the most moderate form, eluded him until such time as the other two members left the team near the end of the season. Pironi then scored two second places.

Rather than sit back and wring his hands in despair, Pironi approached Elf and said that one of the things he had learned was that the interests of a team manager and driver are often at variance! The answer, he reckoned, would be to act as his own team manager and take the responsibility for choosing mechanics and engine tuner. Elf agreed and Pironi set out to have a second crack at the Formule Renault title, again with a Martini chassis.

Pironi gathered together the right personnel for the job, laid down the rules and then climbed into the cockpit of his Martini MK14 and began to bring home the spoils of victory. Frequently.

He won seven out of twenty races and became the undisputed champion. "It was not a very difficult year," he recalls, "because I think that it was a very good team and we had very good mechanics. I also had extremely good engine preparation which is important in racing as competitive as Formule Renault."

Didier won the important Monaco race that year and Renault chose the occasion to announce their plans for Formule Renault Europe for 1975. Formula 3 was having a lean time and it was confidently predicted that Renault Europe would soon become *the* international junior formula—thus keeping the talented young French drivers under the wing of Renault.

The timing was perfect for Pironi; Renault Europe was tailor-made for the growing young racing driver. He was nominated as a works Martini driver alongside René Arnoux. Once again, on paper, the future looked bright. Pironi adapted quickly to the faster car—"It was quite straightforward—only about 20 horsepowers more"—but he soon began to realise that maybe Arnoux had rather more 'horsepowers' than he had.

"I told the engine tuner that I would be happy using his engines provided that he did not try to take on too much work. But he had five drivers to work for and that was too many. Arnoux was doing well in the championship and he was having his engines tuned by this company. I thought that he was having better engines than me. Also, I think that the engine man was a cousin of René!"

Didier raised some additional cash from GPA "because the director of the GPA helmet factory is an old friend", and he changed to the Maithot tuning company. With a few more 'horsepowers' under the right foot, Didier led the remaining four races, winning two of them. But he wasn't champion, and that was what mattered. "That was the lowest point in my career. I felt that I had to win that series, but . . . " and he smiles, giving a characteristically French shrug of the shoulders.

On to 1976 and Pironi continued the pattern of two steps forward and one step back. On his second attempt, he won the Formule Renault Europe title—convincingly. He really swept the board, winning twelve races. "It was no problem," he recalls. "I had my engines prepared by Nanar and he was the best in France. I also had a fantastic mechanic, Daniel Champion, who now works with the Renault Formula 1 team."

Pironi's Martini MK18 became a familiar sight at the head of the field and it was at testing circuits such as Rouen-les-Essarts that Pironi's skill was aptly demonstrated as he hurled the little car at a terrifying rate through the long right after the pits.

Didier renewed his rivalry with René Arnoux when they were nominated as drivers in the works Elf Martini Renault Formula 2 team for 1977. The Martini chassis had been second in the championship the previous year in the hands of Arnoux and it was right and proper that René should be the number one driver. But Pironi was hungry for success and found the year a little frustrating. "Being the second driver, I had problems with things such as tyres during the season because, naturally, the second driver does not have the choice.

"But I did have some satisfying drives during the year. One example was the Nürburgring. After the first practice session, I was on pole and I had to use the same tyres for most of the second session. They let me have new tyres late in the session and I did one lap of the pits loop before going out onto the main circuit. I still had cold tyres and I missed a corner on the climb up to the Karussel. I was third quickest

and I am sure that if I had had another lap then I would have been on pole." (A confident remark from a young driver who was having his first race at the 'Ring and was competing against Jochen Mass.) "Then it rained just before the start and the team manager changed my springs and settings. Then the sun came out! So I had a very bad car for that race. But I like the circuit very much."

For Didier Pironi, motor racing is a job that he loves and part of his sense of achievement comes from tackling difficult circuits such as the Nürburgring and Rouen. It will be interesting to see how he reacts to the demands of his fellow drivers in the rarefied air of Formula 1. Pironi may have that boyish appeal of his team-mate Patrick Depailler but underneath is a similar determination to succeed. If a job is to be done, then it should be done properly. Like the Monaco Formula 3 race this year.

Weighing things up mid-season, Pironi considered that a win in the Monaco Formula 3 race might be worth more kudos than a couple of placings in Formula 2. And, after all, he had won races at Monaco for the previous three years so life would not be the same without the annual visit to the Principality. It was a gamble of course: stepping into Formula 3, the den of hungry lions ready to bolt themselves into a Formula 2 car at the drop of an established ace's reputation. But Pironi had weighed the situation up very carefully.

"I knew that it was very important to win that race so I was happy to step back into Formula 3. I had wanted to do it in 1976 but the car was not ready and Tico (Martini) promised that I would have a car for this year. Dany Snobeck had three or four races with the car but I was unable to try it, apart from twenty laps of Magny Cours, before Monaco. We had gearbox difficulties during practice because the Monaco race fell in between two Formula 2 weekends and gave us a lot of organisational problems."

But during the race it was obvious that Pironi had sorted his problems with the Martini-Toyota. He was a joy to watch as he drifted the car through Casino Square, leaving competitors banging and crashing in his wake.

A few weeks later, Pironi added another feather to his helmet when he was chosen to run a fourth Alpine-Renault at Le Mans with Arnoux. It was an experience that didn't last too long. Three-quarters of a lap, to be precise.

"I was driving when the car suddenly caught fire! It was a stupid problem; an oil pipe dripped onto the turbo and it caught fire. It was a pity because I think that it is a good thing for drivers of single-seaters to race at a place like Le Mans. It is good from a press and publicity point of view."

Didier returned to the business of learning Formula 2 and, as the season progressed, he began to run as quickly as his team-mate. René Arnoux clinched the championship at Estoril—but Pironi won the race. He led René home at the final round at Donington and finished an impressive first season with the same number of finishes (eight) as Arnoux—both drivers being placed in the top six on each occasion. Ken Tyrrell was an interested observer at Donington and felt satisfied that Didier was ready to begin his Grand Prix grooming.

With the Toyota-powered Martini, Pironi easily won last May's Monaco F3 race.

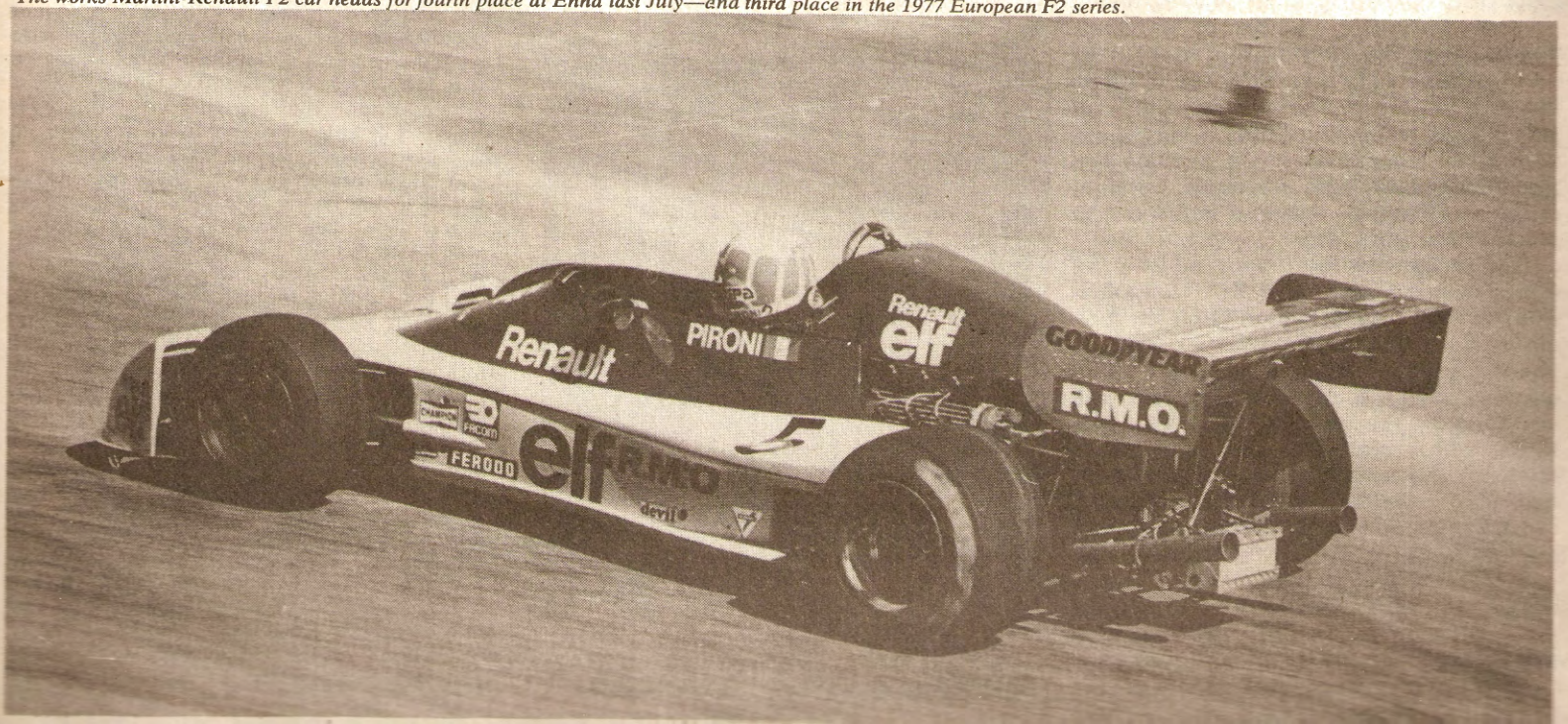
Pironi returned to France to arrange a move from Magny Cours (where he had chosen to live in order to be close to the Martini factory) to Paris. Unmarried, and with no plans in that direction for a while, Didier enjoys flying and swimming. But from now on he will have little free time to indulge in his pastimes and will spend more hours in commercial aircraft than ever before.

The 'interview' at Ripley was successful. Pironi emerged from the office maintaining his professional poise. But underneath was a sense of excitement akin to a schoolboy who has been taken for a ride on the footplate of a steam engine.

"To drive for Tyrrell is . . . fantastic, fantastic. They are the best. No question." Before he had time to elaborate further, he was whipped off to meet the man from First National City Travelers Checks, and within half an hour was up to his contracts in 008 seat fittings and safety harnesses. Events in Grand Prix racing move quickly.

It was worth rushing breakfast for. ■

The works Martini-Renault F2 car heads for fourth place at Enna last July—and third place in the 1977 European F2 series.



match the British car's speed. It was an easier car to drive, as Tom Walkinshaw demonstrated when both he and Andy Rouse (in a works Jaguar) hit oil at Silverstone. The Jaguar finished up in the bank, but the BMW survived to take the chequered flag.

But Quester, with Gunnar Nilsson (at Salzburgring and Nurburgring), Toine Hezemans (Zandvoort), Tom Walkinshaw (Silverstone) and Patrick Neve (Zolder), claimed nearly half the victories in the ETC. Only in the last two races did he finish anywhere other than first or in the pits. The car was rapid and usually reliable.

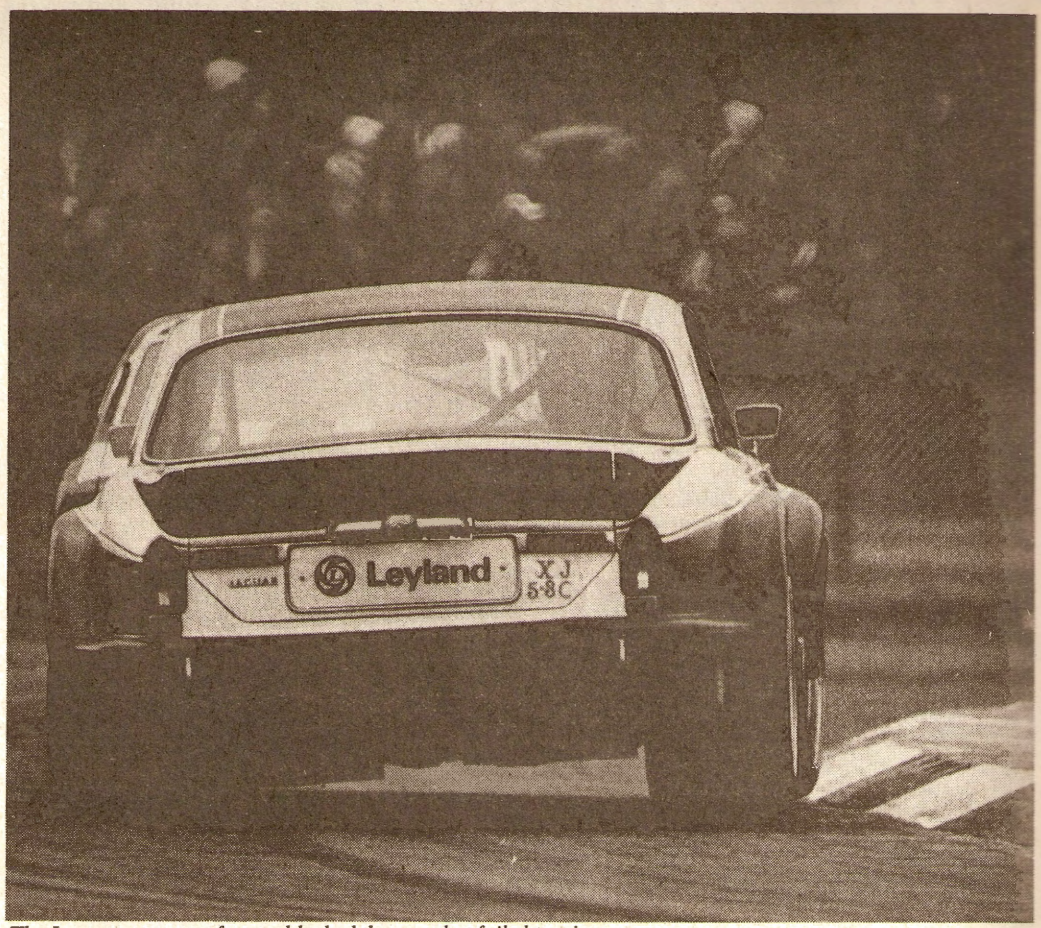
The 1976 European Touring Car Champions, Pierre Dieudonné and Jean Xhenceval, were again Luigi's team leaders and they had one victory to their credit, five second places, two thirds and a fourth: 129 points from nine races. However, they had to drop their three worst results (which included the fourth place), and they slipped behind Quester.

Luigi's Belgian-based BMW team was one of the very few to contest every single round of the ETC. There were two brand-new CSLs for the 1977 season, Xhenceval and Dieudonné driving the number one car, and Claude de Wael, Eddy Joosen and Umberto Grano driving the other, joined by Harald Grohs at Nurburgring and Zandvoort, where they ran a 530i due to a testing accident with one of the CSLs.

The big problem was that the 1977 CSLs from Luigi's stable were not as good as the 1976 cars, as Finotto and Carlo Facetti demonstrated. One problem was that Luigi had not kept any records from the previous season on which to draw for 1977. Last year was easy for Luigi with little opposition, but 1977 was different, their one advantage of already having suspension settings etc for the various circuits being wiped out. When their troubles really came to a head at their home circuit of Zolder, onlookers gloated that finally Luigi had been put in his place at home, and that at last the organisation might begin to take a turn for the better.

If Luigi's team was disorganised, it was also immensely enthusiastic and never once did the amateurs flag in their quest. While Quester was the obvious champion with five victories, Xhenceval and Dieudonné were unlucky on two counts late in the season. They dropped one place to third at Silverstone (with a minute's penalty for missing the chicane), a loss of three points, and lost another five at Jarama when second-string driver Umberto Grano disobeyed team orders and charged on to win when he should have slowed to give victory to the number one pair.

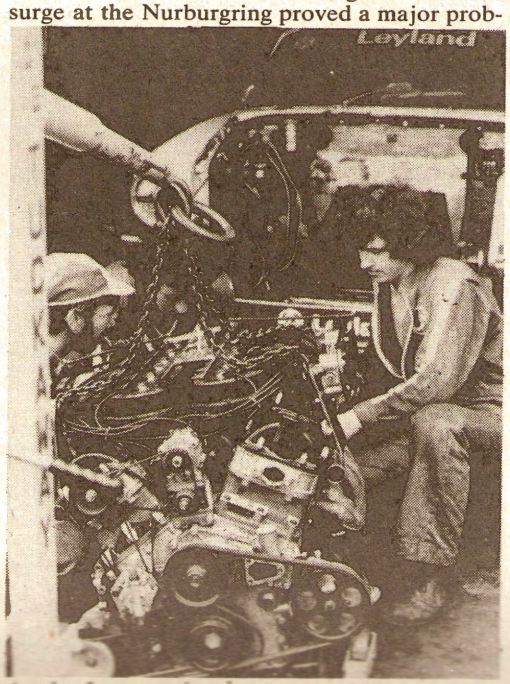
Grano started the season with his wealthy compatriot, Finotto, in Luigi's 1976 CSL, but Finotto was much more interested in having the experienced ex-Alfa Romeo works driver Carlo Facetti as team-mate. Facetti not only brought driving experience, but mechanical knowledge. They won the first event, at Monza, and with Amerigo Bigliazzi, Facetti came third at the next event at Salzburgring in an Alfetta. The 1976 CSL came second at Mugello with Finotto and Facetti driving, and two weeks later, in what was a confrontation with Luigi, they won at Enna. Until then, Finotto had tried to drive not only his own car, but have the third drive in Luigi's number two car. The arrangement stopped in Sicily, however, and driving his own car, he and Facetti won the next event at Brno. At that stage, never having finished out of the top three, Facetti easily led the championship with 87 points, thanks to his one-off Alfa drive. But then things fell apart with four non-finishes. The old BMW was beginning to show her age, and a depressed Finotto nearly withdrew the car from the next two races in Iberia. In the end though, they went to Jarama and came third, and won the final round at Estoril, giving Facetti a total of 119 points, the same as Xhenceval and Dieudonné but with more wins to his credit. Finotto was clearly the anchor man of the team, but after Finotto accepted that he could only drive one car in a race, he



The Jaguars were very fast and looked the part, but failed to win a race.

settled into his own and his driving improved.

Up against these four regular CSLs, there were just two newly developed Group 2 cars in the over 3000cc class: the two works Jaguar XJ5.3Cs. Their experiences could well deter any participation in the future from competitors with cars to develop for Group 2. Fast on the quick circuits, they proved heavy and ungainly on the slower ones. Bearing trouble at the first round at Monza brought the team's entry down to one, and that lasted for just a few laps. The driveshaft flanges broke up at the next round. Both cars were withdrawn and, as the parts still weren't available from Leyland at Mugello, the team withdrew from both that race and the next one at Enna. There was faint optimism at Brno where the cars were very quick, but a puncture delayed one car in the first half hour but that did at least finish, albeit well back. The gearbox broke on the second car. Ridding the cars of oil surge at the Nurburgring proved a major problem and after one car set a new lap record on the standing lap, it retired. But surprising everyone, the other car soldiered on to second with little problem, giving the team much needed encouragement. At Zandvoort the brand new dry sump oil system, completely untested, gave trouble in one car which finished well down, while the other XJ12C's differential broke up.



Another Jaguar engine change . . .

The Access Tourist Trophy at Silverstone was an important race, in front of a home crowd. True, only one Jaguar survived the first hour, but the exciting race showed what the Jaguars and Group 2 were all about. Andy Rouse and Derek Bell were meant to be the hares, being the fastest cars on the track, but the Alpina BMW was no tortoise, and Rouse just wasn't catching the BMW by enough to win when he went off the track on oil, in the closing moments of the race. To many observers, despite the excitement, it proved that the Jaguars were not capable of winning a race. After another failure at Zolder the next weekend, the team withdrew from racing because the twisty nature of the following tracks would not suit them there, either.

What, then, went wrong with Britain's 'national' team? Leyland had the best drivers in John Fitzpatrick, Derek Bell, Tim Schenken and Andy Rouse, massive back-up, the best preparation man in the business and an enthusiastic team behind him. But the programme was ill-conceived from the day it was announced. The blaze of publicity failed to take into account that Leyland were using not the XJS, as originally intended, but the less aerodynamic and heavier XJ5.3C, withdrawn from production anyway in late 1977. It was rather like asking Ralph Broad to win the British Group 1 series in a Rover 2000 instead of a Dolomite Sprint.

The fanfare of publicity brought pressure to bear on the difficult preparation job which Broad undertook. He was accused by Leyland of over-engineering the car while compensating for the massive weight disadvantage. The painful development stages were eagerly watched and each failure greedily digested. It is perhaps

The Stocker/Sigrist Scirocco, most successful VW, leads an Alfa and the works Audi at Monza.

David beats Goliath

continued

interesting to note that, offically, the Jaguar project changed from being a publicity exercise to being an engineering project. Broad's efforts were considerable. He knew the car was too heavy and used too much fuel, but with each failure, he was adding weight, not taking it off, as he hoped to be at that stage. In the end, the team sank under a deluge of bad publicity. Jaguar and Broad had failed, even though the mere appearance of the cars was greatly appreciated by enthusiastic Leyland dealers in Europe.

What Group 2 never lacked, however, was a good field. Whether in Czechoslovakia, Sicily or Portugal, Germany or Britain, there were always enough cars on the grid, even if the numbers were made up with Group 1 cars. But in the four other classes, there were several professional teams that helped to make Group 2 memorable in 1977. In the 2000cc to 3000cc class though, the competition was usually meagre, perhaps underlining the development costs of the bigger cars. Various elderly Opels and Capris contested many rounds, as did the Mazda RX5 of John Markey and David Palmer, but on most occasions, the cars were easily outclassed by smaller Group 2 cars. On the others, it was perhaps interesting that either G1 BMW 530is or Capris were the class winners—could ETC become up to 2000cc Group 2, over 1600cc Group 1 in the future?

The 1600cc to 2000cc class was indeed one of the best, in terms of numbers. It was founded on BMW 2002Tiis and the odd Alfa Romeo GTV, in particular those of the Swiss teams. But interestingly, it was more Swiss who provided the innovations. Rüdi Eggenberger, an ex-Alpina man, built up two Heyco-sponsored BMW 320is and ran regularly throughout the season. Drivers included Helmut Kelleners, Walter Brun (who shared in both the team's best results, thirds at Mugello and Zolder), Eggenberger himself, Rainer Braun, Kalli Hufstadt and Jurgen Reinke. When the cars ran well, there was little to touch them, but clutch trouble in particular afflicted the otherwise well turned out cars. Leyland also brought Switzerland into the fray as their agency there was interested in running a brace of Dolomite Sprints. After Bigliazzi had finished second and third in the first two events, Leyland UK counted themselves in. Ralph Broad delivered a car for the Swiss tuner Freddy Kessler to copy, but this was destroyed and Kessler's subsequent efforts lasted only a couple of laps at each of their three appearances. It was a bad experiment.

Chrysler Spain also became interested, but it took the cars a long time to appear. However at Jarama Chryslers finished eighth, ninth and tenth.

Alfa Romeo were represented in the class by Amerigo Bigliazzi's Alfetta GTV in the first four events, but then the Florence Autovama proprietor sadly ran out of money after a second, third and sixth overall.

Without doubt the best 2-litre showing was that of Hans Heyer and Armin Hahne in a Zakspeed Escort at Nurburgring. Zakspeed withdrew from Group 2 in 1976 because of one blow-up after another due to the wet sump. But for Nurburgring in July, dry-sumping had just been introduced and Zakspeed took full advantage to show their Escort's speed, finishing third overall. It was the only event they contested, but Ron Kluit took his ex-McMahon Escort to a number of events, the best being Salzburgring where he and Alec Poole finished sixth overall.

With BMW, Alfetta, Dolomite Sprint, Chrysler 2000 and Escort, the 2-litre class has produced excellent racing, and the development costs are obviously not as high as in the bigger class.

The 1300cc to 1600cc class was dominated by Germany. Supported principally by elderly Alfas, the front runners were Volkswagen Sciroccos and a works Audi 80GT. The competition, if not extensive, was keen. Regular runners were the Sciroccos of Germany's Willi Bergmeister, at first sharing with Helmut Kelleners, and later Helmut Henzler, and the Swiss pairing of Anton Stocker and Jorg Sigrist. In the Audi corner, and taking things seriously, was Hans Nowak, with either Freddy Kottulinsky or Harald Ertl. The little Sciroccos were easily the

GROUP 2 RESULTS 1977

VENUE/DATE	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD	FOURTH	FIFTH	SIXTH
Monza (I) **March 27**	Martino Finotto Carlo Facetti 3.2 BMW 3.0 CSL	Arturo Merzario Amerigo Bigliazzi 2.0 Alfa Romeo Alfetta GTV	Helmut Kelleners Willi Bergmeister 1.6 VW Scirocco	Freddy Kottulinsky Hans Nowak 1.6 Audi 80 GT	Anton Stocker Jorg Sigrist 1.6 VW Scirocco	Tarcisio Fornera Rüdi Franz 2.0 Alfa Romeo GTV
Salzburgring (A) **April 24**	Dieter Quester Gunnar Nilsson 3.2 BMW 3.0 CSL	Eddy Joosen Claude de Waël 3.2 BMW 3.0 CSL	Amerigo Bigliazzi Carlo Facetti 2.0 Alfa Romeo Alfetta GTV	Anton Stocker Jorg Sigrist 1.6 VW Scirocco	Kurt Mirer Armin Buschor 2.0 BMW 2002 Tii	Ron Kluit Alec Poole 2.0 Ford Escort RS
Mugello (I) **May 8**	Jean Xhenceval Pierre Dieudonné 3.2 BMW 3.0 CSL	Martino Finotto Carlo Facetti 3.2 BMW 3.0 CSL	Walter Brun Rüdi Eggenberger 2.0 BMW 320i	Kurt Mirer Armin Buschor 2.0 BMW 2002 Tii	Anton Stocker Jorg Sigrist 1.6 VW Scirocco	Willi Bergmeister Helmut Kelleners 1.6 VW Scirocco
Enna (I) **May 22**	Martino Finotto Carlo Facetti 3.2 BMW 3.0 CSL	Jean Xhenceval Pierre Dieudonné 3.2 BMW 3.0 CSL	Eddy Joosen Claude de Waël 3.2 BMW 3.0 CSL	Willi Bergmeister Helmut Henzler 1.6 VW Scirocco	Anton Stocker Jorg Sigrist 1.6 VW Scirocco	Amerigo Bigliazzi Spartaco Dini 2.0 Alfa Romeo Alfetta GTV
Brno (CZ) **June 5**	Martino Finotto Carlo Facetti 3.2 BMW 3.0 CSL	Jean Xhenceval Pierre Dieudonné 3.2 BMW 3.0 CSL	Anton Stocker Jorg Sigrist 1.6 VW Scirocco	Kurt Mirer Armin Buschor 2.0 BMW 2002 Tii	Freddy Kottulinsky Hans Nowak 1.6 Audi 80 GT	Tarcisio Fornera Rüdi Franz 2.0 Alfa Romeo 2000 GTV
Nürburgring (D) **July 10**	Dieter Quester Gunnar Nilsson 3.2 BMW 3.0 CSL	Derek Bell Andy Rouse 5.3 Jaguar XJ5.3C	Hans Heyer Armin Hahne 2.0 Ford Escort RS	Jean Xhenceval Pierre Dieudonné 3.2 BMW 3.0 CSL	Walter Brun Helmut Kelleners 2.0 BMW 320i	Willi Bergmeister Helmut Henzler 1.6 VW Scirocco
Zandvoort (NL) **August 7**	Dieter Quester Toine Hezemans 3.2 BMW 3.0 CSL	Jean Xhenceval Pierre Dieudonné Eddy Joosen 3.2 BMW 3.0 CSL	Boy Hayje Albert Vanierschot 3.2 BMW 3.0 CSL	Anton Stocker Jorg Sigrist 1.6 VW Scirocco	Franz Lubin Raymond Raus Serve Maasen 3.2 BMW 3.0 CSL	Claude de Waël Umberto Grano Harald Grohs 3.0 BMW 530i
Silverstone (GB) **September 17**	Dieter Quester Tom Walkinshaw 3.2 BMW 3.0 CSL	Eddy Joosen Umberto Grano 3.2 BMW 3.0 CSL	Jean Xhenceval Pierre Dieudonné 3.2 BMW 3.0 CSL	Derek Bell Andy Rouse 5.3 Jaguar XJ5.3C	Vince Woodman Jonathan Buncombe 3.0 Ford Capri	Stuart Graham John Handley 3.0 Ford Capri
Zolder (B) **September 25**	Dieter Quester Patrick Neve 3.2 BMW 3.0 CSL	Jean Xhenceval Pierre Dieudonné 3.2 BMW 3.0 CSL	Walter Brun Helmut Kelleners 2.0 BMW 320i	Eddy Joosen Umberto Grano 3.2 BMW 3.0 CSL	Jurgen Reinke Kalli Hufstadt 2.0 BMW 320i	— —
Jarama (E) **October 9**	Eddy Joosen Umberto Grano 3.2 BMW 3.0 CSL	Jean Xhenceval Pierre Dieudonné 3.2 BMW 3.0 CSL	Martino Finotto Carlo Facetti 3.2 BMW 3.0 CSL	Dieter Quester Tom Walkinshaw 3.2 BMW 3.0 CSL	Kurt Mirer Marco Vanoli 2.0 BMW 2002 Tii	Tarcisio Fornera Rüdi Franz 2.0 Alfa Romeo 2000 GTV
Estoril (P) **October 16**	Martino Finotto Carlo Facetti 3.2 BMW 3.0 CSL	Dieter Quester Umberto Grano 3.2 BMW 3.0 CSL	Jean Xhenceval Pierre Dieudonné 3.2 BMW 3.0 CSL	Eddy Joosen Claude de Waël 3.2 BMW 3.0 CSL	Walter Brun Helmut Kelleners 2.0 BMW 320i	Anton Stocker Jorg Sigrist 1.6 VW Scirocco

quicker principally due to gear ratios and aerodynamics but, like the Audi, were badly afflicted with gearbox trouble.

The speed of the rapid Sciroccos and the Audi was a real surprise to spectators in Group 2 events, but in each finish, the Audi had to take a back seat. After a fourth at Monza, a seventh at Enna and a fifth at Brno (and despite having a new car on the stocks), the team withdrew. They left Bergmeister and the Swiss pair battling it out, Bergmeister's Jägermeister car normally the faster with a third at Monza, a fourth at Enna and a sixth at Nurburgring. But frequently the gear linkage failed. When it did, the jovial Swiss pair were willing recipients of the class win. Their best was a third overall at Brno, and their record was impressive. They finished between third and seventh overall on eight occasions.

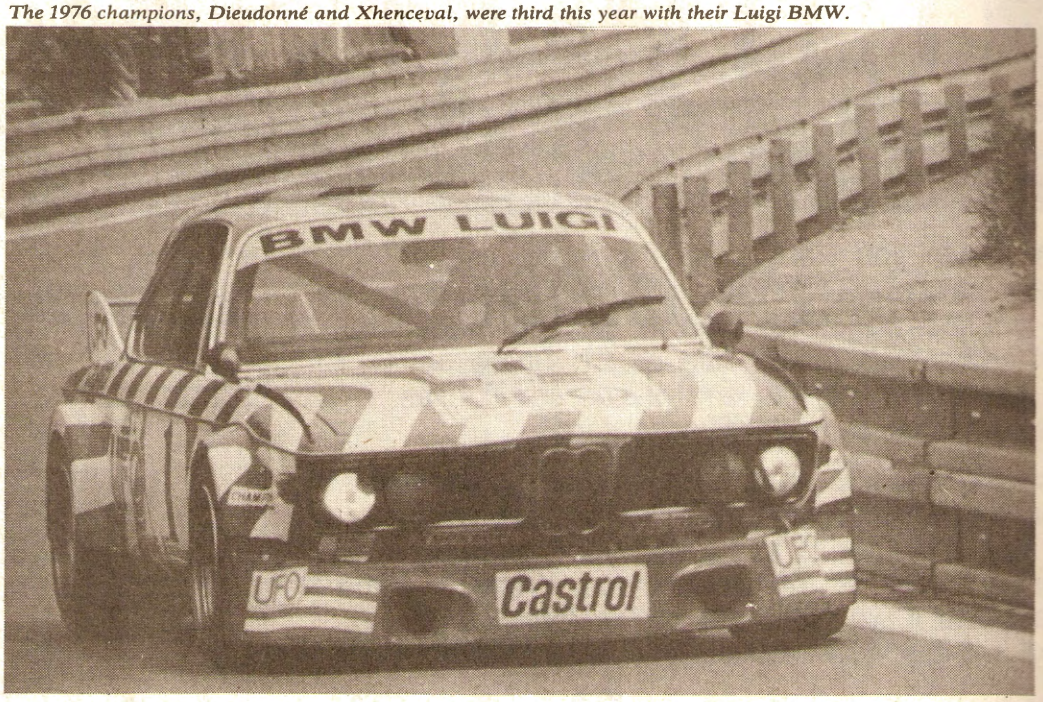
The up to 1300cc class was supported by Alfa Romeos of various ages and Fiat 128s etc. But, after missing the first round, without doubt the best team was the Autodelta-prepared effort of the Argentine 43/70 Cigarillos team. They ran a couple of Alfa Romeo Sprints and after that first race, proceeded to every single class win, save at Brno, where local Skodas thrilled the crowd, and at Estoril where a local Sprint won. Apart from recurring gearbox trouble, the Sprints were very reliable, but the Argentine and Uruguayan drivers were unfamiliar with all the circuits, and thus their efforts were even more admirable. Eduardo Marquez and Juan Zampa were usually the leading pair but Nando Parrado and Eugenio Breard did their bit too.

That, then, was Group 2, the European Touring Car Championship. Whether the series can ever attain the heights of the early seventies is doubtful. The cost of development without works help will keep numbers to negligible proportions in the coming years, especially in the big classes. The up to 2-litre class is not such a problem, but that may not be sufficient to keep Group 2 as the European Touring Car Championship in the coming years. The circuits are willing to run the races, the crowds enthusiastic on occasions, but there is little backing from the trade. In 1978 we could see the last year of this friendly European series. ■

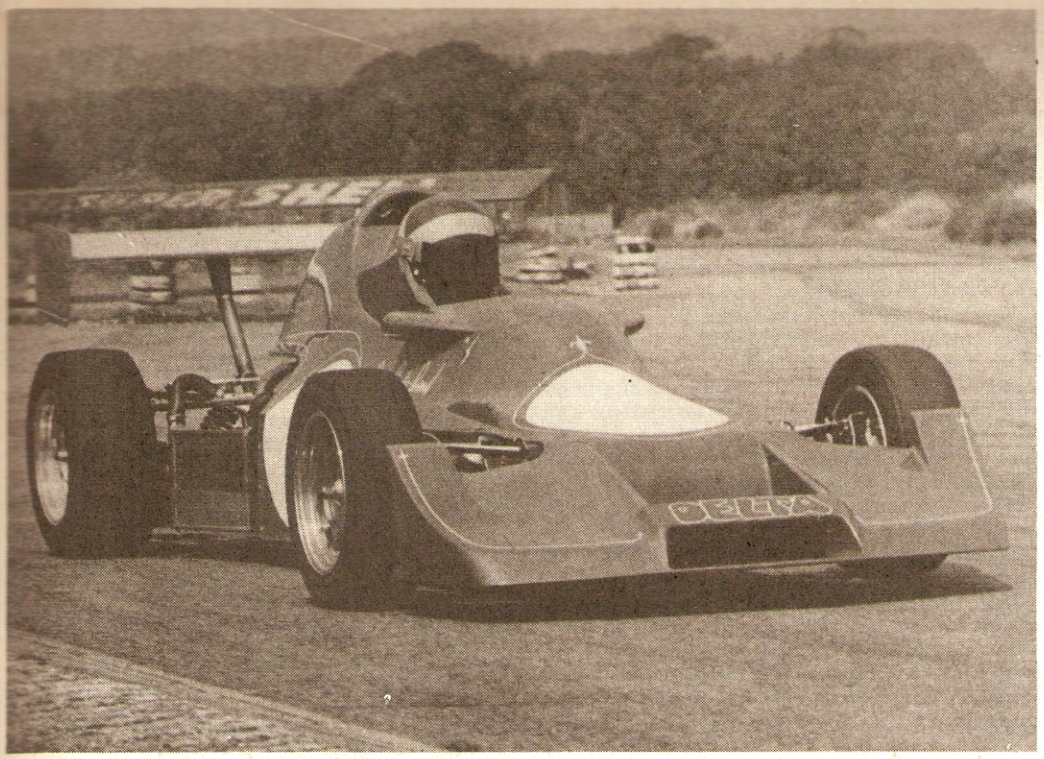
EUROPEAN TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP	Nat	Mar 27 Monza	Apr 24 Salzburg	May 08 Mugello	May 22 Enna	Jan 05 Brno	Jul 10 Nürburgring	Aug 07 Zandvoort	Sep 18 Silverstone	Sep 25 Zolder	Oct 09 Jarama	Oct 16 Estoril	Total points
1. Dieter Quester	A	—	20	—	—	—	20	20	20	20	10	15	125
2. Carlo Facetti	I	20	12	15	20	20	—	—	—	—	12	20	119
3. Pierre Dieudonné	B	—	—	20	15	15	10*	15	12	15	15	12	119
Jean Xhenceval	B	—	—	20	15	15	10*	15	12	15	15	12	119
5. Martino Finotto	I	20	—	15	20	20	—	—	—	—	12	20	107
6. Eddy Joosen	B	—	15	—	12	—	—	15	15	10	20	10	97
7. Umberto Grano	I	20	—	—	—	—	—	8	15	10	20	15	88
8. Jörg Sigrist	A	8	10	8	8	12	4	10	—	—	—	6	66
Anton Stocker	A	8	10	8	8	12	4	10	—	—	—	6	66
10. Helmut Kelleners	D	12	—	6	—	—	8	—	—	12	—	8	46

*Score dropped:—best eight results

The 1976 champions, Dieudonné and Xhenceval, were third this year with their Luigi BMW.



One of the quickest of the 2-litre cars was this BMW 320i, pictured hurtling through the streets of Brno in the hands of Jurgen Reinke.



The Delta FF2000 car in testing at Goodwood—the chassis is already a racewinner.

Delta dawn

One of the most competitive chassis in FF2000 next year is likely to be the Delta. MARCUS PYE has visited the Hove factory to meet Delta boss Nick Crossley and discuss his future plans.

With its narrow, cobbled road and two neat rows of stable blocks, Wilbury Grove, in Hove, Sussex, is hardly the place where one would expect to find a thriving racing car manufacturer. But this is where the Horseless Carriage Company of Hove has based itself since its inception in late 1974. Under the enthusiastic directorship of Nick Crossley, the company has been an integral part of the Formula 4 club racing scene for a number of years, and it was only at the end of 1976 that the decision to market its own chassis for Formula Ford 2000 was taken. As every regular race follower will know, the immaculate 'coffee-and-cream' coloured Deltas have achieved a series of excellent results in the formula, so much so that the company enters the 1978 season with perhaps the most competitive chassis after only one season of development.

Nick Crossley first became involved in motor sport through his father's love of motorcycling. Back in the early sixties, he prepared Manx-Nortons and Dunstall Dominators for other people to ride, taking to the circuits himself, inevitably, two or three years later. Nick enjoyed his racing immensely until he 'dropped' a Dunstall at Brands Hatch, sustaining a broken leg in the process. While out of action he began to follow car racing more closely, and resolved to stick to four wheels from then on.

Crossley's first venture into racing came in 1968 with an 850 'free formula' Mini, which gave him a better insight into the business with a series of highlights interspersed with the occasional shunt. A lightweight 999 'S' was then built up, giving Nick valuable experience in the preparation of racing cars, and this was also campaigned with some success.

At about this time it was realised that some new developments would be necessary to become ultra-competitive in the small Special Saloon classes, and Crossley embarked on one of the first spaceframe Minis, constructed of Duralmin tubing. The car was immediately very rapid Imps were often able to beat the combination.

Having done a couple of seasons in saloons, Nick decided that his main interests lay in the engineering and preparation of single-seaters—and a season in the superb 1-litre F3 category of the day was envisaged. The Mini was sold to Brian Classick to make way for the ex-Charles Lucas/works Titan. Sponsorship was urgently sought but, just as a company was on the verge of signing a contract including the provision of engines, a takeover bid left him with the chassis and insufficient time to gain a new backer for the year. Rather than attempt a very tight season, Nick sold the car.

Without a drive himself, Crossley began to prepare saloons and engines for various people during the day, as well as taking his articles (to become a solicitor) by working through the nights.

After a short while he was lured to Sweden by contacts and, while living there, started an import/export company for motor racing equipment as well as finding time for a few drives and a spell of team management. During the short spell in Sweden the determination to go racing properly bit still deeper and so, for the 1971 season, the ex-Brian Hart Merlyn was purchased for a season of Formula Atlantic racing. Problems with engines ensured a short, not to say expensive, year's sport—mainly in *Formule Libre* events. Fortunately, though, the Crossley preparation business was beginning to flourish (as much as his law activities would allow), and he became involved with a leading London-based preparation firm in which he eventually bought a major shareholding.

In 1972 they ran Nick von Preussen in a Titan FF before he decided to join his friend Rikki von Opel in F3. A pair of March 723s were ordered mid-season for von Preussen and Crossley but, like many others, they had a great deal of trouble with the chassis. Not wishing to be out of a drive, Crossley had updated a Chevron B15 and, despite pressures of business, was able to campaign it in the successor of the now defunct 1-litre F3, the revised Formula 4. He prepared his own engines throughout the the series, emerged as the national champion with several lap records to his credit. The brief F3 programme followed with the 723s, but the cars were still very difficult to drive at the end of the year, and were sold.

It was at the Racing Car Show that Crossley first saw the new 733 and, to prove the old saying "If a car looks right, it is right", chassis 3 and 5 were acquired for Crossley and von Preussen respectively. The team then took in the Lombard championship and some European events in France, Holland and Germany, providing Nick with some reasonable placings. These drives were to be Crossley's last really serious attempts to be a leading driver, as the preparation of cars became more and more time-consuming.

As he did not want to lose the art of driving altogether, Nick bought an ex-works Ensign LNF3 which was stripped, updated and rebuilt in Formula 4 guise for 1974. The car, in P&M Racing Preparations colours, became a familiar sight on the British club scene, another championship victory being his reward. As the preparation service expanded once again, voluntary retirement ensued, although Crossley was able to keep his hand in by testing and setting-up many customer cars.

Having established his reputation in the preparation field over several years, Nick severed his association with P&M and re-occupied his premises on the South Coast—the current workshop in Wilbury Grove—having previously leased them while he was based in London.

At the end of 1974, the Horseless Carriage Company of Hove was formed with three major purposes in mind—a three-pronged attack. First, Crossley had missed the 'wheeling and dealing' of the motor trade, and wished to resume this interest without becoming desk-bound. Second, he wanted to establish an outlet in the area for high-quality work, maintenance and sales, specialising in the more exotic road cars to tie in with race preparation and using his race-trained mechanics. Third, the time was right to branch out on his own in the racing field.

His involvement with race preparation in Hove began mainly with Formula 4 machines. The team ran three cars throughout the 1975 series of races, their most successful drivers being Bruce Coate-Bond in the ex-championship winning Ensign chassis and the Griffiths brothers, Ron and Dave, who shared a GRD. Although the cars were beautifully prepared, the drivers experienced trouble in beating the works Delta car of Fergus Tait. The original Delta, commissioned by Low Cost Racing's founder Glenn Hyatt and designed by Ian Reed, was one of the first purpose-built chassis in the formula and immediately demonstrated its supremacy, Tait winning the championship with comparative ease. The IRF4s, as they were designated, appeared regularly in the hands of Tait, John Brown and John Waldron, their main opposition coming from Lorina Boughton's GRD, the March 733 of the very quick Ian Briggs and, of course, the Crossley-run cars.

Several other cars were prepared at Wilbury Grove that year, the company building up an enviable record of reliability. At the end of the year, Crossley was approached by the Starfire company with a view to building a prototype FF2000 car, which subsequently appeared at the Olympia Racing Car Show. The car was designed by Patrick Head, and immediately Nick had an admiration for Head's work. The car was tested primarily by Richard Scott (Head had designed the Scott F2 car for the Scotsman a couple of years previously), but sadly Starfire hit financial problems before the car could be raced, Richard Piper stepping in to buy the project.

With business flourishing in all spheres, Crossley took the opportunity to take over Delta Race Cars from the Low Cost Racing concern in Farnham, Surrey, which was not in a position to expand the business even after the Ray Jessop-designed RJ03 Formula 3 car appeared at the Racing Car Show. Nick bought out the works equipment and the ex-Tait chassis, plus all jigs, spares and manufacturing rights.

Nick Crossley—the guv'nor—during testing.

Delta dawn

continued

In fact, it was the original chassis which was modified and updated for the genial property developer Bill Cowling to run in the formula last year. Although pressures of business restricted his number of outings, Cowling drove extremely rapidly, notching up several wins and finishing well up in the 1976 national championship. The Ensign was bought back from Coate-Bond for Patric Capon to drive, and the other car run from the works was the heavily-revised Tecno-Delta driven by Bobby Laughton, later fitted with one of the first 1300cc crossflow sidedraught engines for use in the 1977 series in which Laughton finished third.

The biggest decision of Crossley's career was taken at the start of the 1977 season, when he decided to launch into full-time construction of racing cars. Having been deeply involved with preparation and management for many years (including the building of several prototypes), Nick's greatest ambition was finally to construct a car of his own. The decision to enter the field of FF2000 was a simple one to make. It is possible to build an F3-based car to an established quality, but still keep it down to a competitive price, a price which many people in the top echelons of FF1600 or club racing in general would be able to afford.

Nick is still very interested in the Formula 4 scene, and therefore will be building a version of the current T77 FF2000 car for next year's F4 championship. The first of these has already been ordered by Cowling, whose second season in the old ex-Tait IRF4 was curtailed with a roll at Brands Hatch midway through the year. Crossley plans to build a batch of these machines, to be known as the 784, and has already received several enquiries for it.

With both the FF2000 and F4 derivatives, one can construct a car to full F3 standards apart from the engine/gearbox unit. Thus it is possible to do a lot of primary development work for an F3 chassis with only a fraction of the running costs in the development programme. As far as Crossley can see, there is still no sound reason against building a plated spaceframe F3 car, as Ensign and Alpine did so well in the early seventies. The FF2000/F4 cars are inherently strong and, highly important, they are far easier to repair than a monocoque in the event of a shunt. The car is also very sturdy in the driver protection cell area.

The programme, as far as the FF2000 car goes, will be one of consolidation for next year. The 1977 chassis received very low key promotion, as there was little intention to market the car until a full works development programme had been completed. Crossley is a firm believer in getting his house in order before embarking on too ambitious a programme. The 1977 car's design was entrusted to Patrick Head, and the format was discussed at length before Patrick was to start the project. It was firmly decided that he should adhere to a conventional format, as there is no room for complexity in a formula in which many of the cars are still owner-

components, has been simplified as far as possible, although in many cases the parts have been over-engineered to F3 specification. For instance, all uprights, hubs and drivelines will accept far greater power than a current F3 engine can produce. This criterion more than proved itself throughout the 3800-mile testing programme before the end of the season. During these sessions, and indeed throughout the 30-race season, the car only suffered two minor mechanical failures (a shock absorber and a split oil cooler).

Since the concept of the Delta T77 there have been minimal geometry changes to the suspension, but no major revisions to the original design apart from the logical development throughout the year. A major necessity on an FF2000 car is cooling capacity, because power loss is apparent at high temperatures; although this year's car has been made highly satisfactory in this department thanks to the involvement of Serck Services (Brighton), but a new fully adjustable nose/splitter unit will be fitted on customer cars for 1978.

The only time the Delta has been severely tested for strength this year was at Snetterton, when Coate-Bond impaled the car in the bank at Russell. Although he was virtually flat-out on impact, the driver protection cell was undamaged.

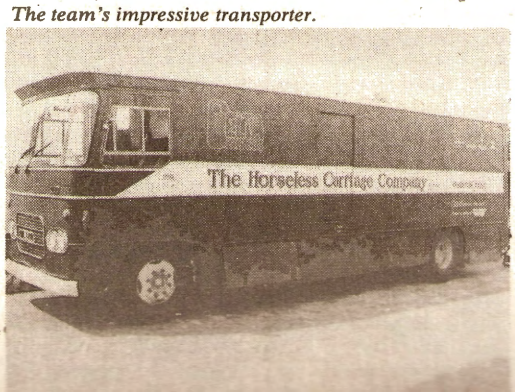
The driving this year has been shared by various people. Crossley himself did the shake-down testing and the first few races before Richard Wills took over the first chassis in June, having forsaken his old MRE. From the first meeting it appeared, the car looked very promising.

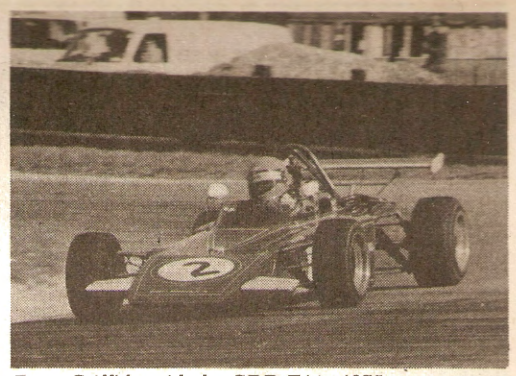
The main reason for running Richard was to see how a previously average midfield driver would be able to develop an all-new car—both parties being in their first season in the formula. From the first time he sat in the Delta, Wills's approach was impressive. The sensible attitude to the development programme was closely monitored, and throughout the season both Richard and the car made terrific progress, culminating in pole positions, consistent top six placings and further improvements leading up to the win at Thruxton last month. The design had not turned a wheel before April, yet such is the progress that has been made that it became one of the most successful single chassis running at the end of the season.

The second car was originally run for London car dealer Coate-Bond, although he was replaced at the end of the year by the Australian driver, Mike Quinn, who is rated by Nick as an excellent test driver.

For next year the Horseless Carriage Co will be fielding a pair of works-run cars in FF2000 events with a full works back-up service at all circuits for the customer cars—and at this stage it would seem that at least three further cars will be on the grid at the start of the season. Bill Cowling will campaign the works-assisted Formula 4 car, which is easily convertible for the American Formula C. In both formulae, full spares back-up will be an integral part of Crossley's service, with the works mechanics available to assist customers with a full stock of components 'off the shelf' in the paddock. New developments will appear throughout the year on the works cars and, providing these prove satisfactory, the transporter should carry a range of proven 'tweaks' for privately-run Del-

The team's impressive transporter.





Dave Griffiths with the GRD F4 in 1975.

tas by the following weekend. All components on the current chassis (bar the uprights, radiators, bag tanks bodywork and wheels) will be produced at their own factory, which assists in this aim.

Apart from the season-long projects in FF2000 and F4/FC, Crossley does not discount the possibility of fielding a works-assisted car in Formula 3 towards the end of the year. The F3 version is already under way at drawing board stage, and would be derived in such a way that an FF2000 owner wishing to move up could retain much of his running gear but return his existing chassis in part exchange for the F3 version. Such are Crossley's intentions at present and, with the level of interest in the T77 running high, a move to larger premises in the Brighton area is programmed.

Ideally, Nick would like to run both Wills and Quinn in next year's team, as their talents complement each other. Both drivers should be very good in the future, and they are also committed to develop the car further, as also are Nelson and Holbay on the engine side.

Nick derives a lot of pleasure from running an efficient, although totally unsponsored racing organisation with works cars, and eventually would like to have a separate sales/service side to the business along the lines of the March/AFMP set-up (although hopefully more successful).

With regard to future drivers and production, he has been thrilled with the response to the Delta's results, and many of the top FF2000 and FF1600 men have approached the company for the T78 FF2000 car. He has even had interested parties enquiring after FF1600 and Sports 2000 Deltas, both of which could well be a possibility for 1979.

For next year, the works team may also take in some of the Benelux countries' championship, with a view to getting the Delta image portrayed on the continent—and eventually to setting up a fully-stocked European distributor with spares back-up.

With interest in FF2000 growing all the time, and Delta Race Cars now established as a leading manufacturer, the works are seriously looking at the possibility of supplying cars in kit form, like Reynards do at present, so that a customer with an outdated chassis can utilise the expensive running gear of their current car in a completely new chassis. Nick's only reservation with this scheme is that a customer may not build the car as meticulously as the works, and so the purchase price of a kit would include a full works check and set-up to ensure that the car is built to the normal high standard.

"Motor racing is an intensely professional business for constructors, but one mustn't lose sight of the fact that it is essential to enjoy oneself in the sport," says Crossley. The ultimate customer arena, inevitably, would be F2, and this is what Delta would like to aim at eventually. One can never learn enough from all the eatablished manufacturers and their years of experience—Ron Tauranac has probably forgotten more than most of us ever knew about racing car construction. In motor racing, there are the three types of driver: the prospective F1 and F2 star; the man who wishes to reach the top of the national tree; and the driver who races purely for enjoyment. In each case it is rewarding to develop the driver's career, and we hope to cater for them all at

edited by Peter Newton

Good news for the Open?

Mikkola's RS1800, Dawson's Datsun, Alen's Fiat—or so it is said

Listening intently to RAC Rally bar room gossip, it seems that next year's International Open championship is becoming more interesting by the minute. It is now more than likely that Markku Alen will be contesting the series (in one way or another), for Fiat. The Finn mentioned the fact as early as October, and events have moved on since then.

Meanwhile, across the other side of the world, Datsun are said to be stirring their competitive thoughts towards another major assault in Europe with their new Violet coupé, which is apparently considerably lighter that the 160SSS. We gather that not only will Andy Dawson be driving for them, but Harry Kallstrom is also expected to be making an appearance on their behalf in International Open championship rounds in this country. Initially, the car's 2-litre engine is expected to possess 'only' eight valves, but Dawson may well contest a 16-valve version in the Castrol/AUTOSPORT championship and in '79 Datsun are expected to return in a big way with a myriad of specially lightened, homologated parts.

Up north, the Trolls are getting busy with turbochargers which we expect will herald a return of the Saab team to Britain next year with 99EMS Turbos—in G1!

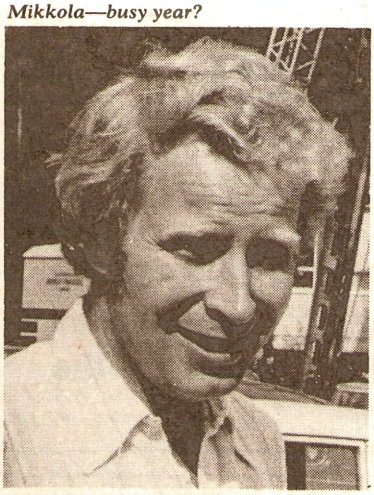
And finally Ford must surely be contesting the following WCRs; Portugal, Acropolis, and RAC. We know that they also intend to compete in Sweden as their first WCR event next year, and all the tarmac experience gained in 1977 must surely be used again—presumably at San Remo and Corsica.

So who contests the International Open? Mikkola seems the obvious choice, although the Manx clashes with San Remo practice, and the Circuit with Hannu's Peugeot Safari plans. Perhaps the line-up will be Brookes, Clark and Mikkola in Britain—not a bad 'B' team!

Dawson—renewing old connections?

Alen—keen to rally here.

Mikkola—busy year?



It seems very likely that Team Toyota Europe have now signed Leif Asterhag for next season. The Swede showed an excellent turn of speed on the recent RAC Rally, although he only had a 1600 Corolla, and he was inside the top ten at the time of his retirement. Leif has been in rallying for some time and has driven Toyotas for most of that. We expect him to contest the Castrol/AUTOSPORT championship with the 2-litre Corolla as well as a number of other events in Europe.

NORTHERN LIGHTS RALLY

Vatanen at it again

Directly they had dispensed with the RAC Rally, Ari Vatanen, Kyosti Hämäläinen and Timo Salonen flew straight back to Finland to take part in the Northern Lights Rally, the last round of the Finnish rally championship, on Saturday.

Before the rally the championship was being led by Ulf Gronholm in an Opel Kadett GT/E with Vatanen and Salonen equal second.

Vatanen, who had Atso Aho with him, started badly and incurred some road penalties, so at the halfway mark was lying second to Salonen. But it was not to be a good event for either of them as they both went off on the same corner of the same stage! A long right hander which tightened into a very acute right and caught them and many other competitors out.

Atso was soon out to warn the next cars on the scene, which included Gronholm. Consequently Gronholm went on to win the rally and the championship. Second was Henri Toivonen in an Avenger with Leo Kinnunen third in a Porsche. Hämäläinen came fourth in his Group 1 RS2000 and clinched this section of the championship. Hannu Valtaharju took the Group 2 title in his

Portugal makes ready

The organisers of the Rally of Portugal were present at scrutineering for the RAC Rally, handing out information for their 1978 event which will be run from April 18 to 23 and is, again, a WCR qualifying round.

The entire route, which will be divided into four sections, will be 2450kms with 610kms of these over 45 stages. The rally will be mainly on forest roads with 495kms on loose and 115kms on tarmac.

Regulations will be available in January with the road book ready for entrants in early February and entries will close on March 30. The organisers have also arranged special rates for competitors and journalists at Rally HQ, the Hotel Estoril-Sol; and the Hotel Vermar at Povoa de Varzim.

Anyone wanting further information or regulations can contact the Portuguese National Tourist Office, New Bond Street House, 1/5 New Bond Street, London W1 or Rallye de Portugal, Avenida da Republica, 47-5°. Esq, Lisboa 1, Portugal, tel: 76 97 11/76 97 59 or telex: 16780 Rallye P.

● The Dukeries Rally on Saturday March 11 has attracted sponsorship for 1978 from Tyreservices and will be known as the Tyreservices Dukeries National Stage Rally. A total of 120 crews will be accepted for the event, a round of the ESSO/BTRDA Championship, which will be starting from Trent Bridge cricket ground in Nottingham at 9am. Regulations will be avail-

Galway opens Irish Tarmac

Organisers from the rounds of the Irish Tarmac Rally Championship were at Wembley for scrutineering for the RAC Rally and available there were regulations for the first round which is the Galway International Rally on February 10 to 12. The event has a total prize fund of over £6000 with £1000 to the winner, and 300 miles of the 500 mile route will be on tarmac stages. Regulations are available from Brian Thornton, Pabria, 12 Sylvan Avenue, Newcastle, Galway, Ireland, tel: (091) 7853. Entries at the reduced rate of £50 close on December 15 and close finally at a fee of £60 on January 20.

● The British Motor Racing Marshals Club have introduced a Rally Marshals Training Scheme and are hoping to increase their activities on this side of the sport in 1978. To help this scheme they are publishing a new booklet entitled 'Guidelines for Rally Marshals', which is being sponsored by Castrol. Any rally organising clubs who would like their assistance or marshals who would like to volunteer should contact Colin Turvey at 5 Ellesmere Road, Brackley, Northants, tel: Brackley 703783.

● Very attractive additional prizes for next year's Ford Escort championship, run in conjunction with the ESSO/BTRDA Gold Star Championship, will be two Group 1 works Escort drives as the major awards. These will be given to the competitors doing best in the two halves of the season and will be taken on rounds of the Castrol/Au-

New films from UMP

Just prior to the RAC Rally, Vauxhall held a premiere of their new film called *'Pentti—first year of the Chevette'*. The film is another fine rally offering from United Motion Pictures, directed by Barrie Hinchliffe and will surely be a popular addition to motor sport club nights this winter.

Containing some of the best rally action sequences witnessed on the screen for a long while, the film includes scenes of the car on the 1000 Lakes (which are quite breathtaking), the Lindisfarne and the Castrol '77.

Also at the premiere was the first showing of a film UMP have made on behalf of the RAC regarding safety on rallies in relation to spectator behaviour, stage arrowing, etc. This film proved highly amusing in places and it should also prove very useful to rally organising motor clubs. The first results of its instructional contribution may have already been witnessed last week, when the RAC Rally ran so smoothly. Without once resorting to patronage, and with much valuable commentary from drivers actually at work (plus a horrifying sequence of the Dean accident on the '76 RAC) this film will doubtless prove most valuable.

The Vauxhall film will be available from the Vauxhall Film Library, 16 Paxton Place, London, SE27 in January and the safety film from the RAC Motor Sport Division, 31 Belgrave Square, London, SW1.

● Regulations are now available for the Holfeld Pump Rally '78 centred on Wicklow Town on Saturday, January 14 and organised by the Dublin University and Light CC and the Trials Drivers Club. The event will include 60 stage miles over 15 stages and will have a prize fund of £500. Clerk of the Course for the event, from whom regulations can be obtained, is Richard Hamilton, 20 Sydney Avenue, Blackrock, County

Brookes is champion!

MOTOR/RAC RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP DRIVERS OVERALL	Jan 09 Tour of Dean	Feb 25/26 Mintex	Apr 08/12 C of Ireland	Apr 23 Granite City	May 12/15 Welsh	Jun 03/07 Scottish	Jul 02/03 Jim Clark	Aug 19/20 Burmah	Sep 02/03 Ulster	Sep 16/17 Manx	Oct 01 Lindisfarne	Oct 15 Castrol '77	Nov 18/23 Lombard RAC	Total Points
1. Russell Brookes	—	—	10	10	—	9	10	9	9	—	—	9	9	75
2. Pentti Airikkala	—	10	—	9	10	—	9	—	8	10	7	10	1	73*
3. Andy Dawson	—	7	8	—	—	7	7	8	—	8	10	7	7	62*
4. Hannu Mikkola	10	8	—	—	9	—	—	10	—	—	—	6	10	53
5. John Taylor	9	—	—	4	8	—	8	—	—	1	8	—	—	38
6. Nigel Rockey	8	5	—	5	—	—	—	7	4	—	—	4	—	33
7. Paul Faulkner	7	6	—	7	—	—	6	—	—	—	6	—	—	32
8. Graham Elsmore	6	—	—	—	5	—	4	6	—	—	4	3	3	31
9. Jim McRae	4	4	5	—	—	—	5	5	2	3	2	—	—	30
Chris Sclater	—	—	—	8	7	—	—	—	6	—	9	—	—	30
etc														

GROUP 1 DRIVERS														
1. Graham Elsmore	10	5	—	9	10	—	9	10	6	8	10	10	9	77*
2. Jim McRae	9	10	9	6	—	—	10	9	10	9	8	3	—	74*
3. Malcolm Wilson	6	9	8	8	7	10	—	—	1	6	9	7	10	68*
4. Will Sparrow	8	6	10	7	8	9	8	8	—	—	6	6	—	64*
5. Gavin Waugh	—	7	—	5	6	7	—	—	—	—	5	9	—	39
6. Pat Ryan	—	—	—	10	9	8	—	—	—	10	—	—	—	37
7. Chris Field	4	—	—	—	2	—	6	5	—	3	2	—	—	20
8. Steve Smith	—	—	—	—	—	—	7	4	—	—	—	5	—	16
9. David Jones	5	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	7	14
10. David Robbins	—	—	—	—	—	6	—	—	—	—	—	2	5	13
John Cleary	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	1	6	13
etc														

* Total from the best 8 scores

Russell Brookes—1977 British Rally champion.

The two cars of the year: RS1800 (Clark) below; Fiat (Timo Salonen) above.

WCR

	Monte Carlo	Sweden	Portugal	Safari	South Pacific	Acropolis	1000 Lakes	Quebec	San Remo	Corsica	RAC	Total points
Fiat	16	14	18	—	18	12	16	18	18	18	6	154 (136*)
Ford	—	14	16	18	16	18	18	14	10	—	18	142 (132*)
Toyota	—	10	14	—	9	—	12	9	—	—	16	70
Opel	9	17	13	—	—	4	8	—	13	—	1	65
Lancia	18	—	—	14	—	—	—	—	12	16	—	60
Datsun	—	—	—	16	—	14	—	10	—	—	—	40
Porsche	14	—	4	—	—	—	—	—	10	8	—	36
Saab	—	18	—	—	—	—	—	10	—	—	2	30
Chrysler	—	—	—	—	—	10	14	—	—	—	—	24
Mitsubishi	—	—	—	12	2	—	—	8	—	—	—	22
Peugeot	—	—	—	6	—	—	—	—	—	9	—	15
Seat	14	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	14
Citroen	—	—	—	—	—	13	—	—	—	—	—	13
Mazda	—	—	—	—	10	—	—	—	—	—	—	10
Renault Alpine	10	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	10
Leyland	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	4	8
Volvo	—	8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	8
Skoda	—	—	—	—	—	—	7	—	—	—	—	7
Renault	—	—	—	—	—	7	—	—	—	—	—	7
Lada	—	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4

* Best 8 scores

Irish crews join Scots

Regular crews on the Scottish rally scene will be out this weekend on what is usually one of their most sociable events, the Dunlops of Dumfries/Burmah Galloway Hills Rally. The 120 crews will be leaving the Cally Hotel in Gatehouse of Fleet from 9.30 on Sunday morning and will be due back there from 2.30 in the afternoon.

Joining in the fun and games will be a total of ten Irish crews including Ronnie McCartney and Robin Lyons. There will also be a bit of wife swopping going on between Allan Arneil and Drew Gallacher, but we are assured this will stop with just a change of spouses for the co-drivers' seats.

The event is the last round of the West of Scotland Rally Championship, which is currently being led by Ian Gemmell who can just conceivably be beaten by Andy Smith or Murray Grierson, but this would mean him not finishing and one of the others winning outright.

There will be a total of 45 stage miles in the 140 mile route over ten stages, nine of which are spectator stages.

The spectator stages are as follows: SS2 Kirroughtree I—MR 83/47056970 (start) 83/402688 (finish) first car 10.07. SS3 Kirroughtree II—MR 83/441671 (start) 83/442648 (finish) first car 10.13. SS4 Glentrool—MR 77/364820 (start) 76/330809 (finish) first car 11.05. SS5 Drumjohn—MR 76/327806 (start) 77/353896 (finish) first car 11.12 SS6 Balloch—MR 77/352963 (start) 77/394973 (finish) first car 11.32. SS7 Tairlaw—MR 77/399986 (start) 77/004430 (finish) first car 11.39. SS8 Dundeugh—MR 77/609884 (start) 77/602881 (finish) first car 13.10. SS9 Laurieston—MR 83/670656 (start) 83/647652 (finish) first car 13.52. SS10 Glengap—MR 83/667650 (start) 83/650599 (finish) first car 13.58.

The top 10 crews are: 1, Allan Arneil/Sandra Gallacher (Vauxhall Magnum); 2, Murray Grierson/John Shannon (Datsun); 3, Charles Samson/William Greig (RS1800); 4, Drew Gallacher/Sandra Arneil (RS1600); 5, Ronnie McCartney/TBN (RS1800); 6, Dominic Buckley/Walter Duguid (RS1600); 7, Andy Smith/TBN (RS1800); 8, Bill Murray/Bryan McCleary (RS1600); 9, Fred Patterson/Martin Riley (RS2000); 10, Ivor Clark/Frank Wright (Chrysler

Briefly . . .

● After a very successful season in America and Canada with the TR7, Leyland have won the drivers and manufacturers sections of the Sports Car Club of America National Rally Championship and the Prime North American Cup and came second in the drivers, co-drivers and manufacturers sections of the Castrol Rally Championship of Canada. All these results have come from the efforts of the American couple John Buffum and 'Vicki' in their Abingdon-built car.

● Following the last round of the Triple Crown Championship on the RAC Rally, winners of the five event series (rounds were the Circuit of Ireland, Welsh, Scottish, Manx and RAC) are the English team with 100 points from the Irish with 76 points, the Welsh with 74 points and the Scottish with 45 points. Points scorers for the England team were Andy Dawson with 42, Russell Brookes with 36 and Chris Sclater and Roger Clark with 11.

● Ford will be holding two more forums next Monday and Tuesday (December 5 and 6) in aid of the Lord's Taverners charity, which they raised £900 for with their recent Taunton and Finchley forums. The Monday date is organised by Longs of Newcastle upon Tyne at the Centre Hotel, Newbridge Street and Tuesday's is organised by Dalblair Motors of Ayr at the Caledonian Hotel in Ayr. The panel for both evenings, which start at 7pm for 7.30, will be Bjorn Waldegaard, Russell Brookes, Peter Ashcroft and Stuart Turner. Entrance will be 50p at the door.

● In the 1978 Castrol/AUTOSPORT Championship there will be a £30 end-of-season award to the winning co-driver in the Huxford Liberated Ladies Championship.

● The Welsh Association of Motor Clubs have published details of their 1978 stage championship, which has a total of 28 rallies in the series with the best eight scores of registered competitors counting. Anyone wishing to register should send £1 to Ian Jenkins, Afallon, Dryslwyn, Carmarthen, Dyfed SA32 8QY, tel: Dryslwyn 373, along with their full name and address, telephone number(s) and stating whether they are a driver or co-driver. There will also be a separate up to 1300cc championship. Full details of the championship will appear in the association's Year Book which will be available shortly from Mrs Megan Lewis, Rhydonnen, Pentrecwrt, Llandyssul, Dyfed, tel: 055 932 3219.

● When Jayne Neate was looking round scrutineering prior to the RAC Rally she heard that the owner of Car No 117, Kalle Grundel, from Sweden, was keen to sell his car after the event. She arranged to meet him in York and is now the owner of a rally Saab 99EMS, which finished 32nd on the event. Jayne has not done any rallying this year, but was the Ladies Champion in the Castrol/AUTOSPORT series in 1975 and runner-up to Jill Robinson in 1976. As well as the Castrol/AUTOSPORT Championship next year, Jayne hopes to compete on the Welsh and RAC Rallies and would like to contest some foreign events such as the Hankirallii. However, she would first like to get used to the car which is the first LHD example in which she has competed. She is also looking for a sponsor for the

RAC

Spectators were out on the Lombard RAC Rally in unprecedented numbers last week. Below: Nigel Rockey in Blenheim Palace grounds. Lower left: Jim McRae on the bumpstops for the notorious bend in Cwmhenog. Lower right: Class winner again—John Haugland and his Skoda. Bottom left: Alen in Hafren, his car smoking ominously. Bottom right: Makinen in Yorkshire.

Briefly . . .

● After a last-minute problem over case hardening of camshafts, Chris Field was forced to begin the RAC with a well-used engine. By the time the GKN SPA Avenger reached Wales, Chris was involved in a struggle for the class lead with Jim Haslegrave, and returned to York with a 31-second lead. A front strut mounting partially collapsed after Boltby, and then Chris went off 1½ miles into Grisedale 1 on the same tightening left hander which claimed Verini's Fiat. The Avenger lost 30 seconds. Chris then recovered 23 seconds from Haslegrave on the next test (Grisedale 2) but the oil pressure dropped one mile from the end of the stage which subsequently turned out to be pump failure. Field was leading the class by 20 seconds at the time of his retirement.

● The Simpson brothers in their Tyreservices RS1800 had a steady run on the first three days of the RAC Rally, and were lying 30th overall when they reached York on Tuesday evening. They did, however, have one problem on this part of the event when the connecting rod between the carburetters broke early on Tuesday morning in Wales, and they had to complete a stage on two cylinders. Their rally did not last much longer, as early on Wednesday morning the engine started misfiring, and after testing compressions a blown head gasket was diagnosed. This point of the rally was just down the road from where they retired on the event last year . . . . with the same malady!

● On the Monday afternoon, as many British competitors on the RAC Rally were down in the low 'teen positions, Nigel Rockey was displaying some fast consistent driving, and as the cars headed toward mid-Wales was lying eighth overall, with Andy Dawson being the only British driver ahead of him. Unfortunately he put his car on its side in Dyfi (SS18) on Monday evening, where it remained for about five minutes and when he finally got going again, was relegated to 29th overall. Nigel then proceeded to drive back up through the field and before he started the penultimate stage on Tuesday (SS36 Clocaenog 2) was back up to 11th following astute choices of tyres and quick driving on the ice. Unfortunately it was in Clocaenog that the car slithered off the road and clouted a pile of wood and debris on which he damaged the steering and badly bent the anti-roll bar. He managed to complete the last Clocaenog, however, and went to service to effect repairs. Unfortunately, as Nigel admits, he made a bad mistake by not carrying on to York before trying to repair the car, as the repairs took so long that by the time they arrived back at the Racecourse they had gone OTL, even though on stage times they had only dropped to 16th! Nigel was naturally upset as he shouldered the blame fairly and squarely himself, but pleased nevertheless at his curtailed result.

● Tony Drummond's retirement after Hafren began eight miles into the stage, when the lights began to fade. One mile further on and everything went black, the engine also died. Tony switched over to the starting battery, and with co-driver David Curry hanging out of the side window clutching a torch, the crew completed the test whereupon the alternater was changed. The work was to no avail, however, and the crew went OTL while diagnosing a mysterious electrical fault.

● If any spectators on the Radnor Stage of the RAC Rally found a Eumig standard 8 cine camera on the spectator parking road, Alun Owen of 65 Larkfield Road, Rigsburth, Liverpool, tel 051 727 3212 would be very pleased to

Rally

Below: Roger Clark during a troubled first day. Lower right: a hard week's work for Tony Pond culminated in eighth overall. Lower left: Ari Vatanen understeers into the trees about one mile into the rally! Bottom left: the "anchor man" at work, Simo Lampinen drove very quickly towards the end of the rally. Bottom right: first private entrant at 21st o/a, Rod Millen's Mazda.

Briefly . . .

● Paul Faulkner's RAC Rally was very much an up and down affair (on the stages at least!) and his eventual 23rd overall represented a series of highs and lows. After 29 stages Paul was up to 14th overall and deep among the ice and snow of Wales, which caught him out at Cwmhenog (where else?). The RS1800 mingled with the scenery without damage to itself or its occupants, but consuming eight minutes and dumping Paul and Monty down to a depressing 26th place. Undaunted, they continued to persevere, and had returned to recognition (if not prominence) after Moffat where they were classified 16th. However, they then bent a TCA in some ruts and as a result of a very hurried service in Tweedbank, succumbed to jammed steering, necessitating a stop in SS58 (Wauchope) before they could hobble out of the stage. During the service at Tweedbank, a washer had been left off the TCA where it passes through an eye on the anti-roll bar, and the steering had jammed on full opposite lock. At Teesside they were back in 25th place . . . just a little disheartened.

● A new name on the side of Graham Elsmore's car for the RAC Rally was that of TI Silencers, manufacturers of exhaust systems. They joined with Thomas Motors for the event and it is hoped that they will be encouraged to carry on for next season. If they do sponsor Graham next year it is very likely that he will be doing several events on the continent as well as the Open Championship.

● Dunlop's successful RAC Rally contained a considerable element of delicate diplomacy as they only had 120 of the latest soft compound A2s, which naturally everyone wanted! The tyre itself proved to be a great success and though by no means puncture-proof, it did prove able to withstand some extra rigorous treatment. The company had a new M&S for Saab, whose tread pattern showed individual blocks around the centre of the tread, and their 'Acropolis' specially strengthened M&S were used in Kielder. However, after the Welsh loop (where A2s were in evidence), in the Lake District and South Scotland, most drivers reverted to the normal textile braced M&S, since the wet and muddy stages were no suitable ground for A2. During Sunday, Ford used the racing compound (534) last used in Corsica on a 175 30/13 tyre size—a simple slick with three grooves cut longitudinally around the tyre. Leyland's TR7s used the extra-soft 592 compound front *and* rear for the first time, and their racers were made up in a pattern similar to A2 but with much narrower grooves.

● As a bizarre chapter of accidents, the tale of Henry Inurrieta's '77 RAC Rally takes some beating. On Sutton Park, Henry completed the entire stage on three cylinders as a core plug located at the bottom of one of the two float chambers had fallen out, releasing the petrol to the engine bay. As soon as the car stopped, a fire naturally broke out and the service crew spent nearly one hour replacing all the burnt components. With 2m 20s of road penalties the crew continued, short of tyres and time. However, much later in the event, and after drowning out in a deep ford(!) the problems of Sutton Park returned on a road section between Glentress and Elibank. This time the offending core plug had fled from the float chamber of the other carburetter, and another fire ensued. This time the service crew were out of reach. Inurrieta was lying 20th overall at the time,

SS30: Cwmhenog—a difficult one!

Sometimes on the Lombard RAC Rally it's difficult to escape from the camera! This notorious corner on Cwmhenog, a downhill ice-covered square right preceded by a very long straight not only caught out the famous, as photographers David Tomlinson and Alan Davidson illustrate here. Right and far right: Waldegaard executes an uncharacteristic spin, and escapes. Centre left: Makinen in the throes of going backwards over the edge. Centre right: the sad aftermath of Vatanen's mistake. Lower left: the Simpsons get started again. Lower right: Geoff Lobb—so this is sideways motoring! Bottom left: well, have you often seen three on a stage . . . together! Bottom right: Charles Golding is joined by Markku Saaristo.

Waldegaard's 1977 WCR season has been one of the very best in living memory: Portugal—2nd; Acropolis—1st; Safari—1st; 1000 Lakes 3rd; San Remo 5th; RAC—1st.

Going first class

Bjorn Waldegaard's great triumph heads an Escort dominated event—Ford's sixth consecutive RAC Rally—Mikkola's Toyota a fine second—Russell Brookes, Andy Dawson, Roger Clark and Tony Pond (Triumph TR7) all make the top ten—Vatanen crashes again—Fiat experience disappointment after promising showings from Alen Makinen and Salonen—Malcolm Wilson wins a hard-fought G1 battle—A much improved and much tougher RAC Rally—Brookes is British Champion—Report: PETER NEWTON—Photography: HUGH BISHOP.

The Public Relations executive suddenly sat back in his chair, an air of absorbed concentration being replaced by something approaching exasperated determination.

"So let's have it then, in writing. . . . Who do you think is going to win?" The gauntlet had been thrown down; for once the precocious *cognoscenti* with their 'told you so' cynicism were not going to escape. It was a wet and windy November night deep in remote central Wales, the RAC Rally was two days old and a large writing pad lay between the PR executive, three empty glasses and two recalcitrant journalists facing him across the dinner table. The bottle of Beaujolais and a whiskey or two had taken the chill and damp from the night air; a fire blazed and crackled in the hearth behind the table; some welsh 'locals' discussed sheep farming at the bar—a pleasant evening.

Thoughts reluctantly swung from bar and barmaid back to the rally. Silently the two journalists took up their pens and scribbled casually on the pristine white

What is his next ambition? "I haven't won the Swedish championship since 1967. I'm still keen so I'll try again perhaps.(!)

paper. The writing pad scraped audibly as it passed between them, the empty glasses and the PR executive. The latter's exasperation visibly deepened yet his next words came out as half-laugh, half-scorn . . . "you can't say *that*! *Everyone* says that! I'm disappointed in you"; the last remark a joking throw-away line.

The journalists remained silent, smiling at the fire. Beside the vacant slots awaiting answers to "second", "third" and "fourth", there was nothing. But against "first" were scrawled the words: Bjorn Waldegaard. This year it had not been difficult for them to make up their minds; not difficult at all.

As one of the most widely predicted wins on an RAC Rally in recent years, Bjorn Waldegaard's classic performance last week stands alone; yet it is also important in other ways, for it emphatically underlines the fact that the British are still incapable of winning their own rally despite an intrinsic advantage which their detractors are only too keen to discuss on the rare

occasion of British international success. Bjorn was in many ways the ideal victor, for he not only completed a life's ambition to win the RAC, and in one year has completed a unique triple (Safari, Acropolis and RAC) but he also went without any practice in British forests, a factor considered almost mandatory by his many competitors.

The 1976 RAC Rally was the last occasion on which Waldegaard drove in our forests, yet he had no real difficulty either in winning the rally or matching individual stage times with anyone. Quite simply, (and with the possible exception of Russell Brookes) Bjorn (and Hannu Mikola who trailed him remorselessly for four days) stood head and shoulders above the others, who despite years of intensive practice and acclimatisation, still had no permanent answer to this taciturn, dedicated and calculating professional.

British rallying enjoys one of the most competitive national scenes in Europe, yet its drivers still seem incapable of rising to the big occasion. Waldegaard had an answer for everyone. He just out-drove them all without fuss, drama or damage. The British certainly had their excuses but these didn't cut much ice with the foreigners. If your car is not powerful nor good enough, then you *should* be driving one that is; if it breaks down, then you or your team should prepare it better; if you have accidents then you are not mature enough to win the RAC Rally, etc etc. Hard words; and perhaps a little unjustified in some cases, but Bjorn's win was doubly satisfying in that no one could dispute or question its significance. Waldegaard came to win the RAC Rally, a combination of his personal psychology, his excellent car and team, and his massive talents all made that end so much of a predictable reality, that few of us were at all surprised. Bjorn not only showed us how to win the RAC Rally, he also underlined the fact that you don't *need* to know the forests to win here either—all you need is a great forest car and a great professional talent.

So what is left for us in which to find solace? Russell Brookes never put a wheel wrong to seize the British championship back from the jaws of the Finn. His car, however, let him down twice and although he had his sights set on victory until Wednesday afternoon, it forced him to be content with third overall; Andy Dawson drove tenaciously until extra-effort coupled with fatigue contributed to an accident which damaged his car and put paid to any *really* great things; Roger Clark drove almost serenely to fourth overall, not the quickest any more, but still able, it seems, to better the efforts of all but Brookes; and Tony Pond struggled with typical skill and tenacity, driving a car 30bhp down and over 100 kilos up on the Fords, and which also possessed a slipping clutch and some rather undesirable handling quirks.

Further down came a remarkably mature and impressive drive from Malcolm Wilson who fought a personal battle against physical illness, and still managed to beat Graham Elsmore in all parts of the country to take G1 in conclusive style.

There was certainly something to savour for the British, but how long will we be required to wait before another man can imitate what Roger Clark proved was so very possible in 1972 and 1976? Now that the first two finishers of this year's event are in the same team, the wait could be a long one. Brookes hopes to prove otherwise.

Above: Corsica re-visited? The scene is actually Great Orme photographed last Monday week. Airikkala (pictured here) was sidelined by many problems including a painful, broken thumb. Below: Russell Brookes gave the British something to cheer about.

After a slow start during which he drove without racers and coped with a broken oil pipe and a stout branch through the rear window, Kyosti Hämäläinen in his Total-backed Peter Clarke-prepared RS1800 proved that he's not so worried about unseen British forestry as we thought. This was a smooth, unflurried performance.

After the justified criticism surrounding last year's event, the '77 Lombard RAC Rally changed its format considerably, as has been detailed in these pages in recent weeks. The route itself consisted of 10 stages between London (Wembley) and York on Sunday which was arranged very much to protect spectators from themselves and the sport from the consequences of their numbers.

This slow start was accepted in good faith by competitors and the logic was not hard to follow. Any relief of the overcrowding within forest stages which could be carried out at the weekend was welcome. The RAC Rally has one great drawback which in any other sport would be a cause for celebration. It has become (and is still in the process of becoming) far too popular for its own good. At the start there were rumblings of last minute Parliamentary intervention, and the RAC were asked to make 11th hour representations to MPs that all possible safety precautions had in fact been taken. Apparently satisfied, nothing needed to be altered, but the rally remains ludicrously vulnerable to outside intervention and there is little doubt that had the 'incidents' of last year been repeated, then the days of this rally would have been numbered.

Wembley itself proved to be a highly satisfactory, if hardly atmospheric starting venue. The much-vaunted and well-promoted *Star Talk* evening, compered by Tony Mason, proved to fall somewhat short of expectations. As one observer remarked, "the presentation was brilliant, but *was* it entertainment?" And one was left with the view that the political considerations and language barriers which bind and hinder drivers have yet to be transcended by a sport so obviously in its promotional infancy. Star of the show was undoubtedly Brian Culcheth, whose pungent remarks succeeded in arousing the house from their lethargy in no uncertain terms. . . .

So this year's event was far tougher and tighter than before, with longer stages, less of them, and less time to service cars between them. It's a sad testimony to the increasing popularity of stage rallying in this country that going to watch one's sport at premier level has now become a major struggle against fellow individuals of the same mind. Time was, when the RAC Rally consisted of the competitors, a few journalists and one or two service cars following the route. These days, a vast mult-coloured mobile army invades various areas of the countryside, completely clogging communications and overloading transport systems for hours at a time while the rally passes through. This army leaves as rapidly as it arrives, but while it is present, the prospects of achieving one's destination are never sure.

North and central Wales on Monday night and Tuesday morning were chaotic to say the least, and resulted in a re-route (the only one of the rally, which was a most commendable achievement) via Llandovery to circumvent the total chaos compounded by frozen snow and ice on the Abergwesyn-Tregarron road. Thankfully the organisers avoided similar or worse events becoming reality in sensitive areas like the Lake District and North Yorkshire, but the RAC Rally will continue to present an ever greater spectator problem as its popularity expands. The job of organising and marshalling the hordes who come to watch will inevitably reach proportions beyond the control of the hard-pressed authorities. When this situation is reached, the rally will have yet another problem with which to deal. Crowd attendance figures were by all accounts considerably up on last year, with a reputed 120,000 at Sutton Park and at least 15,000 at Donington Park (a greater crowd than the circuit has *ever* hosted at a motor race!) Wembley was very well attended, and all major weekend venues must have been the subject of much satisfaction on behalf of the sponsors—even if Pentti Airikkala *did* spin his Chevette under the very noses of the Luton hierarchy at the Castrol-sponsored Towcester stage!

There's no doubt that the Lombard RAC Rally has been brought back onto the map in a big way this year. There remain two main areas where work seems still to be required. The first concerns road mileage, which could be usefully cutailed if the route did not compel competitors to return to York for a midway overnight halt. The second concerns the state of service areas throughout the route, whose condition was at times bordering on the scandalous. Obviously the weeks of wet weather compounded the problem, and service areas of suitable magnitude are obviously hard to find, but to wade around in ankle-deep mud in conditions of gross overcrowding is perhaps a little tough.

In almost every other way though, the rally stood out as being a great step forward. The success of the timing system (see page 35) and the obvious improvements in standardised stage quality as a result of Jim Porter's latest 'audio visual' nationwide briefings produced a surprisingly slick organisational package which in conjunction with a tame computer in York (as opposed to a shared system) and the enthusiasm of an experienced results/press office team ("we never close"!) gave the rally a cohesion which has been woefully lacking of late. It was sad perhaps that the snows so widely predicted at the start failed to materialise in depth, but the rally still had its challenge, even if most had settled for their positions by the time that the longest stages (and potentially the toughest hazards) in Kielder were due.

Tests in north and central Wales in the early hours of Tuesday morning (especially Halfway, Crychan, Cwmhenog and Nantyrhwch) were affected by snow, and made particularly treacherous thanks to widespread ice patches; while on the second loop, over 70 miles of almost continuous stage driving in Kielder (besides a short service halt at Plashetts) really brought red rims to the eyes by the time crews reached Yorkshire and a breakfast at Teesside on Thursday morning.

Perhaps the RAC Rally could be accused of possessing too long a duration; it certainly plays a merry dance with one's metabolism, making re-entry to normality a subject for Kremmen-like adaptation. One would like to think that the club could cut a day from the schedule without reducing the stage mileage; but they have made great strides this year, perhaps best summed-up by one of the officials at the breakfast halt, Llanwrtydd Wells, on Tuesday, who when informed that the RAC had not given competitors much time for rest, remarked succinctly: "that's O.K., they're growing lads, they'll manage!"

It was also encouraging to see rally officials actually out in the field, not merely monitoring the progress of their gin and tonics but carrying out notes checks, offering advice and generally making the event a success where it matters—in and around the forests.

Route

Although the 1977 RAC Rally started on Sunday morning, 20th November, at 09.00; it did not *really* start until 16.30 the following afternoon, when the leaders moved into the very first of the forests for which this WCR rally is famous. There had been forestry going prior to this time, principally in Clipstone on the way north from London to York, but few of the people who really mattered saw the results of Sunday and Monday morning as being very meaningful, although more amateur stage time analyses and driver 'profiles' were performed by sport-starved fanatics than ever before.

The implications of the Sunday run (10 stages and about 60 competitive miles) were however important for two reasons. Firstly the result of the first three all tarmac tests would decide the important starting order on the 'morrow (see under Road and Stage Timing) and secondly, to win the Sunday Run would generate an inordinate amount of publicity in the national media. Most of the stars however played themselves in warily; a few fell by the wayside, and Blomqvist set fastest time on a very dark and icy Bramham Park before the crews retired for an early night within the Satanic fortress walls of York, that fine old city whose connections with the rally make next year's move to Birmingham seem like sacrilege. sacrilege.

The long haul to North Wales began in fine weather on Monday at 09.30. This second leg of the rally amounted to a large geographic figure-of-eight loop through Wales incorporating halts at Machynlleth (two hours) and Llanwrtydd Wells (one hour 55 minutes) and comprised a total of 26 stages, arriving back at York from 19.50 on Tuesday (although the final stage of this loop had in fact taken place at 15.24 in Clocaenog (North Wales).

A rest halt at York preceded the northerly expedition which began at 08.30 on Wednesday with two Yorkshire forest stages before trekking across country to the Lake District and the Borders where a rest halt awaited at Moffat. Competitors were due here at 21.48. Fifteen stages lay in wait prior to Moffat, and these marked a prelude to what had been intended as the rally's 'sting'- Kielder. It did not quite work out like that in reality, but this particular section through Wednesday night and Thursday morning proved very wearing, and involved a further 14 stages in Scotland, Kielder forest itself (Northumberland) and North Yorkshire. After a brief respite in Teesside, on a fine and clear Thursday morning, the survivors tackled the likes of Cropton, Staindale and Ingleby before returning down the well worn path to York via Pickering.

First crews returned to the city soon after 5 pm. Altogether there were 395 competitive forest miles within the total stage mileage of about 460. Road mileage totalled 1633 and 32 stages took place in daylight out of the 68 that were finally run.

continued

FORD

As always, Boreham's pre-event planning for 'their' rally was immaculate as ever. The fact that the World championship was dead and gone had been erased from memory as far as possible, and memories of what might have been were exchanged for thoughts of the future. The signing of Mikkola about a month before the rally was kept a close secret from the press, and morale before the start was as high as ever it can be when a team have won this same rally for five consecutive years.

The three works 'A' team cars for Bjorn, Ari and Roger were sponsored by British Airways, the *Daily Express* and the *Sunday Times* respectively, along with the usual trade support in this country. Only Waldegaard's machine was brand new, the two others being re-builds of the cars which participated in Canada and were new for Safari way back at Easter.

Traditionally, the RAC Rally is not a time when innovations appear on cars, the rally is too well known to risk anything save a tried and tested formula. Thus the cars were changed only in detail from 1976, and once more came fitted with 190lb rated front springs and five leaf rear springs, no compression struts (which are now generally regarded as exclusively tarmac ware) special fuel tanks, ventilated rear discs etc. Where the cars nevertheless show improvements over last year however were in detail changes.

First, the latest Hart BDAs, fitted with L1 race camshafts etc, have now been standardised for forest use, as well as for tarmac on which they have been active for some time. Thanks to detail modifications to the 'head porting, induction etc, the torque curve at low and middle ranges has actually improved, while performance at the top end gives the car somewhere around 250bhp. There are those who say that the BDA is getting old, but there was little to indicate this fact on the RAC Rally, and the motors have much envied reliability to add to their power.

Experiments with self-adjusting clutches have progressed apace this year, beginning in Safari when all three cars were fitted with single plate self-adjusting units (and where only Bjorn's car enjoyed a reasonably trouble-free run). Bjorn's car had a single plate self-adjusting unit for the 1000 Lakes, and at San Remo a similar unit was installed but in triple plate form. Vatanen meanwhile had a manual type adjustment. For Corsica, Nicolas' (Bjorn's) car ran a self-adjusting triple plate unit with no ill effects at all, so by the time of the RAC, the team felt confident enought to fit all their cars with this type. Both Bjorn and Roger had their clutches changed during the rally (on the return run from Wales) but this move took place largely as a precautionary measure. Both radius rods on Bjorn's and Roger's cars were also changed. In addition, Clark and Waldegaard also had new gearboxes after the first day, when the second gear synchronisers failed.

These things apart, little work was actually carried out during the rally, save for the mandatory halfshaft changes following punctures, of which Waldegaard sustained a total of six. None were potentially that serious however, the longest distance the winner ever ran on a flat tyre being about five-and-a-half miles.

Top ten after TC10A York at 19.53 on November 20.
1, Hannu Mikkola (Toyota Celica), 38min 50secs pens; 2, Pentti Airikkala (Vauxhall Chevette), 38:54; 3, Bjorn Waldegaard (RS1800), 38:58; 4, Sandro Munari (Lancia Stratos), 39:05; 5, Andy Dawson (RS1800), 39:15; 6, Timo Makinen (Fiat 131 Abarth), 39:38; 7, Markku Alen (Fiat 131 Abarth), 30:40; 8, Timo Salonen (Fiat 131 Abarth), 39:45; 9, Stig Blomqvist (Saab 99 EMS), 39:46; 10, Leif Asterhag (Toyota Corolla), 39:49.

The only serious drama to worry Boreham was one which could well have been fatal to their chances of victory and which occurred to Waldegaard in Kielder, where he has experienced trouble in years past. At Plashetts service a routine tyre change before the second long Kielder test became suddenly tense when a rear wheel nut would not re-thread itself satisfactorily on the stud, and reached the halfway point on its length before seizing solid, leaving more than half-an-inch of thread uncovered. Without the time required to rectify matters, Waldegaard was sent away to complete the stage with the effective power of only three nuts securing the wheel to the hub—a very serious situation, and one which gave cause for considerable nail-biting and many long and anxious minutes before the leader returned to Plashetts where the team unscrewed the hub cap screw at the rear of the carrier assembly and withdrew wheel, halfshaft and the offending stud together, all of a piece. They then replaced the entire assembly. There have been problems with threading hot wheel nuts on to equally hot wheel studs before (eg: Nicolas in Corsica) and the team have found that it is usually of greater benefit to use new cold nuts rather than those which have just been removed from the wheel. Waldegaard's sole other anxious moment occurred in Cwmhenog at the hairpin which claimed Vatanen. Here he uncharacteristically spun and very nearly went off.

Dunlop's latest steel braced MS proved too stiff in the sidewall to suit the cars on this 'sprint' rally, and all drivers remarked that they tended to upset the handling. They thus used the new softer compound A2s almost exclusively. Clark and Vatanen both punctured at Sutton Park after getting very sideways at the ford and clipping the kerb. Clark took the safety rim clean off a Minilite wheel but both drivers hobbled to the finish, albeit with stage times which seriously affected their start numbers the following day.

When will Ari Vatanen *stop* having accidents? He was suffering a severe bout of influenza this year but that's hardly sufficient justification for another of those lapses. His car approached the icy downhill adverse camber hairpin towards the finish of Cwmhenog at which Waldegaard had spun, Makinen rolled, Eklund had all kinds of problems etc etc; slid across to the bank, somersaulting in the air and landed back on its wheels well off the road with bent TCAs, anti-roll bar and sadly out of track front wheels. It took some 25 minutes to regain the road. It might theoretically have been possible to continue. Vatanen had been fourth at the time of his accident, his slow start accounted for largely by a thrown fan belt on Blenheim Palace (SS1) and the wheel incident at Sutton Park.

The 'B' team also sported little that was really new. Dawson's car had been fitted with a works L1 camshafts engine during the week prior to the rally (it was in fact a unit that Dawson had run-in for Waldegaard prior to the San Remo!) The Cariba-sponsored car differed only in minor detail to those of the works, Dawson having fitted rose-jointed track control arms, a marginally different location of rear links and an exhaust system above the level of the floor. In all other major details this car was to a Boreham specification. Dawson remarked that perhaps his greatest enemy, particularly on the final northerly loop, was fatigue. He had been trying hard to close the gap between himself, Brookes in third place, and Mikkola, when on the first Grisedale stage, a rough Lake District test (which seems to have been a new one even to Malcolm Wilson) he began a

Andy Dawson drove consistently quickly in his Cariba sponsored RS1800 but was unable to make an impression on the leaders during the final loop.

continued

partial demolition job on his car by destroying a wooden caravan parked on the outside of a bend.

However it was in Greystoke that he forfeited a place or any chance of regaining it. In full cry, Dawson came over a crest in the darkness, saw lights ahead of him and was deceived into assuming that a straight lay ahead. In fact the road turned square right and the Cariba Escort yumped into some tree-stumps, Dawson succeeding in keeping the car straight while it ploughed over the obstacles, damaging the chassis rails, the co-driver's doorsill etc. The driver also suffered a sprained wrist and it took six minutes to regain the road.

The lights which the driver saw had in fact been spectators' torches, and they were watching the same stage . . . two corners farther on! During the run-in to the finish, the engine broke a valve spring, and the crown wheel and pinion showed signs of expiry, so Dawson, having survived a total of three excitements (including a harmless but heart stopping spin on the heights of Great Orme) was very glad to finish where he did; and very grateful to Boreham without whose body panel beating expertise, he may have been forced to retire.

Top ten after TC19A Machynlleth at 22.30 on November 21.
1, Bjorn Waldegaard (RS1800), 111mins 07secs pens; 2, Markku Alen (Fiat 131 Abarth), 111:41; 3, Andy Dawson (RS1800), 111:55; 4, Hannu Mikkola (Toyota Celica), 112:01; 5, Sandro Munari (Lancia Stratos), 112:24; 6, Pentti Airikkala (Vauxhall Chevette), 113:16; 7, Russell Brookes (RS1800), 113:26; 8, Timo Makinen (Fiat 131 Abarth), 114:25; 9, Ari Vatanen (RS1800), 114:39; 10, Jean-Luc Therier (Toyota Celica), 114:49.

Russell Brookes' Andrews Heat/Castrol car used the same single leaf rear springs which he has been using on occasions already this year. They have never given a moment's cause for concern, yet on the very first test of the RAC Rally at Blenheim Palace, both rear springs bowed upwards on full bump and stayed that way. The reason why they did so seemed to be because the springs themselves were marginally too short, and this factor coupled to the fact that Russell had done away with a lower roller (Boreham and many other leaf spring locations run between two rollers at either end) allowed the spring to 'escape' from its location point when full bump was reached. Sunday was a bad day for Russell, for after Boreham versions of the springs had been fitted (and on which he completed the remainder of the route without drama) the spiggot bearing on the first motion shaft broke-up. This bearing runs on needle rollers where it meets the crankshaft, and it was the needle rollers themselves which came adrift and allowed the shell to weld itself to the crankshaft, where it proved very difficult to shift. After Russell had struggled through a nightmare Sunday with no clutch at standing starts, an operation was launched during the road sections of Monday morning to begin putting the car to rights. The gearbox was changed at Oulton Park, but it was not until Machynlleth that evening that the team were able to lay hands on a rotary grinder file to clear away the stubborn debris and fit a new clutch and shaft. The work was completed 45 seconds before Brookes was due to incur road penalties!

In other mechanical respects, Brookes' car was very much as seen elsewhere this season. Russell used his familiar (rebuilt) Terry Hoyle BDA with the normal L1 (inlet) and BD3 (exhaust) camshafts and it too finished the event very much as a Boreham spec car for a number of different reasons!

John Taylor's Haynes car sported experimental aluminium dampers but was otherwise almost standard. Two punctures upon his arrival in Wales delayed him somewhat but it was a persistent problem of carburation (involving the spindles) which hampered him most, making the car very difficult and unpredictable to drive. The team had planned to change the induction but never found the time and eventually the car succumbed to a failure in the pick up head of the distributor in Kielder after John had just reached the top ten.

Russell's drive through the field on Monday evening and Tuesday back from 37th place on Monday morning to third was a fine achievement. Naturally he had his sights set on both the Scandinavians ahead of him, and could still have caught Mikkola (particularly following the latter's fuel injection linkage problems on Grisedale 2), had not further misfortune struck the Andrews' car on this same stage. A strut top mount centre bolt worked loose, and when the suspension reached full droop as Russell yumped the car, the entire strut came away. When the RS1800 crashed down again on full compression, the steering was wrenched from Russell's hands, a right hand front tyre punctured simultaneously, and the car careered along a bank as the wayward strut punched through the inner wheel arch, relocating itself about nine inches farther forward and coincidentally making the car a runner, even though it resulted in a front wheel jammed tight against the bodywork. Over five minutes were lost as the Escort limped painfully out of

Hannu's last outing in a Celica (above, at Blenheim) was a memorable one.

TOYOTA

Team Toyota Europe were not quite as cheerful as we have seen them in the past. The team had still received little or no news from Japan concerning next year as we went to press, and without a 16-valve head etc the G2 Celica will be totally uncompetitive. By the same token their 2-litre Corolla will be ineligible for similar reasons and the only hope for them next year is that the factory make a definite decision to market a 2-litre Corolla road car.

Their No 1 driver however was in great form. Mikkola used his 1000 Lakes car for the rally, initially fitted with a 5.1 to 1 ratio crown wheel and pinion. This unit was later swopped for a 5.5 to 1 ratio during the northern loop, and Hannu's excellent stage times in the heavy going of Kielder were aided in part by the lower gearing of the car. It's ironic that while the performances of the Celica this year have so often ended in mechanical failure, at RAC Rally time, the car should complete the equivalent of four national rallies without a single major fault.

Fitted with its softer rear springs, it handles better than it has ever done, and Hannu drove as sympathetically as possible, saving the clutch, maintaining the pressure on the Swede in front of him, and vainly hoping for a mistake or mechanical intervention. He remarked at the finish that he felt he would not have been able to catch Waldegaard without great risk to his second place. This was another memorable drive from Mikkola in a car which can hardly be easy to control in the forests. Nevertheless, team mate Jean Luc Therier rapidly came to grips with his (similar) new car, and lay sixth overall having been in the top ten almost since the start, when he irretrievably inverted it in the Forest of Ae.

By contrast Walfridsson never seemed to come to terms with a car whose acquaintance he first made on the Castrol '77.

The team arrived in England accompanied by engine builder Joseph Schnitzer, the eldest of the three brothers, who had never been on a rally before. He was understandably shocked at what he saw before him, and determined to alter several aspects of his rally engine preparation as a result. The most damaging failure which occurred to Hannu's car throughout the rally befell him when a throttle link pin broke between the fuel pump and the injection butterflies in Grisedale 2 on Wednesday afternoon (a similar failure occurred in Ulster this year and had been the subject of considerable dialogue between Ove and Schnitzer himself) which cost Hannu over two minutes as he coasted out of the stage.

Toyota may be moving to Cologne next year where Toyota (Germany) have set up a competition work shop—"if we have a car to rally" remarked Andersson a little gloomily.

Road and Stage Timing

One of the best features of an excellently conceived and run event was the new road timing system. This adopted the traditional Finnish system of 'target timing', which means that competitors are given a target time for covering the sections in between stages. At the finish of a stage, one can calculate the due time for starting the following road section by using the finish time itself, and deducting the seconds involved. In this way, if one car overtakes another on a special stage, there is no need for that car to have to overtake the same one again. Once ahead, stay ahead. There was again a penalty for early arrival, so the continental system of "once late, stay late" applied. There was, however, deviation from foreign systems in that the first 30 minutes of lateness was not penalised, and this gave leeway in case of traffic congestion. After 30 minutes there was penalty of 10 seconds per minute until one hour was reached. After each rest halt, competitors started without lateness counting against them.

The order of restarting from rest halts was based on the order in which competitors arrived at the finish of the preceding stage, and this position was marked on the time cards of the drivers concerned, there and then. Cars were re-classified according to overall position for the re-starts from York on Monday and Wednesday, but here there was trouble, as in order to notify competitors of their re-start time on Monday, it was necessary to consider positions after only three stages—asphalt stages at that! Obviously the slightest problem (as happened with Brookes, Vatanen, Sclater and Clark on these stages) meant that some cars would have to start disproportionately late.

The old concept of 'maximum penalty' was completely abandoned: if a competitor took more than an hour over the target time for a stage, he was excluded, as happened with Tony Fowkes after his marathon pushing exercise at Oulton Park. Sandro Munari also suffered heavily from this rule, but was not actually late enough to be excluded. From the competitors' angle, probably the most satisfying aspect was the clarity of the regulations. Every year, in the past, there has been misunderstanding, confusion, ambiguity—but this year all these things had disappeared.

The overall timing worked well because of the new timing system, with increased safety factors for spectators and greater convenience for service planning. In all these factors the RAC Rally was a great success.

continued

FIAT

Fiat arrived in England with a total of six cars, three of which were being jointly sponsored by the English importers and Graham Warner's Chequered Flag Garage in Chiswick, while the others were in OlioFiat colours as usual. The company came to England in strength despite having convincingly won the World Championship in Corsica.

They had good reason for optimism following Alen's performances in this country with new compound MS 35 Pirellis on the Castrol '77 and Trossachs rallies. In addition, the Italian drivers could practise on unseen forest roads, and the dealer team (Makinen, Salonen and Lampinen) promised great things. Although there has been much talk of as many as 50 rally cars in constant circulation during the year at the Abarth works, truth is far less strange than fiction. In reality there are only just over 20 in existence, *including* practice cars, so one was not as surprised as all that to discover that the team were actually scratching to make up the six car team!

Verini's machine was the interesting one—a refugee from Giorgio Pianta's three strong permanent mini-test fleet, this car was pressed into service for the RAC with a number of interesting new features including an Abarth single plate clutch fitted with an aluminium casing and housing, a new SPICA mechanical fuel injection pump similar to that used on Alfa Romeo F1 flat 12-cylinder engines (which demanded the use of butterfly type injectors rather than the latest slides) working off the camshaft belts in similar fashion to the Bosch system; and BREMBO aluminium brake calipers never before used on a rally.

All the OlioFiat cars used dry sump equipment, and the latest throttle slides (apart from Verini), while the dealer cars all had wet sump lubrication. Makinen's car, along with those of Alen and Bacchelli had about 10bhp more than the others, which were fitted with the older butterfly injectors. Salonen experienced some trouble with these at the finish of Oulton Park but once again, very little actually went wrong with the Fiats.

The normal rev limit for the latest Abarth 16-valve engines is 8,000rpm, but revised camshaft profiles gave Verini's car an extended range (8,700) although not more power as yet. Finally Verini's differential ratio was considerably lower at 5.4 to 1 than the other cars (4.9 to 1).

Top ten after TC31A Abernant at 08.05 on November 22.
1, Bjorn Waldegaard (RS1800), 214mins 49secs pens; 2, Hannu Mikkola (Toyota Celica), 215:49; 3, Russell Brookes (RS1800), 216:49; 4, Andy Dawson (RS1800), 219:20; 5, Timo Salonen (Fiat 131 Abarth), 221:57; 6, Roger Clark (RS1800), 222:51; 7, Tony Pond (Triumph TR7), 223:18; 8, Stig Blomqvist (Saab 99 EMS), 223:37; 9, Sandro Munari (Lancia Stratos), 223:40; 10, Kyosti Hamalainen (RS1800), 224:10.

All six used Bilstein springs and shock absorbers and progressive rate settings as used satisfactorily in Canada. The cars have progressed markedly in loose surface performance throughout the year, although they still have some way to go to match Escort handling under such circumstances.

Bacchelli's machine sported the newest registration number and he brought his car home to the finish in 17th place despite some excitements on the ice, (particularly at the point on Cwmhenog where Makinen and Vatanen rolled). He also suffered from punctures in Grisedale which meant that he was forced to begin the second of the two tests on a flat tyre having acquired two punctures on the first test and changed this one for his spare wheel. Eight miles through this stage the wallowing Fiat was overtaken by a wallowing Vauxhall Chevette (also with a flat tyre!) and Fulvio's dramas here lost him something of the order of nine minutes.

Verini, who had been complaining of brake problems, finished his rally on a very nasty slow lefthand corner in Grisedale 1, where the Fiat shot straight-on over a ditch, damaging one side of the front suspension.

Alen's climb up through the field on Monday night to a position in second place just 34 seconds behind the leader after 19 stages was as close as anyone ever came to Waldegaard. Markku's rally effectively ended in Hafren, among the stages with which he is most familiar, where, in similar fashion to Verini in Corsica, the reinforced rubber piping used for returning oil from the front-mounted cooler to the dry sump tank in the boot chafed at the cooler itself, allowing large quantities of oil to escape during the 19-mile stage. It was cruel luck that this blow struck just after the two-hour halt, since the repair had to be carried out in something of a rush. The damaged pipe was hastily replaced and the engine refilled with oil before Markku attempted Rheidol where the pipe eventually blew off entirely (perhaps because the pistons were already damaged and the system pressurised itself; or perhaps because in the haste of the repair, the pipe replacement was made just too short). In any case the engine was irreparably damaged. Alen was fifth fastest on Rheidol, two seconds behind Waldegaard. It was his last special stage of the '77 RAC Rally. " . . . Next year!" he remarked with some considerable feeling.

Makinen experienced little trouble beside a broken offside lower rear wishbone on Dyfnant which was itself perhaps a legacy from his roll and 10-minute excursion on the very icy downhill adverse camber hairpin near the finish of Cwmhenog which also accounted for many others. Thanks to this incident, (before which he lay sixth overall) Makinen lost a certain final place within the top five.

Timo had changed a puncture in this stage soon after the start and had just overtaken Kullang when he approached the infamous downhill hairpin. The Fiat slid over the bank and rolled, landing softly in a bog, and being righted and sent on its way after 10 minutes. Makinen also experienced a differential failure two miles from the finish of Kielder 1, but the car dragged itself to the finish and 'was assisted' to Plashetts where the crown wheel and pinion were changed.

After Salonen's retirement, Lampinen was instructed to go as hard as possible and after a subdued rally highlighted by damaged steering for the three Clocaenog tests following collision with a rock, Simo drove in a most determined and exciting manner to overtake Pond into seventh place.

Salonen had been unwell before the start of the rally, having pinched a nerve between two vertebrae in his back and being confined to bed. He was still unwell throughout the rally, particularly on the final loop into Scotland. He had been taking pain killers for his condition, yet was holding down an impressive fifth place overall when he suffered a massive accidident on the first Grisedale stage late on Wednesday afternoon, going straight-on into a tree at a 'flat' right hand corner where his car would have been travelling at about 60mph in third gear. The Fiat was completely wrecked and both crew members taken to Carlisle hospital where they were treated for shock, Jaakko Markula being retained under observation with chipped vertebrae in his neck.

There was a further and possibly sinister mystery surrounding the accident, for despite the fact that marshals on the scene of the crash immediately disconnnected the battery, and took all sensible fire precautions, Fiat Abarth number 10 was consumed by fire . . . hours later! The blaze could not have begun until long afer the special stage had been disbanded and the remains were apparently still ablaze at midnight. One is left to speculate on these bizarre circumstances.

VAUXHALL

Vauxhall's chapter of misfortune during the first two days of this rally did not give us much hope that either Chevette would finish. However, they both did, albeit in the lower half of the top 20. The cars were to their now standardised forest specification and the team had put in an enormous amount of pre-event work into organising garage service en route, staggered routine maintenance schedules, etc, etc.

They seemed confident and determined to make it *their* rally. However, Chris Sclater began the event with very low oil pressure, having changed the plugs at the start because the car wouldn't fire. Pentti by contrast had had a last-minute engine change when it was discovered that his unit was very much down on power. He was beaten to the first day honours on the very last stage (SS10) at Bramham Park by Hannu Mikkola.

DTV's plans for staggered routine maintenance were impressive (were no emergencies to intervene) and they had planned for a clutch/gearbox and axle change for both cars. Airikkala had his axle changed in Machynlleth and his clutch and gearbox were swopped over at the end of the Welsh loop back at York, where Chris Sclater's axle was also changed. Chris then had his gearbox and clutch changed at the Moffat rest halt. It had been decided before the event that these routine jobs should be carried out as precautions, largely since the constant assault from stones wears out calipers, brake discs etc; and the torque settings on LSDs are bound to be reduced as an event progresses. Halfshafts also require periodic attention, particularly following stage miles driven on punctures.

Pentti was beaten for the honours of the first day's play by Hannu Mikkola who forced the Toyota into the lead at Bramham when Pentti chose A2s on a very icy special stage. The Chevette thus started second from York, but long before it ever arrived in Wales, sustained a serious crack in the sump which resulted in consumption of some two to three pints of oil per stage and worried the driver considerably, for surge was occasionally bringing the pressure down to near zero. It was possible that the engine may have been damaged during the day but in Hafren the Chevette *must* have hit an undulation in the road surface which transmitted the shock through the steering wheel. The force was sufficient to break Pentti's right thumb (although he only considered it badly sprained at the time and could not explain the injury) and thereafter the Finn was in severe pain which at times must have been excruciating. Two stages later he failed to hang on to the car and it toppled a full 70 feet off the road and down a gulley where it remained for 20 minutes while a heaving gang, 40-strong, struggled to return it to the road.

Thereafter the car tended to 'bumpsteer' in disconcerting fashion, suggesting that the front end geometry was not correctly aligned. Despite the fact that championship and RAC Rally hopes had evaporated, and in great pain at times, Pentti struggled home to the finish. We gather his thumb will now be in plaster for three weeks.

Chris Sclater had an equally unhappy event. His brand new engine began Sunday by blowing out large quantities of oil, which resulted in low oil pressure and surge in the sump. However, the engine settled down as the rally progressed. Chris was unfortunate to be first on the scene of Saaristo's roll on a long righthand bend in Hafren. The Chevette slid into the ditch while trying to stop, as the TR7, lying on its roof, lay straddling the road, crew members still inside. The Vauxhall crew were just in time to flag down Vatanen who exhibited great control in slicing round the back of the TR7, just clipping it (like Chris had already done) as he passed.

The Chevette escaped from this ditch after two minutes, but on a very icy Cwmhenog, Chris slid off (on his own this time) four miles from the start, and before the infamous bend which claimed other heroes. Martin Holmes then began a two mile run to summon assistance, and the whole procedure cost 15 minutes and any chance of a good place.

Chris fell off again though. This time in the Lake District at Greystoke where the Chevette rolled into a ditch and landed on its wheels amid some tree stumps. After nearly eight minutes, several exhausted spectators and a tow rope, the Chevette emerged over the tree stumps from the ditch, and the tow rope was slung in through the driver's window whereupon Chris drove off, having assumed that a safe amount of rope was inside the car. However, a length had coiled itself around the rear wheel while the jumble inside had found a way around the driver's right arm. Chris could have had his arm wrenched from its socket. As it was he suffered painful bruising and a partially useless limb for some while. Mechanically, however, Sclater's car stood the course, and aside from shock absorbers and brake pads, only a new header tank was fitted as an unscheduled replacement.

In the aftermath of the RAC, Vauxhall's first season with the Chevette has ended in marked anticlimax. No one expected them to achieve what they have done, but the fact that they got so close, only to be beaten at the post must have come as a bitter disappointment which such trifles as cancelled reserve advertisement space in national newspapers etc can only aggravate. Service arrangements did not go entirely smoothly during the rally, despite copious plans, but the future looks very bright.

LEYLAND

Leyland's four car TR7 team comprised a new machine for Pond, one of the Manx cars each for Culcheth and Ryan, and a new Cambridge registered Safety Devices built car for Markku Saaristo. The Triumphs were very much as seen previously, overweight and left behind in the power race, but purposeful and impressive to look at nonetheless.

Facing page, top: Great Orme—almost reminiscent of the Tour de Corse. Bottom: Sandro Munari takes the Stratos round Lodge corner at Oulton Park.

our centre spread

Bjorn Waldegaard marked the first anniversary of his Ford works drive with a faultless performance on the Lombard RAC Rally. With Hans Thorszelius co-driving the British Airways-sponsored Escort RS1800, Waldegaard established no fewer than 25 fastest stage times, and led the event for more than three-quarters of the 1900-mile route. Photo: Hugh Bishop.

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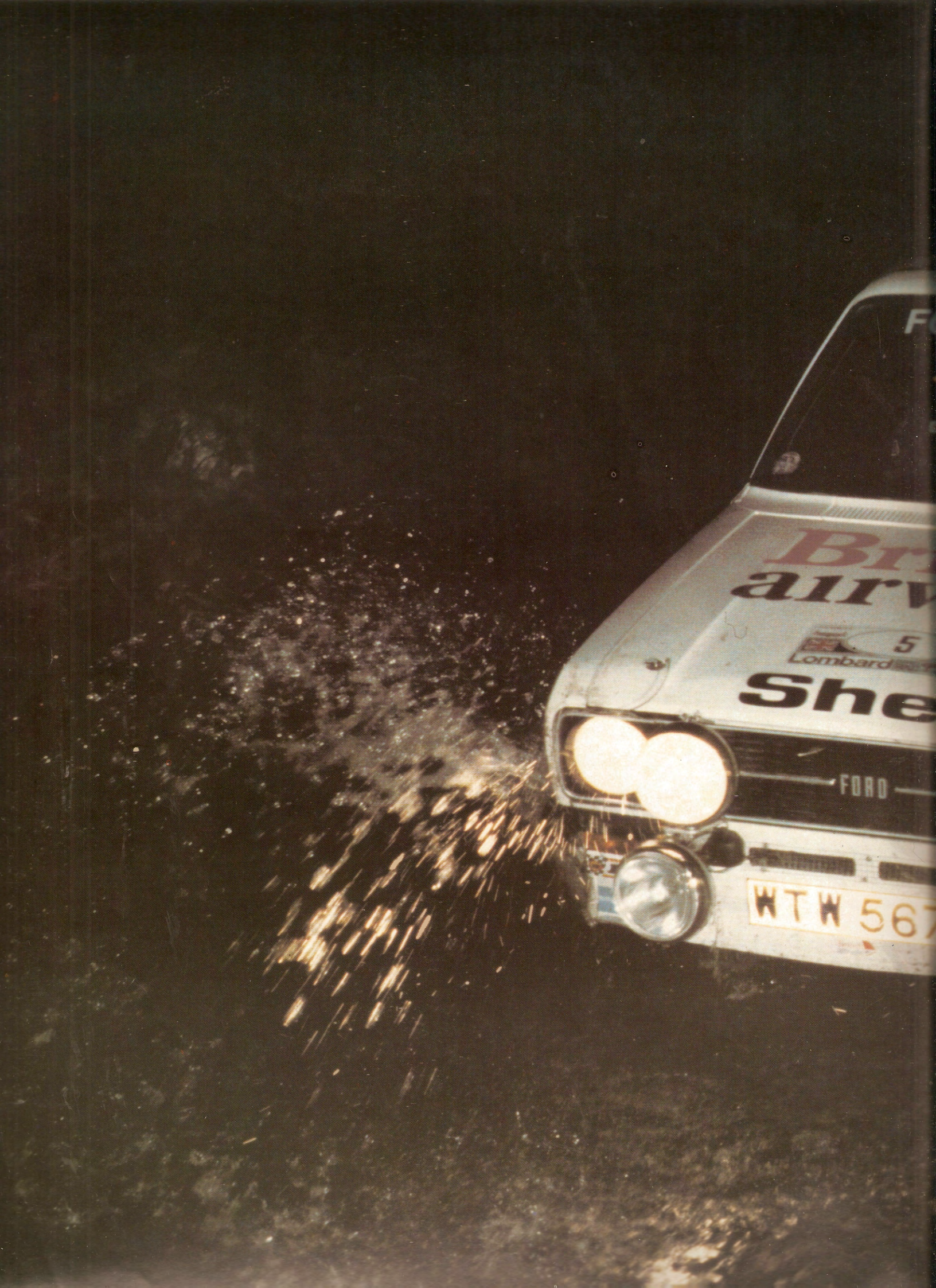
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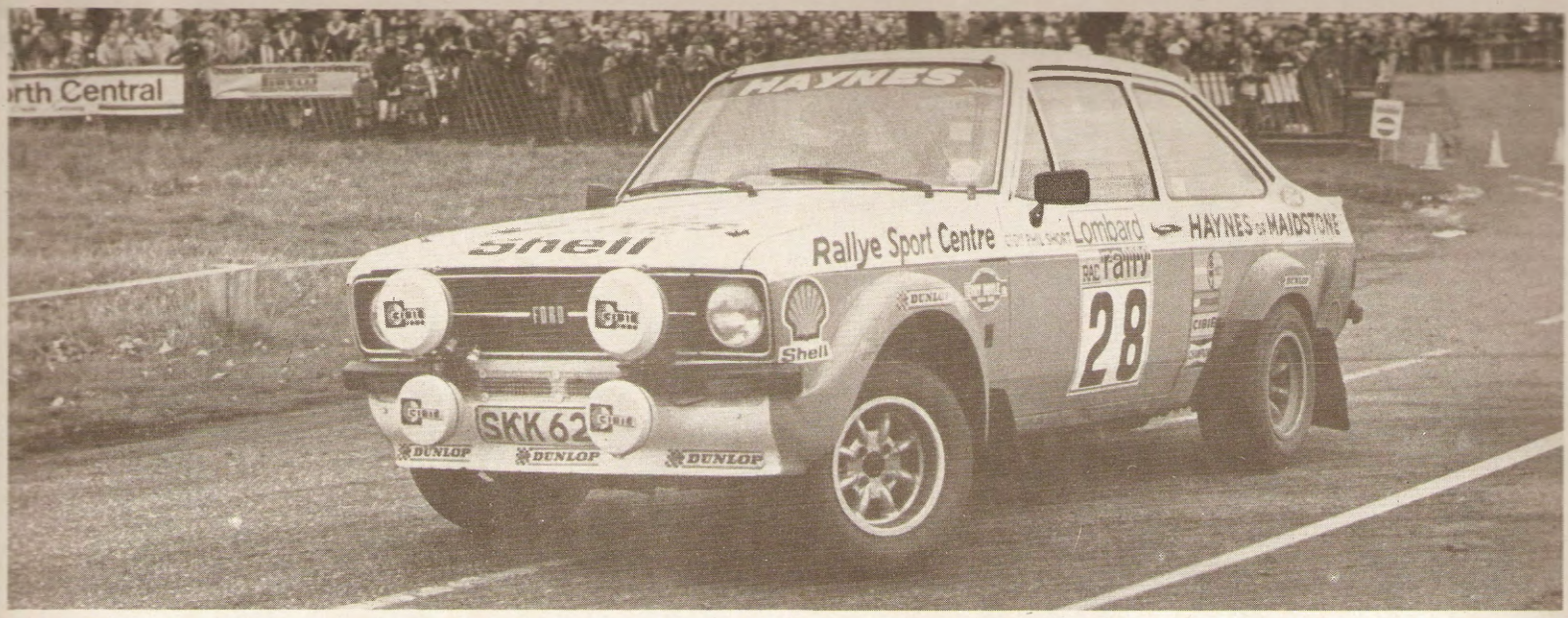
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Facing page, top: John Taylor, destined to retire, stuck in a mud bank with a sick engine. Centre: Tony Pond on his way to a hard-earned eighth place with the TR7. Bottom: The man who came closest to Waldegaard—Markku Alen's Fiat on the first night in Wales.

Saaristo had enjoyed a brief airfield practice in his car which he professed to like although obviously finding the restricted vision and difficulty in judging the width of the car a problem. He also found A2s not at all to his tastes, and like Ryan, stuck to M&S where possible. With A2s fitted, Saaristo found the car difficult to control in a drift and he eventually rolled in Hafren and spent many minutes in the stage before being able to resume in 117th place. At the finish, where he was classified 38th, he was left to ponder the question of why he had not finished higher in a car possessing 220bhp, even with the extensive contribution of his accident.

Pond's car was afflicted from the start with heavy steering which no amount of geometry checks, tracking etc could cure. He and Pat Ryan were not too happy with the handling which seemed very prone to understeer, and the cars were also noticeably slower than the opposition down the straights. Culcheth suffered wheel stud failure in exactly similar fashion to the events which surrounded the Hunsrück when the nuts were left only loosely tightened, and posted the first Leyland retirement in Wales on Monday night. By this time Pond was working his way laboriously up the leader board but as the rally progressed his car seemed to become that much less cooperative, and when the clutch began to slip badly on the final leg he drove to Teesside for a replacement only to discover that the team's spare unit had already been fitted to Ryan's car at an earlier date. He eventually finished a disconsolate eighth overall, unable to set times remotely comparable with the Fords.

Ryan, after clouting the bank on cold racers at Croft and repeated visits to ditches in various parts of the country, began to suffer overheating in the Lake District following an earlier water pump change. A suspected sticking thermostat was changed along with clutch and gearbox, and the crew continued, albeit OTL.

CHRYSLER

Chrysler suffered a disastrous rally, and not one of their works or works-assisted cars finished the event. Even Charlie Wood's remark ("I'm glad it went 'pop' because I wouldn't have wanted a bad result!") can hardly have offered much consolation. Both Gavin Waugh and Charlie Wood retired on Sunday, with suspected main bearing failure and valves hitting pistons respectively, while Sparrow disappeared on Tuesday afternoon in Clocaenog 3 with a broken differential which he thought initially was the usual culprit—the gearbox. It was only after being towed out of the stage and having the innocent unit changed

After Salonen's accident, Simo Lampinen had a real 'go'! Are rumours of his impending retirement from rallying correct?

that the differential was at last suspected.

Andrew Cowan found his unfamiliar 16-valve machine somewhat 'cammy' and thus difficult to drive on unseen roads. However, he coped well before running wide on a corner in Dovey and sticking fast in the thick shale and mud for 12 minutes. The engine eventually expired on the first Clocaenog test on Tuesday afternoon. It was a spectacular finale for the 16-valve Avenger, as the gushing oil from the ventilated block poured out over the hot exhaust, starting a raging fire under the car which certainly caught the imagination of spectators as it limped towards the end of the stage.

Top ten after TC37B York at 19.50 on November 22.
1, Bjorn Waldegaard (RS1800), 259mins 55secs pens; 2, Hannu Mikkola (Toyota Celica), 260:38; 3, Russell Brookes (RS1800), 261:05; 4, Andy Dawson (RS1800), 265:54; 5, Timo Salonen (Fiat 131 Abarth), 268:29; 6, Roger Clark (RS1800), 268:54; 7, Tony Pond (Triumph TR7), 270:57; 8, Kyosti Hamalainen (RS1800), 271:06; 9, Jean-Luc Therier (Toyota Celica), 271:43; 10, Per Eklund (Saab 99 EMS), 272:38.

OPEL

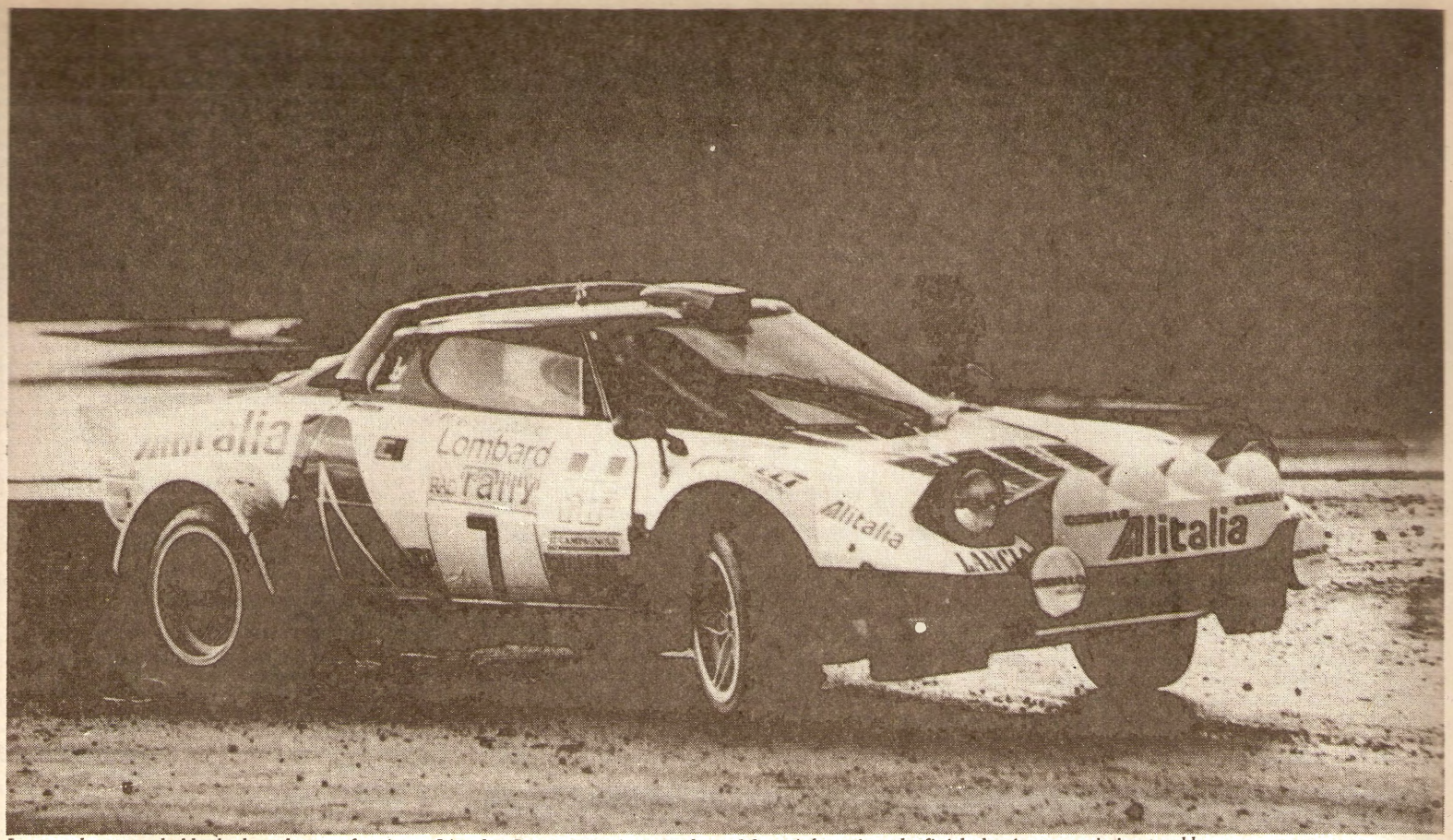
Anders Kullang's G2 class win for Opel, and Danielsson's hard-won tenth place in the DOT G4 car kept hopes alive for Opel during the RAC Rally. The combined Eurohandler and DOT effort brought a number of personnel from different countries and produced quite remarkable cooperation. Kullang's torque tube failure on Stang East, which resulted in him having to push the car out of the stage was unexpected in that it was the special steel outer casing which broke (this is normally constructed from aluminium) rather than the spline inside. Kullang lost eight minutes here, but after a change of axle, carried on to take the class.

Walter Rohrl, who was in Italy late last week putting the finishing touches to his Fiat contract, suffered from a misfiring engine which the Irmscher mechanics could not cure. By a cruel touch of irony, he was overtaking Tony Fall on the return to York from Ruthin when the engine expired completely.

Lars Carlsson had been surprising the Group One contingent with some excellent times (second overall in Group One) when he was involved in a road accident through no fault of his own. On the way into Machynlleth he was following Russell Brookes down the outside of a queue at about 25mph when without warning one of their number turned right straight in front of him. The Opel was too badly damaged to continue.

Danielsson drove steadily for a finish on a rally but towards the end of the event it began to look as though he would fail to do so once again. From Glentress in Scotland, all the way to the finish, the Opel's clutch began slipping, and worsened as the event drew to a close. It's a one-and-a-half hour job on a Kadett and there was simply no time for such a task. Nevertheless Bror finished the rally, happy to have secured tenth place overall.

The most unlucky competitor on the Lombard RAC? To complete all the special stages, and yet still be OTL at the finish, Terry Kaby qualifies for this title.



Last week was probably the last chance of seeing a 24-valve Stratos in action over here. Munari drove it to the finish despite transmission trouble.

WCR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP **LOMBARD RAC RALLY** **11**

continued

SAAB

Exactly what steps Saab will be taking in the competition world next year remained a mystery as we went to press. The 16-valve heads have presumably been seen for the last time. RAC Rally fortunes depended very much on sustained snow and ice, and with only a handful of stages seriously affected, Saab were not really in with a great chance. In addition they found that the compound they had ordered for the tryes did not meet with expectations or requirements, so they were not a happy team at the start.

Blomqvist and Eklund tried as hard as ever, Stig eventually retiring as a result of layshaft failure and his car was eventually towed out of the centre of Clocaenog forest. The layshaft between the engine and the clutch has failed only twice before, about three years ago, when Saab were developing the car. Eklund suffered the more common driveshaft failure before rolling the EMS in Yorkshire on the last morning. He then drove one and a half stages with the rear wheels askew, rubbing against the bodywork, before the mechanics could repair the car sufficiently to allow him to make the finish, where he settled for ninth behind Tony Pond.

Top ten after TC53A Moffat at 21.48 on November 23.
1, Bjorn Waldegaard (RS1800), 354mins 13secs pens; 2, Hannu Mikkola (Toyota Celica), 356:44; 3, Russell Brookes (RS1800), 360:24; 4, Roger Clark (RS1800), 365:37; 5, Kyosti Hamalainen (RS1800), 368:17; 6, Tony Pond (Triumph TR7) and Andy Dawson (RS1800), 368:53; 8, Per Eklund (Saab 99 EMS), 369:14; 9, Simo Lampinen (Fiat 131 Abarth), 370:53; 10, Bror Danielsson (Opel Kadett GT/E), 371:30.

OTHERS

Munari came to the RAC with the intention of winning the rally. This was to be the swansong of the 24-valve Stratos under the existing homologation rules, and the FIA World Drivers championship was not really the point in question on this occasion. His troubles began on Gartheiniog where the fan belt broke and the V6 overheated, but he then stopped in Radnor with the gearbox jammed in fourth gear and lost a total of 52 minutes here before struggling on thanks to the help of spectators. Finally it was Ron Pellatt (ex-Chequered Flag chief mechanic, now with Copersucar) and the Chequered Flag service crew who came to Munari's aid, changing both the gear ratios and the clutch, and allowing him to continue.

Sandro repaid their efforts and those of the many spectators who helped him out of Radnor, by remaining in the event, albeit way back (he finished 25th) and thus allowing many people the chance of seeing this amazing vehicle, probably for the last time. The RAC may not be the Italians' favourite, but Munari stuck to his task despite an obvious reluctance at times, and finished the rally without further serious trouble.

Both Renaults retired from the Rally, Ragnotti while leading the class handsomely, and Nicolas in Yorkshire, almost in sight of the finish, after a rally of problems caused by the unsuitabilty of the new Michelin tyres in very slippery conditions, and the fact that the cars were generally thought to be too high and soft. However, the R5s were a tremendous success with crowds wherever they went and its doubtful if any newcomers to the rally have ever been so instantly popular. Nicolas, like Ragnotti, suffered driveshaft failure, but Jean Pierre met more British inhabitants than even he imagined he would when after completing three stages in Wales on sidelights as a result of alternator failure, he then ran out of petrol on a stage, and had to rush off into the inky blackness of the night in search of 'Jerry' cans and generosity. One hopes the enthusiastic and personable Frenchmen will return with their exciting little cars.

John Haugland had an uncharacteristically troubled RAC, going through two gearboxes, both of which developed severe oil seal leaks (the first cost 10 minutes on stages, and was changed at Machynlleth) a loose distributor on a stage (Crychan, 1m) and other minor problems. Nevertheless he soldiered on and was finally handed the class on the last day when Zapadlo went off twice. John has now won his class for Skoda four times in the past four years, and Skoda's effort this year was again impressive.

The little Renaults became highly popular with the vast crowds. Below is Jean Pierre Nicolas.

GROUP ONE

With the demise of Carlsson, the only foreigner able to challenge the British on their own ground, the Group One contest became a very parochial affair—albeit a very fast and furious one. Both Graham Elsmore and Malcolm Wilson had been loaned brand new Terry Hoyle Pinto engines before the start, and both drove excellent rallies to finish second and first in the Group respectively. If there *was* a difference in specification between these engines, then it should not detract from an excellent performance from Malcolm who at the end of a very hard and frustrating year, had nothing to lose and everything to gain. Graham was never able to match his stage times consistently, despite driving as hard as he could (having given up the waiting game on the third day!) and even though the Thomas Motors car never even sustained a puncture, Malcolm was not to be caught.

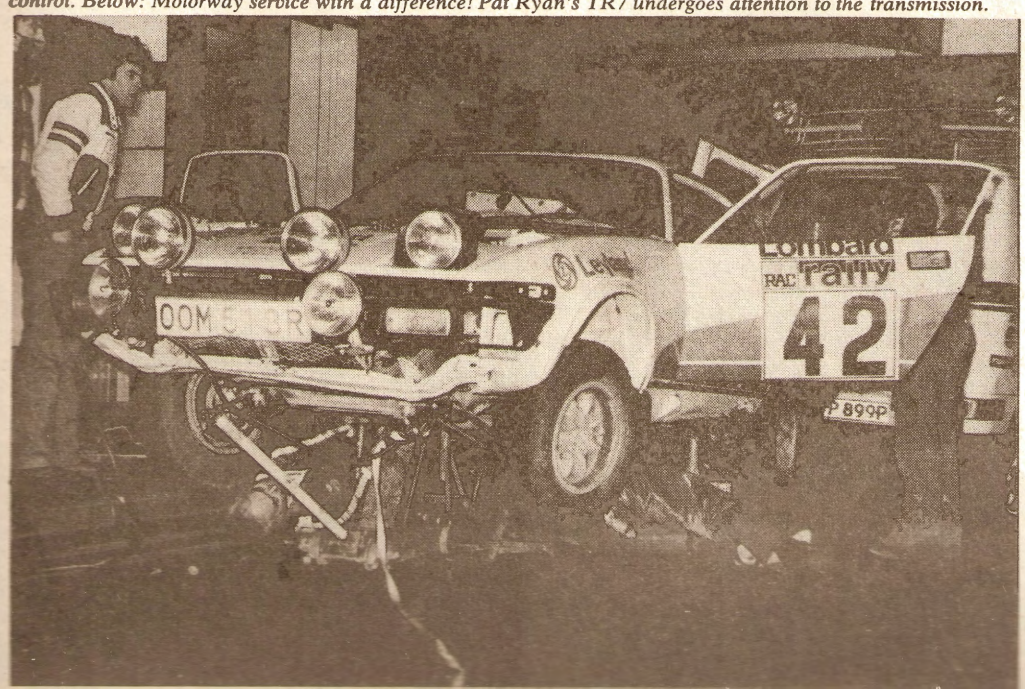
Top ten after TC62A Teesside at 08.40 on November 24.
1, Bjorn Waldegaard (RS1800), 458mins 11secs pens; 2, Hannu Mikkola (Toyota Celica), 460:20; 3, Russell Brookes (RS1800), 467:49; 4, Roger Clark (RS1800), 472:55; 5, Andy Dawson (RS1800), 476:21; 6, Kyosti Hamalainen (RS1800), 478:07; 7, Per Eklund (Saab 99 EMS), 479:24; 8, Simo Lampinen (Fiat 131 Abarth), 480:42; 9, Tony Pond (Triumph TR7), 481:00; 10, Bror Danielsson (Opel Kadett GT/E), 481:27.

He took the lead from Jim McRae in Penmachno on the Monday afternoon, and thereafter was never headed, despite one or two potentially serious problems including a need for a replacement exhaust in Kielder, and a stomach ailment which beset him all the way from Penrith to Teesside. The County Garages RS2000 was without a starter motor for the entire third loop into Scotland, and three stages from the finish, Malcolm almost surrendered a great drive to Elsmore when he clipped a pile of logs at the start of Dalby and lost two minutes with a some rear wheel puncture. Fortunately the tyre took some three miles to deflate. McRae was forced to give up the struggle with his SMT/DTV Magnum on the A74 when after ten stages without a clutch, a piston cracked while on the road section in pouring rain from Penrith to Castle O'er.

Perhaps the saddest tale of the rally belongs to Terry Kaby who nevertheless bore his disappointment philosophically. After coping with two bent steering racks, a seemingly perennial lack of rear brakes and several punctures, Terry seemed certain of third in Group One until the first signs of engine trouble appeared in Dalby on Thursday morning when water was seen pouring out of the overflow pipe. Overnight the car had required a large amount of water but on the penultimate stage, a section of the headgasket blew out and both oil and water drained away together. The engine was dry at the finish and poured water straight out of the block when any was added, so bad was the gasket failure. The Dolomite faltered at the end of Wykeham, the last stage and thanks to a tremendous effort from spectators, was pushed over the finish line—a 1 in 4 hill slope! Thereafter the car was towed back towards York, and successfully 'negotiated' one control before being defeated by traffic. The crew arrived at the final control four minutes OTL.

As a postscript to misfortune, Billy Coleman retired the Chequered Flag 12-valve car when the distributor drive sheared on the road section before Sutton Park and seized the distributor itself. Regrettably there were no spares available so the black and white machine with its all new University Motors engine had to be pushed forlornly away.

Above: A mature and very quick drive from Malcolm Wilson vanquished Graham Elsmore's attempts to take control. Below: Motorway service with a difference! Pat Ryan's TR7 undergoes attention to the transmission.



1977 Lombard RAC Rally
WCR Round 11 **Motor/RAC Round 13**
19/25 November

1, B. Waldegaard/H. Thorszelius (RS1800), 501m 26s penalties;
2, H. Mikkola/A. Hertz (Toyota Celica GT), 503.49;
3, R. Brookes/J. Brown (RS1800), 511.55;
4, R. Clark/S. Pegg (RS1800), 516.21;
5, A. Dawson/A. Marriott (RS1800), 519.46;
6, K. Hämäläinen/H. Scott (RS1800), 522.17;
7, S. Lampinen/S. Andreasson (Fiat 131 Abarth), 524.24; 8, T. Pond/F. Gallagher (Triumph TR7), 525.04; 9, P. Eklund/B. Cederberg (Saab 99EMS), 526.02; 10, B. Danielsson/M. Broad (Opel Kadett GTE), 526.22; 11, T. Makinen/H. Liddon (Fiat 131 Abarth), 535.25;12, M. Wilson/R. Palmer (RS2000), 538.06; 13, G. Elsmore/S. Harrold (RS1800), 539.26; 14, P.-I. Walfridsson/J. Jensen (Toyota Celica GT), 539.38; 15, A. Kullang/B. Berglund (Opel Kadett GTE), 524.50; 16, P. Airikkala/R. Virtanen (Vauxhall Chevette 2300HS); 17, F. Bacchelli/F. Rossetti (Fiat 131 Abarth), 554.22; 18, C. Sclater/M. Holmes (Vauxhall Chevette 2300HS), 554.53; 19, D. Thompson/A. Greenwood (RS1800), 556.07; 20, R. Hainbach/P. Linzen (RS1800), 557.41.
182 starters—67 finishers.

Group One
1, M. Wilson/R. Palmer (RS2000), 538.06 (12th o/a);
2, G. Elsmore/S. Harrold (RS1800), 539.26 (13th o/a);
3, G. Colsoul/A. Lopes (Opel Kadett GTE), 576.00 (26th o/a);
4, Alan Carter/Adrienne Fenwicke (RS2000), 578.34 (30th o/a);
5, D. Jones/R. Roebuck (RS2000), 580.28 31st o/a).

Clubman's Trophy
1, D. Thompson/A. Blackdora (Vauxhall Firenza), 287.07;
2, J. Thompson/N. Calvert (Escort Mexico), 305.10;
3, M. May/G. May (RS1600), 311.04;
4, N. Porter/J. Parker (Mercedes Benz), 318.40;
5, J. Banks/T. Thorp (RS1600), 319.11.

Classes
Class 1 (G1 up to 1300cc)
L. Sundling/B. Lie (Honda Civic), 621.42 (40th o/a);
Class 2 (G1 up to 1600cc)
J. Parsons/J. Dandy (Chrysler Avenger GT), 640.23 (48th o/a);
Class 3 (G1 over 1600cc)
M. Wilson/R. Palmer (RS2000), 538.06 (12th o/a);
Class 4 (G2 up to 1300cc)
J. Haugland/R. Saunders (Skoda 130RS), 570.06 (23rd o/a);
Class 5 (G2)
A. Kullang/B. Berglund (Opel Kadett GTE), 524.50 (15th o/a);
Class 6 (G2/4 up to 1600cc)
F. Henderson/C. Wilson (Toyota Corolla TE37), 576.03 (27th o/a);
Class 7 (G2/4 up to 2000cc)
B. Waldegaard/H. Thorszelius (RS1800), 501.26 (1st o/a);
Class 8 (G2/4 over 2000cc)
P. Airikkala/R. Virtanen (Vauxhall Chevette 2300HS), 543.32 (16th o/a).

Private entrants
1, R. Millen/M. Franchi (Mazda RX3), 564.58 (21st o/a);
2, M. Johansson/M. Harvey (RS1800), 578.13 (28th o/a);
3, A. Carter/A. Fenwicke (RS1800), 578.34 (29th o/a).

Ladies Award
J. Robinson/D. Selby Boothroyd (RS2000), 639.51 (47th o/a).

Manufacturers' Team Prize
1, Ford, 2, Skoda.

Rally leaders: SS1-9 Airikkala; SS10-13 Mikkola; SS14-end Waldegaard.

Number of fastest stage times	1	2	3	4	5
Waldegaard	25	16	9	5	5
Brookes	15	10	10	5	7
Mikkola	14	16	12	8	5
Vatanen	5	5	2	1	1
Airikkala	5	—	2	2	7
Munari	4	5	3	6	2
Lampinen	4	—	1	1	3
Clark	3	5	10	7	4
Dawson	2	7	9	7	6
Eklund	2	—	—	4	5
Makinen	1	3	2	6	6
Alen	1	3	—	3	2
Blomqvist	1	1	—	2	2
Pond	—	1	1	2	2
Kullang	—	1	—	—	1
Asterhag	—	1	—	—	1
Bacchelli	—	1	—	—	—
Sclater	—	—	2	4	3
Hämäläinen	—	—	2	4	1
Salonen	—	—	1	1	3
Therier	—	—	1	—	1
Taylor	—	—	1	—	—

Previous winners
'68: Lampinen; '69 and '70: Kallstrom; '71: Blomqvist; '72: Clark; '73, '74, '75: Makinen; '76: Clark.

Final WCR Positions
Fiat 154 (136 from best 8 scores); Ford 142 (132); Toyota 70; Opel 65; Lancia 60; Datsun 40; Porsche 36; Saab 30; Chrysler 24; Mitsubishi 22; Peugeot 15; SEAT 14; Citroën 13; Mazda and Renault Alpine 10; Leyland and Volvo 8; Skoda and Renault 7; Lada 4.

Motor/RAC final positions
Russell Brookes 75; Pentti Airikkala 73; Andy Dawson 62; Hannu Mikkola 53; John Taylor 38; Nigel Rockey 33; Paul Faulkner 32; Graham Elsmore 31; Chris Sclater and Jim McRae 30. **Group One:** Graham Elsmore 77; Jim McRae 74; Malcolm Wilson 68; Will Sparrow 64; Gavin Waugh 39; Pat Ryan 37; Chris Field 20; Steve Smith 16; David Jones 14; David Robbins and John Cleary 13.

Leading retirements
Stig Blomqvist/Hans Sylvan (Saab 99EMS Rally), transmission lay shaft, 35 stages;
Markku Alen/Ilkka Kivimaki (Fiat 131 Abarth), piston failure, 23 stages; while 2nd o/a;
Ari Vatanen/Pete Bryant (RS1800), accident/driver illness, 29 stages;
Timo Salonen/Jaakko Markkula (Fiat 131 Abarth), accident/driver illness, 44 stages while 5th o/a;
Walter Rohrl/Willi Peter Pitz (Opel Kadett GTE), engine failure, 37 stages;
Maurizio Verini/Nini Russo (Fiat 131 Abarth), accident, 42 stages;
Jean Luc Therier/Michel Vial (Toyota Celica GT), accident, 52 stages;
Andrew Cowan/Paul White (Chrysler Avenger GT), engine failure, 34 stages;
Leif Asterhag/Anders Gullberg (Toyota Corolla), piston failure, 26 stages;
John Taylor/Phil Short (RS1800), distributor, off, 58 stages;
Brian Culcheth/Johnstone Syer (Triumph TR7), wheels studs, 18 stages;
Billy Coleman/Dan O'Sullivan (Lancia Stratos), distributor, 2 stages;
Jean Ragnotti/Jean Marc Andrie (Renault R5 Alpine), driveshaft, 34 stages;
Jean Pierre Nicolas/Vincent Laverne (Renault R5 Alpine), driveshaft, 65 stages;
Nigel Rockey/Derek Tucker (RS1800), steering damaged/OTL, 37 stages;
Tony Drummond/David Curry (RS1800), alternator, 20 stages;
Tony Fowkes/Bryan Harris (RS1800), flywheel broken, 12 stages;
Jim McRae/Ian Muir (Vauxhall Magnum), headgasket/clutch, 48 stages;
Jan Hetterna/John Gittins (RS1800), differential, eight stages;
Pat Ryan/Mike Nicholson (Triumph TR7), overheating/OTL, 57 stages;

Will Sparrow/Rodney Spokes (Chrysler Avenger GT), differential, 37 stages;
George Hill/Roger Jones (Vauxhall Chevette), water pump, 19 stages;
Lars Carlsson/Bob de Jong (Opel Kadett GTE), accident on road, 19 stages;
Robin Eyre Maunsell/Neil Wilson (Chrysler Avenger GT), engine (valve), 12 stages;
Terry Kaby/Bob Freeborough (Triumph Dolomite Sprint), headgasket, 69 stages;
Ruben Borgesson/Joe Hawkins (BMW 320i), gearbox, 4 stages;
Henry Inurrieta/Dave West (RS2000), fire in engine bay, 55 stages;
Gavin Waugh/Peter Handy (Chrysler Avenger GT), main bearings, 1 stage.

Other finishers
Timo Makinen/Henry Liddon (Fiat 131 Abarth), delayed 10 minutes, accident;
Pentti Airikkala/Risto Virtanen (Vauxhall Chevette), delayed 21 minutes, accident;
Fulvio Bacchelli/Francesco Rosetti (Fiat 131 Abarth), delayed 9 minutes, punctures;
Chris Sclater/Martin Holmes (Vauxhall Chevette), delayed 24 minutes, accidents;
Sandro Munari/Piero Sodano (Lancia Stratos), delayed 52 minutes, jammed gearbox.

Rally: 68 stages, 5 all asphalt (19 miles), 6 part asphalt; other all gravel (forestry), 395 miles. Length of road sections 1,633 miles. 32 stages in daylight; three stages affected by snow, one seriously; many very wet and slippery; 50 per cent dry. Start at Wembley 0900 Sunday—halts Sunday night and Tuesday night at York. Finish—1600 Thursday, York.

Other notable features
Brookes is 1977 British Rally Champion.
This rally was also the last WCR event to take place before the dispensation on homologations lapse. Manufacturers affected are Saab, Toyota, Opel, Chrysler, Lancia (24 valve model Stratos).

Special stage times

Sunday 10 stages

SS1 Blenheim Palace (4 miles)
1, Airikkala 3.46; 2, Makinen 3.51; 3, Waldegaard 3.52; 4, Munari 3.54; 5, Mikkola 3.55.

SS2 Towcester Racecourse (2 miles)
1, Mikkola 2.02; 2=Waldegaard and Vatanen 2.03; 4=Alen, Airikkala, Munari, Eklund, Dawson 2.06.

SS3 Sutton Park (5 miles)
1, Airikkala 5.42; 2=Munari and Dawson 5.54; 4, Sclater 5.55; 5, Brookes 5.56.

SS4 Tom's Hill (4 miles)
1, Clark 4.35; 2, Mikkola 4.39; 3, Waldegaard 4.44; 4, Munari 4.46; 5, Airikkala 4.48.

SS5 Donington Park (3 miles)
1, Airikkala 2.43; 2, Dawson 2.45; 3=Clark and Mikkola 2.46; 5=Sclater, Waldegaard, Therier 2.47.

SS6 Blidworth (2 miles)
1, Mikkola 2.12; 2, Blomqvist 2.14; 3=Airikkala, Waldegaard and Munari 2.15; 5=Clark, Sclater and Eklund 2.17.

SS7 Clipstone 1 (6 miles)
1, Mikkola 5.48; 2, Vatanen 5.53; 3, Waldegaard 5.54; 4, Blomqvist 5.56; 5=Airikkala, Makinen, Sclater, Drummond 5.58.

SS8 Clipstone 2 (2 miles)
1=Vatanen and Brookes 2.35; 3=Mikkola and Dawson 2.37; 5, Waldegaard 2.40.

SS9 Finningley (3 miles)
1=Vatanen and Waldegaard 2.44; 3=Clark and Dawson 2.45; 5=Alen, Asterhag 2.46.

SS10 Bramham Park 1 (4 miles)
1, Blomqvist 5.51; 2=Munari and Asterhag 5.52; 4=Alen, Brookes and Pond 5.53.

Monday/Tuesday 27 stages

SS11 Bramham Park 2 (4 miles)
1, Munari 5.29; 2, Alen 5.34; 3, Salonen 5.35; 4, Mikkola 5.39; 5=Makinen and Lampinen 5.40.

SS12 Oulton Park (3 miles)
1, Brookes 1.51; 2=Clark, Waldegaard, Mikkola, Dawson, Vatanen and Sclater 1.54; 4, Therier 1.55; 5=Airikkala and Munari 1.56.

SS13 Great Orme (3 miles)
1, Waldegaard 2.50; 2=Munari, Mikkola and Vatanen 2.51; 4=Airikkala and Brookes 2.52; 5, Sclater 2.54.

SS14 Beddgelert (6 miles)
1, Waldegaard 8.08; 2, Dawson 8.29; 3, Vatanen 8.32; 4, Alen 8.33; 5, Airikkala 8.36.

SS15 Penmachno North (7 miles)
1, Waldegaard 8.13; 2, Munari 8.15; 3, Brookes 8.16; 4=Mikkola and Dawson 8.19.

SS16 Penmachno South (5 miles)
1, Brookes 6.55; 2, Alen 6.57; 3, Dawson 6.58; 4, Vatanen 7.01; 5, Waldegaard 7.03.

SS17 Gartheinlog (10 miles)
1, Dawson 11.38; 2, Alen 11.39; 3, Waldegaard 11.42; 4, Brookes 11.44; 5, Airikkala 11.54.

SS18 Dovey (12 miles)
1, Blomqvist 14.38; 2, Alen 14.51; 3, Dawson 15.06; 4, Brookes 15.10; 5, Waldegaard 15.14.

SS19 Pantperthog (9 miles)
1, Alen 11.05; 2=Brookes and Mikkola 11.22; 4, Munari 11.24; 5, Waldegaard 11.25.

SS20 Hafren (19 miles)
1, Mikkola 23.15; 2, Vatanen 23.26; 3, Brookes 23.28; 4, Waldegaard 23.44; 5, Dawson 23.47.

SS21 Rheidol (2 miles)
1, Vatanen 2.27; 2, Waldegaard 2.32; 3=Airikkala and Brookes 2.33; 5, Alen 2.34.

SS22 Cyneiniog (2 miles)
1, Waldegaard 3.46; 2=Vatanen and Brookes 3.47; 4, Mikkola 3.49; 5=Makinen and Blomqvist 3.52.

SS23 Taliesin (5 miles)
1, Waldegaard 6.49; 2, Brookes 7.01; 3=Vatanen and Mikkola 7.07; 5, Makinen 7.09.

SS24 Llanafan (5 miles)
1, Vatanen 7.04; 2, Waldegaard 7.07; 3, Brookes 7.10; 4, Blomqvist

A moment to savour. Champagne for the winners at York Racecourse on a cold November evening.

SS25 Brechfa West (45 miles)
1, Waldegaard 4.55; 2=Brookes and Bacchelli 5.00; 4, Mikkola 5.03; 5, Blomqvist 5.04.

SS26 Brechfa East (7 miles)
1, Brookes 9.00; 2, Waldegaard 9.01; 3, Mikkola 9.02; 4, Makinen 9.09; 5, Vatanen 9.12.

SS27 Glasfynydd (4 miles)
1=Waldegaard and Brookes 6.22; 3, Clark 6.25; 4, Hämäläinen 6.26; 5=Salonen and Pond 6.29.

SS28 Halfway (2 miles)
1=Airikkala and Brookes 2.51; 3, Mikkola 2.58; 4, Waldegaard 3.00; 5=Pond and Sclater 3.02.

SS29 Crychan (8 miles)
1, Brookes 9.46; 2, Mikkola 9.56; 3, Waldegaard 9.57; 4, Pond 10.09; 5=Makinen and Salonen 10.10.

SS30 Cwm Henog (11 miles)
1, Clark 14.35; 2, Mikkola 14.41; 3, Brookes 14.44; 4, Waldegaard 14.49; 5, Airikkala 14.51.

SS31 Nantyrhwch (7 miles)
1, Mikkola 11.36; 2, Waldegaard 11.40; 3, Brookes 11.41; 4, Eklund 11.42; 5, Kullang 11.46.

SS32 Radnor (6 miles)
1, Brookes 6.23; 2, Waldegaard 6.27; 3, Mikkola 6.37; 4, Clark 6.38; 5, Dawson 6.40.

SS33 Ceri (4 miles)
1, Brookes 4.52; 2=Waldegaard and Mikkola 4.53; 4, Munari 4.55; 5, Clark 4.56.

SS34 Dyfnant (6 miles)
1, Mikkola 7.12; 2=Waldegaard and Brookes 7.15; 4=Clark, Airikkala and Sclater 7.30.

SS35 Clocaenog 1 (3 miles)
1, Brookes 5.01; 2, Waldegaard 5.05; 3, Mikkola 5.09; 4, Clark 5.13; 5, Eklund 5.15.

SS36 Clocaenog 2 (12 miles)
1, Brookes 15.09; 2, Mikkola 15.21; 3, Waldegaard 15.36; 4, Sclater 15.49; 5, Dawson 15.58.

SS37 Clocaenog 3 (5 miles)
1, Brookes 5.36; 2, Mikkola 5.37; 3, Hämäläinen 5.41; 4, Clark 5.43; 5=Eklund and Verini 5.47.

Wednesday/Thursday 32 stages

SS38 Kilburn (2 miles)
1, Waldegaard 2.53; 2=Brookes and Dawson 2.57; 4, Makinen 2.58; 5, Mikkola 2.59.

SS39 Boltby (4 miles)
1, Waldegaard 4.00; 2, Mikkola 4.07; 3, Dawson 4.08; 4, Brookes 4.10; 5, Salonen 4.12.

SS40 Croft (2 miles)
1, Waldegaard 1.37; 2, Brookes 1.38; 3=Sclater, Dawson, Taylor; 5=Clark and Munari 1.40.

SS41 Stang East (3 miles)
1=Waldegaard and Brookes 3.39; 3, Dawson 3.46; 4=Mikkola and Makinen 3.49.

SS42 Stang West (2 miles)
1, Waldegaard 1.56; 2, Brookes 1.57; 3, Mikkola 1.58; 4=Clark and Makinen 2.00.

SS43 Grisedale 1 (6 miles)
1, Waldegaard 8.17; 2=Mikkola and Brookes 8.24; 4=Makinen and Salonen 8.30.

SS44 Grisedale 2 (16 miles)
1, Lampinen 22.19; 2, Makinen 22.21; 3, Therier 22.29; 4, Waldegaard 22.33; 5, Clark 22.54.

SS45 Whinlatter 1 (4 miles)
1, Waldegaard 4.46; 2=Clark and Mikkola 4.51; 4, Dawson 4.56; 5, Eklund 4.59.

SS46 Whinlatter 2 (5 miles)
1=Waldegaard and Dawson 7.25; 3, Clark 76.30; 4, Mikkola 7.33; 5,

SS47 Parkless (3 miles)
1, Mikkola 4.15; 2=Clark and Waldegaard 4.16; 4, Eklund 4.17; 5=Brookes and Dawson 4.18.

SS48 Greystoke (3 miles)
1=Waldegaard and Mikkola 4.12; 3, Munari 4.13; 4, Makinen 4.16; 5, Clark 4.17.

SS49 Castle O'er (4 miles)
1=Waldegaard and Mikkola 4.17; 3=Clark, Hämäläinen and Lampinen 4.23; 5=Eklund and Brookes 4.25.

SS50 Twiglees (5 miles)
1, Waldegaard 6.10; 2=Mikkola and Brookes 6.16; 4=Lampinen, Hämäläinen, Dawson and Inurrieta 6.24.

SS51 Wellcleuch (Ae) (3 miles)
1, Makinen 4.08; 2, Munari 4.09; 3, Brookes 4.13; 4=Mikkola, Eklund and Dawson 4.14.

SS52 White Naze (Ae) (4 miles)
1=Mikkola and Eklund 5.01; 3=Waldegaard and Makinen 5.03; 5=Munari and Wilson 5.05.

SS53 Glenhill (Ae) (7 miles)
1=Brookes and Eklund 7.36; 3, Pond 7.40; 4, Munari 4.44; 5, Wilson 7.45.

SS54 Cardrona (6 miles)
Cancelled.

SS55 Glentress (4 miles)
1, Waldegaard 4.36; 2, Clark 4.46; 3=Mikkola, Brookes 4.50; 5, Hämäläinen 4.52.

SS56 Ellbank (4 miles)
1, Waldegaard 5.33; 2, Mikkola 5.41; 3, Clark 5.42; 4, Hämäläinen 5.43; 5, Makinen 5.48.

SS57 Yarr (5 miles)
1, Mikkola 5.15; 2, Waldegaard 5.20; 3, Clark 5.28; 4=Eklund and Brookes 5.29.

SS58 Wauchope (7 miles)
1, Waldegaard 8.13; 2, Mikkola 8.16; 3, Dawson 8.26; 4, Hämäläinen 8.29, 5, Brookes 8.30.

SS59 Kielder 1 (20 miles)
1, Mikkola 24.41; 2, Waldegaard 24.56; 3, Dawson 25.24; 4, Clark 25.38; 5, Brookes 25.56.

SS60 Kielder 2 (20 miles)
1, Mikkola 22.23; 2, Waldegaard 22.31; 3, Clark 23.03; 4, Brookes 23.05; 5, Dawson 23.12.

SS61 Kielder 3 (20 miles)
1, Mikkola 20.00; 2, Waldegaard 20.37; 3, Brookes 20.54; 4, Dawson 21.04; 5, Clark 20.08.

SS62 Hamsterley (11 miles)
1, Waldegaard 12.12; 2, Makinen 12.26; 3, Mikkola 12.30; 4, Clark 12.37; 5, Brookes 12.41.

SS63 Ingleby (4 miles)
1=Airikkala and Brookes 3.36; 3=Waldegaard and Mikkola 3.38; 5, Dawson 3.40.

SS64 Cropton (6 miles)
1, Lampinen 7.19; 2, Mikkola 7.21; 3, Sclater 7.22; 4, Dawson 7.23; 5, Waldegaard 7.24.

SS65 Gayle Hill (5 miles)
1=Lampinen and Waldegaard 4.58; 3=Clark and Makinen 5.00; 5, Munari 5.01.

SS66 Dalby (15 miles)
1, Clark 11.53; 2, Waldegaard 11.55; 3, Munari 12.03; 4, Dawson 12.05; 5, Mikkola 12.09.

SS67 Staindale (3 miles)
1=Waldegaard and Munari 4.24; 3, Clark 4.25; 4=Mikkola and Dawson 4.27.

SS68 Langdale (8 miles)
1=Lampinen and Dawson 8.02; 3, Mikkola 8.03; 4, Sclater 8.04; 5, Eklund 8.06.

SS69 Wykeham (2 miles)
1, Munari 2.38; 2=Pond, Dawson, Kullang 2.42; 4=Airikkala, Eklund,

by John Bolster

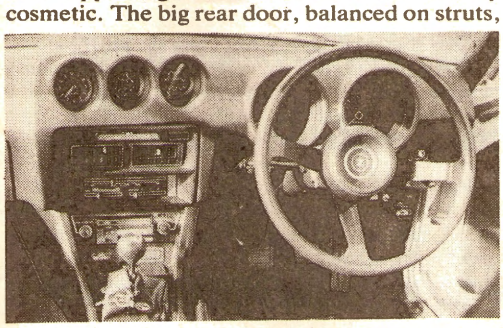
Retaining the well-known shape, the 260Z now displays aerodynamic aids front and rear.

Looking the part

The Datsun 240Z was a much-loved sports coupé with a six-cylinder engine that gave it a reserve of smooth power but was small enough to be reasonably economical. For anti-pollution reasons, and to accommodate low-octane fuels, a longer-stroke version of the overhead-camshaft unit was developed, with a lower compression ratio. I tested both types and found that the later 260Z car was less inclined to rev, because of its longer stroke, but with its higher gearing it was still a fast and effortless sports car.

For the last couple of years, only the longer, 2+2 version has been available in the UK, but now the sports 2-seater is back. I therefore lost no time in obtaining a road-test car, for real sports cars are getting somewhat thin on the ground.

The Datsun retains the well-known shape, though it now displays aerodynamic aids front and rear. Judging by its stability in gusty winds, these appendages are rather more than merely cosmetic. The big rear door, balanced on struts, gives excellent access to the large luggage deck, but it would be well to improvise some sort of cover, for the suitcases are all too visible through the window. This is one of the few cars that provides ample leg room for today's tall young men and, though the seating is fairly low, the view in all directions is satisfactory.



Having a long bonnet, the 260Z easily assimilates an in-line six-cylinder engine, with plenty of metal in the right places. The valves are operated by a chain-driven overhead-camshaft and two constant-vacuum carburettors are mounted on well-proportioned manifolds. However, the design of the exhaust manifold cannot be applauded and a useful power increase is here available for the asking—accessory shops please note! The under-bonnet arrangements offer good accessibility.

Mounted in unit with the engine, the gearbox gives five speeds with a direct fourth, the overdrive fifth gear position being out to the right and forward, which is now the most popular arrangement. A chassis-mounted hypoid unit drives the rear wheels which, like the front, are suspended on struts and lower wishbones. Anti-roll bars are found at both ends and the steering is by rack and pinion.

The attractive lines of the body are complemented by an interior which suits a genuine sports car, with plenty of legible, round dials. The seats give good lateral location, although their head-restraints are rather in the way during reversing manoeuvres. The controls are well-placed and, while the steering is heavy for parking, it becomes reasonably light at normal town speeds. The gearchange is not of the ultra-light variety, as on some Japanese cars, but it is easy to use and absolutely precise.

Above: The interior suits a genuine sports car. Below: The big rear door gives excellent access.

The car starts instantly from cold, after which the choke should not be fully released too soon, but the big engine actually warms up quite quickly. First gear is unusually high, which is ideal for hairpin bends on mountain roads. The engine is very flexible and quiter than that of the original 260Z, but there is no point in using maximum revs in the gears and I found that I obtained the best acceleration by changing up reasonably early. Theoretically, it would be possible to reach 100mph in third gear, but 90mph is a more realistic speed. There seems little difference in the *maxima* on fourth or fifth, about 115mph being an honest figure.

The latest Datsun is more refined than its predecessors and it has a marvellously long-legged stride. It makes fine averages without ever being pressed and high cruising speeds do not empty the petrol tank too rapidly. Some sports coupés suffer greatly from booming, but the 260Z is innocent of this fault. Nevertheless, there is a good deal of tyre roar on non-skid surfaces and some thumping over bad bumps. The ride is fairly firm but by no means harsh, and the comfort of the occupants is ensured by an excellent heating and ventilation system with a truly silent fan.

Normally, there is a moderate degree of under-steer, changing gradually to over-steer during hard driving or on lift-off. The car feels stable at speed but the steering seems slightly dead on occasion, though the controllability is generally good. The brakes are powerful and responsive, coping well with fast touring, though they would need some attention for competition work. As supplied, the 260Z makes a charming road car for any purpose, with plenty of performance in reserve and a sporting character that is not over-emphasised.

Though there is still a demand for a good-looking two-seater, with no space for occasional passengers, the day has gone when such cars were expected to be noisy and intractable. The Datsun looks the part, but it has six-cylinder smoothness and a clutch light enough for a feminine foot, plus fuel economy that would not disgrace a rather dull family saloon.

Specification and performance data

Car tested: Datsun 260Z 2-seater coupé, price £5728.

Engine: Six-cylinder in line 83x79mm (2565cc).Compression ratio 9.2 to 1. 150bhp DIN at 5400rpm. Chain-driven overhead camshaft. 2 Hitachi constant-vacuum carburettors.

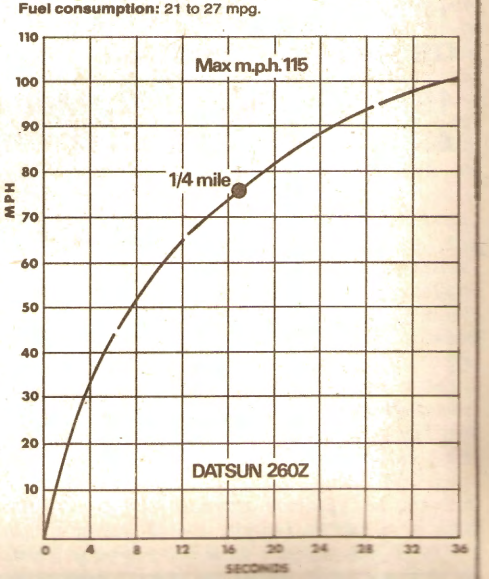
Transmission: Single dry plate clutch. 5-speed synchromesh gearbox, ratios; 0.86, 1.0, 1.31, 2.08, and 3.32 to 1. Hypoid final drive, ratio 3.54 to 1. Driveshafts to rear hubs.

Chassis: Combined steel body and chassis. Independent suspension of all wheels by coil-spring struts and lower wishbones with anti-roll bars. Rack and pinion steering. Servo-assisted dual-circuit disc/drum brakes. Bolt-on light-alloy wheels, fitted 195/70 VR 14 tyres.

Equipment: 12-volt lighting and starting. Speedometer. Rev-counter. Oil-pressure, water-temperature and fuel gauges. Voltmeter. 2-speed and intermittent wipers and washer. Flashing direction indicators with hazard warning. Heating, demisting, and ventilation system with heated rear windows. Reversing lights.

Dimensions: Wheelbase 7ft 6.7ins, track 4ft 5.5ins/4ft 5ins, overall length 11ft 6ins, width 5ft 4.2ins, Weight 1 ton 2 cwt 3 qrs.

Fuel consumption: 21 to 27 mpg.



by John Bolster

Refined new Alfa

Alfa Romeo have found an individual shape for the Giulietta.

The name Giulietta is a famous one in Alfa Romeo annals. The original model to bear the title was a real trend-setter in 1955 among small cars. The new Giulietta, like its predecessor, is a family saloon specifically designed to have sports car handling qualities, but it incorporates more than 20 years of engineering progress.

In Italy, the car has two alternative engine sizes, 1.6 and 1.3 litres, the latter being favoured in its country of origin because it earns a reduction of tax and *autostrada* dues. However, only the larger engine will be imported into Britain, because such artificial advantages don't apply here. I shall therefore concentrate on the Giulietta 1.6.

In designing the new car, the Alfa Romeo engineers could have produced a front-drive chassis on the lines of the Alfasud, especially as that car is earning such golden opinions everywhere for its handling qualities. Instead, they have followed the Alfetta and used a front engine with rear-wheel drive. Like that car, the clutch, 5-speed gearbox, and differential are combined in a light-alloy housing, which also carries the inboard rear disc brakes. Such a design is a sheer joy to the engineering purist, but it would appear to be rather an expensive solution.

The rear hubs are carried on a De Dion axle tube, with forward location by a pair of long, tapered members, angled to meet at a ball joint; lateral forces are absorbed by a central Watts linkage. Coil springs embrace the telescopic dampers and there is an anti-roll bar. In front, there are wishbones and torsion bars, again with an anti-roll bar, and the steering is by rack and pinion.

Too well known to need a long description, the engine has a light-alloy cylinder block with wet liners and five main bearings. The twin camshafts are chain-driven, the exhaust valves are sodium cooled, and each cylinder has its own carburettor choke, as is right and proper. The flywheel is merely a disc to carry the starter ring, a second flywheel serving for the rear-mounted clutch, with a universally-jointed propeller shaft uniting the two.

As the photograph shows, an individual shape has been found for the body which is yet unmistakably Alfa Romeo. It's a full four-seater with four doors and very great pains have been taken over sound insulation, both mechanical and road-inspired. I would be willing to bet that we shall be seeing a Giulietta Sprint Veloce in the not too distant future, too.

Road impressions

I was able to drive the new Giulietta in Sicily, both on the winding roads around Mount Etna and on the *autostrada*. My first impression was that this is a remarkably quiet car, which one has not always been able to say of Alfa Romeos. Not only has the song of the engine been muted, but the rear-mounted transmission is virtually silent. Tyre and wind noises are also well subdued.

Some Sicilian roads provide a good test of suspension and the De Dion axle gives fine traction on bumpy corners. On one occasion, I saw a tremendous bump coming and braced myself for the crash, but the suspension simply soaked it up. The tyres become noisy when corners are taken near the limit, but they hang on well and the cornering power is very high.

The steering gives plenty of feel and warns if slippery surfaces, such as a coating of larva, are suddenly encountered. The steering is quite fairly heavy on very sharp corners or when parking. The small rear spoiler probably does little aerodynamically, but it does make reversing manoeuvres easy. The gearchange does not have the irritating 'clonk' of the Alfetta, but it falls a little short of the lightness and precision that earlier Alfas displayed. With large disc brakes all round, the Giulietta makes light of mountainous descents.

The acceleration through the gears feels more like that of a 2-litre car than of a 1570cc machine. Evidently modern manufacturing techniques have permitted a light but rigid construction to be achieved, to the benefit of performance. The manufacturers claim 175kmh (108.7mph), but I saw considerably more than that, if the speedometer is even reasonably accurate.

The new Alfa Romeo Giulietta is going to make some other 1.6-litre cars feel very coarse and unrefined. It is as happy climbing mountains as it is when cruising at 100mph on the *autostrada*, and after the tough Sicilian conditions it will find that British roads are childishly easy.

Specification and performance data

Car Described: Alfa Romeo Giulietta 4-door saloon.
Engine: Four-cylinders 78 x 82mm (1570cc). Compression ratio 9 to 1. 109bhp DIN at 5600rpm. Twin chain-driven overhead camshafts. 2 twin-choke Weber carburettors.
Transmission: Front engine with propeller shaft to rear transmission aggregate, comprising hydraulically-operated single dry plate clutch, 5-speed synchromesh gearbox, ratios: 0.83, 1.02, 1.34, 1.95, and 3.30 to 1, and hypoid final drive, ratio 4.3 to 1.
Chassis: Combined steel body and chassis. Independent front suspension by wishbones, torsion bars, and anti-roll bar. Rack and pinion steering. De Dion tubular axle on semi-trailing arms, Watts linkage, and coil springs, with anti-roll bar. Servo-assisted, dual circuit disc brakes, with rear control valve. Bolt-on steel wheels, fitted 165 SR 13 tyres.
Dimensions: Wheelbase 8ft 2.8in. Track 4ft 5.5in. Overall length 13ft 9.7in. Width 5ft 4.9in. Weight 1 ton 1 cwt.
Performance: Maximum speed 108.7mph (maker's figure).

Hatchback Audi Avant

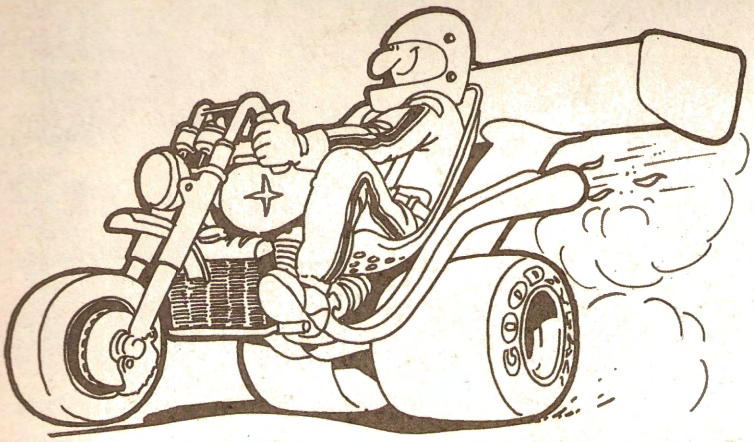
In addition to the existing Audi 100 saloon, a new fastback body is now available. With a tailgate measuring 4ft 8in wide by 3ft 8in high, the luggage is normally concealed under a flap-type shelf, in addition to which the rear seat squab can be folded forward to provide a large deck for bulky objects.

In other respects, the car follows the lines of the model which is already well known over here. At first, the Avant, as the 100 is called with its new swept tail, will be available only with a 1.6-litre engine developing 85bhp which, with its very clean aerodynamic shape, is quite sufficient for a 100mph performance, running on 2-star fuel, with a DIN consumption figure of 32mpg. The price is £4,955 and a very up-market luxury model, elaborately equipped, will also be sold in the UK later on, fitted with the 2.2-litre five-cylinder engine.

As the Avant only differs from the 100LS in having a hatchback tail treatment, the performance scarcely differs from that of the more familiar car. However, the smaller, 1.6-litre engine has not been offered in the UK before for the 100 series, and I was interested to see how it would cope with a big car over 15ft long. Actually, the Avant is far lighter than it looks and 21.9 cwt is not excessive for such an efficient power unit.

Nobody need worry about the car being under-powered. Accelerating through the gears, the Avant soon gets into its stride, assisted by a high third gear which is excellent for overtaking. The engine is not at all noisy and after passing through a slight boom period at 90mph, it becomes remarkably quiet. No doubt with some assistance from the wind, I held an indicated 110mph for quite a distance, with the rev-counter on the 6000rpm mark, just below the red sector. The car handles well, cornering with very little roll, and rides comfortably on the uneven surfaces of English country lanes. It will appeal to the man who wants a spacious car with a moderate thirst for

by Eoin Young



Rough-rider Southgate

Tony Southgate has been finding that motorcycling has done all sorts of good for the design of the new Formula 1 Shadow for 1978. A Greeves fell on him and broke his ankle, the plaster cast of which effectively kept him chained to the drawing board at home, and he missed the US and Canadian GPs!

It seems the whole incident was as embarrassing as it was painful. Tony is quite a dab hand at rough riding on his own KTM trial bike, but he had swapped machines with a guy who works on his KTM, and that's how he came to be off-roading on an aged Greeves. While Tony could make his own bike talk on the rough stuff, the Greeves was altogether different and less responsive. Falling off it wouldn't have been so bad. The problem compounded itself when Tony fell off and the bike fell on him and his right ankle broke.

Southgate was lugging his cast around in Japan, counting the days until it would be off and wondering whether he should tempt fate and get back on the KTM. . . .

A matter of balance

I mentioned in the last *Kickstart* column how difficult the R100/RS BMW was to muscle up on to its stand, and former motorcycle racer of note turned saloon racer of note, Stuart Graham phoned to say that he has an R100/RS and he suffered the same problems—until he read the handbook. "Now my wife can put the RS on its stand. It's that simple. Just a matter of balance." Then Jenks showed me how to put his BMW R60 on its stand. Piece of cake when you know how. Pity the bike didn't come with a handbook. Anyway, if you've got three grand burning a hole in your jeans, don't worry about getting the RS on its stand.

Stuart Graham, son of the late and great Les Graham, raced a 7R AJS and a G50 Matchless before moving on to works Hondas and Suzukis. He says the RS BMW reminds him a lot of the G50 Matchy. He has had his RS since February and finds that the designed-in fairing makes the bike as far as he is concerned. "You can use the RS when you wouldn't otherwise use a bike. It isn't just a fair weather machine. I can set out with just a rain suit over my business suit and arrive for a meeting without getting mussed up. It's quicker too," and he told me about a cross-country run of 190 miles to a conference in a time that makes the mind boggle.

New bikes for old

I was mentally wording a classified FOR SALE ad as I was living up to the name of the column and trying to kick some life into my 350cc AJS the other day. It had started perfectly and was bom-bomming happily while I locked the garage and girded up for the trip. Then it died and no amount of kicking and coaxing (and a fair measure of cursing) would get a spark out of the single-cylinder. I mean, with a 20-year-old Brit single there isn't a hell of a lot that *can* be wrong because there's not much to go wrong, but it still wouldn't start.

At this point you should take deep breath and do a systems check, but by now I am in something of a lather and not thinking too clearly apart from wondering why I am shortening my life trying to make this thing start when there is a perfectly good Honda ten feet away that starts with the press of a button. Then some kid comes by and asks if I've got the petrol turned on. Of course I have. Have I got any petrol in it? Hmmm. Reserve tap on. Kick it again. Bom-bombom. Bloody thing. I really will sell it one of these days.

The problem with the AyJay is that it goes so refreshingly well when it goes, which is most of the time when I haven't made some dumb mistake in the procedure. It's great to be thumping along at 60-odd now that it's run in (20 years old and just run in? Read on) and provides a vintage-style aspect on motorcycling compared with the effortless excellence of the 400/4.

You should know about the AJS and the man behind it. Peter Pykett was a Norton racing mechanic until the company pulled out of racing and he decided to commercialise his hobby which was building up pristine AJS and Matchless bikes which he had saved from fates worse than the wreckers yard. He soon found that he had all the business he could handle and he converted his garage at home into a small assembly line. He rebuilds about four bikes a month, concentrating only on AJS and Matchless to make the parts position easier to live with; also because he has a long-standing love affair with machinery from the old Associated Motor Cycles plant.

You can take your bike to Pykett and he will rebuild it to as-new condition, or you can tell him what type of bike you're looking for and he will find one and rebuild it to your spec. Whichever way you do it, the end price will be about £600. "If you've got a non-runner worth fifty quid you can reckon there's £550 in rebuilding and new bits involved. If your bike is worth £300, there will only be £300 worth of work to make it concours."

Pykett completely strips the bikes down to the last nut and bolt, stoves the frame, and then painstakingly rebuilds the engine and puts the whole thing together again. John Surtees has asked Peter if he will consider a rebuild programme on some of the Surtees collection of motorcycles dating back to 'Big John's' bike days.

If you want to go classic motorcycling on an off-the-shelf AJS or Matchy of the 'fifties, call Peter at Abbotts Ann 620 or drop him a line at Ridgeway, Broad Road, Monxton, near Andover, Hants.

USAC 500-miler

McLaren Racing's American chief Tyler Alexander was telling me about the 500-mile ride through the mountains in Colorado, organised for the USAC people by Wally Dallenbach. There were about 30 riders this year including Parnelli Jones, Al and Bobby Unser, Dan Gurney and Roger Penske. Roger apparently went out and bought a new suit of leathers to go with his new XT500 Yamaha, the single-cylinder that has amazed even Yamaha by its popularity. Penske says it would climb the side of a house if you could stay on it.

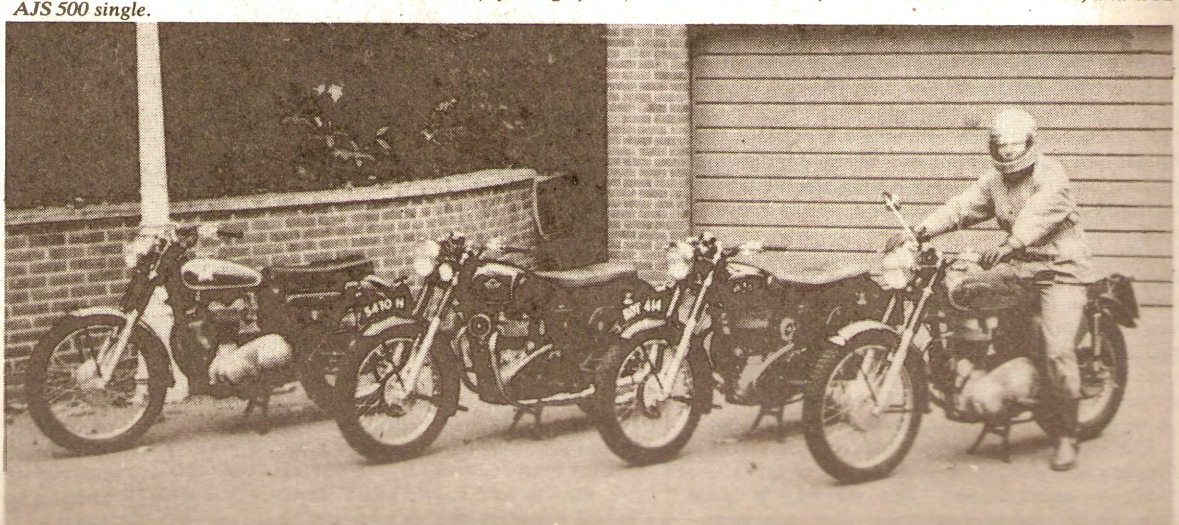
Last year a handful of drivers made the ride, but this year the three-day relaxer was professionally set up by Dallenbach who had organised motels and restaurants, side visits to gold mines and ghost towns along the way. . . .

Japanese trailers

The success of the XT500 prompted Yamaha to bring out a 500cc single-cylinder four-stroke roadster, the SR 500, but initial reports suggests that it lacks the rugged charm of the XT trail machine. In the States, some specialists have done their own mods to the XT, dropping the forks and adding a fairing to turn the Yamaha trail bike into a copy of a Manx Norton.

At the recent Tokyo Motor Show Suzuki announced a new 370cc single-cylinder ohc trail bike which they reckon will match the Yamaha on power to weight. ◆

Author Eoin Young astride his 1958 AJS 350, backed by the motorcycle collection owned by Brymon Aviation boss Bill Bryce, who took over the flying business from Chris Amon and built it up to the point where he is now the only private airline operator flying out of London Heathrow. The other bikes are (left to right) a 1960 Matchless G80CS, 1951 Matchless G9 500 twin, and 1952 AJS 500 single.



edited by Robin Bradford

Bevan enquiry

Noticeable by his absence from special saloon races in the past month have been Rob Mason, the Orpington driver who has campaigned George Bevan's impressive 2-litre BDG-powered Stiletto throughout the year. It transpires that entrant Bevan has pulled out of racing completely following a controversial incident at a Rochester MC meeting at Brands last month. While Mason was sitting patiently waiting for the start of his race, Bevan, sporting a 'B' pass on his lapel, tried to gain access to the centre of the circuit. Naturally, the tunnel marshals would not let him through and so George and mechanic had to force their way into the centre. Driver Mason was informed of the action of his team by an RAC Steward who, at an enquiry after the meeting, found Bevan guilty of contravening GCR 160(iv)—conduct prejudicial to the good of motor sport—and duly reprimanded him. An enraged Bevan decided there and then to withdraw from the sport, being deeply insulted by the findings, and has since sold the car to Malcolm Johnstone leaving the luckless Mason without a drive for 1978.

APG again in 1978

The Allied Polymer Group will retain their close and long-standing relationship with Silverstone and the BRDC by sponsoring the Silverstone Driver of the Day, and Year, Awards again in 1978.

Previous recipients of the prestigious annual title have been Mick Hill, John Harper, Frank Sytner, Jim Walsh and Trevor van Rooyen. The winner of the award wins £500 with £250, £125, £75 and £50 going to the next four placings, while a Driver of the Day receives £25 for this efforts or £50 at GP circuit events.

Pedrick's shunt

Roger Pedrick, the young Hawke driver who has gone so quickly this season in a Hawke DL15/19, was unfortunately involved in a serious testing accident at Brands Hatch on Friday. He was driving Bernard Devaney's works DL19 chassis with his own engine and gearbox installed when he lost control on Paddock Hill bend, slamming backwards into the bank at a frightening speed. Pedrick was taken to Queen Mary's Hospital, Sidcup, where his condition was said to be very serious. He underwent an emergency operation on spinal and neck injuries on Friday and is currently in the intensive care unit where his condition is said to be "unchanged", although late reports would indicate that he regained consciousness briefly on Sunday. Roger has been working on a construction site all this season to raise finance to run his car, such is his determination to succeed in racing. AUTOSPORT wishes Roger a speedy and complete recovery and we hope to see him out again next season.

Royale expand overseas

Just to prove that they are not going into hibernation up in Bedfordshire this winter, Royale Racing Ltd have informed us of their latest activities.

Royale have won nine UK championships in 1977, and interest from overseas has escalated. New distributors are being set up in Europe and USA. Horag Racing in Switzerland, the concern run by Markus Hötz, has added a Royale dealership to its March franchise, while, in the States, Douglas Shierson has been appointed sole importer for Royales, once again in addition to dealing with the Bicester products.

Congratulations to BARC Marshals' Secretary Del Evans and Rescue Unit member Martin Slade on their wedding in Andover on Saturday, November 19. The happy couple had no transport problems on the day—being driven to the reception in the BARC's Volvo 245DL rescue vehicle, which fortunately was not required on this occasion. . . .

Wil Arif looks to have an extremely busy season on his hands next year in a variety of formulae. His long-time sponsors, Brookside Garden Centre of East Peckham, Kent, have agreed to back him in FF1600 (possibly with a Crosslé 32F chassis) concentrating on Brands Hatch and Lydden, three or four of his existing backers are interested in a new FF2000 deal while it seems likely that a few drives in competitive F3 machinery may be taken in with some additional finance. Wil is keeping his hand in by competing in the remaining Formule Libre *races of the year at his home circuit. Last Sunday he was surprised to be confronted with a pair of St. John Ambulancemen strolling across the track in front of him during the FF1600 race in which he had a third outing in Tony Howard's Crosslé—going on to win the race.*

Another Welshman in F1?

Having won the 'Driver of the Year' award at Brands Hatch Racing, Tim Davies, a 26-year-old lorry driver from Lampeter in Wales, received the first part of his prize at Brands last Thursday.

This consisted of a full test session in Divina Galica's Surtees TS19, in which Davies acquitted himself extremely well. Despite the cold, blustery conditions, and running on wet tyres on the slippery surface, Tim drove in neat and confident style to record a lap time of only 47.5s—and this with a 10,000rpm limit imposed instead of the normal 11,000.

Divina and Charlie Whiting, who runs the car, were particularly impressed with the Welshman's performance, especially when one considers his previous experience is limited to a few outings in the BHR-Rolatruc Opportunity Elden FF1600 car.

Tim was delighted with the opportunity to drive a current F1 car, even wondering when he could have another go!

The second part of Davies's prize will be two expenses-paid drives in a works FF2000 car in the New Year, so it will be very interesting to see how he performs against the established aces.

Rochester rantings

It is unfortunate that we have to report a number of less than satisfactory incidents that occurred at last Sunday's club meeting at Brands Hatch. First of all the Rochester MC decided to attempt to put on seven races whereas most other Clubs are prepared to accept six as a manageable maximum for a winter's day.

There seems to have been little excuse for restarting the MG Midget race four times. We accept the point that everyone deserves a race but the restart was only for four laps and the competitors had already completed three. Could the results not have been declared after three laps rather than waste valuable time? As it happened, the modsports chaps never got a run at all.

To be fair, the Club were unlucky in the large number of incidents they had to tackle but, still, their handling of these did not come up to the standard usually expected from them.

Another more disturbing point was the way that the marshals on Brabham Straight coped with a three-car incident in the FF1600 race. All the drivers were swiftly out of their cars, although one was abandoned only half off the track. While other competitors were passing by, several marshals were seen to cross the track to help push the stricken car away—even the Flag Marshal! We therefore witnessed the awful situation of people running all over the track and no-one left to warn the on coming competitors, who were totally unsighted. Obviously, this is a very rare case of British marshals being negligent—ours are still reckoned to be the best in the world—but one hopes the guilty party was suitably admonished.

Sleeman samples Rostron

Lydden FF1600 Champion Paul Sleeman acquitted himself extremely well last Sunday at Brands Hatch driving the new Rostron-Minister CT77 Formula Ford again in a race sponsored by Rostron Race cars themselves. Paul had some bad luck in practice when a drive-shaft coupling broke after only one lap ("bit embarrassing really"), and started from well down the grid but then drove superbly and was catching the leaders at a remarkable rate. By the time the chequered flag came out, after a mere six laps, Paul was just over a second behind Wil Arif and Peter Lawrence—another lap and he would quite possibly have scored the new car's first win in its 'own' race!

● **Our apologies to the BRDC, as we muddled two lists of dates last week (*Sports Extra*). The dates for BRDC Silverstone Super Saloon rounds were transposed with those for Tricentrol Clubmans rounds. Sorry to all concerned.**

Datsun deranged

Practice for last Sunday's Brands meeting was almost as incident-packed as the racing! The modsports session had to be red-flagged after a bad accident involving the Janspeed Datsun 290Z—used so effectively the other week at Thruxton by Alec Poole—and Colin Charman's Midget. Rex Greenslade was having an outing in the Datsun and contrived to spin at Surtees and was very heavily T-boned by Charman. Both cars were badly damaged and the track was blocked so it took some time to clear away the debris.

Another more potentially dangerous accident occurred in the *Libre* practice when Martin Watson (GRD) moved over to overtake a slow FF1600 runner on Brabham Straight and ran directly into the path of Irishman Jim Kelly. Kelly's Trojan and the GRD careered into the guard-rail on the inside of the track and finally came to rest half-way round Paddock—"I was pulling about 7700rpm in top", said Jim "which must be over 140mph. . . ." Neither driver was injured but the GRD looked particularly nasty, while the Trojan had been the quickest car on the track until that point. Jim was out for the first time in the smart colours of his new sponsors, Hassop Quality Car Specialists, and was using grooved slick tyres for the cold conditions, which was looking like a good choice. He was, therefore, particularly disappointed at not being able to challenge his friendly rival Damien Magee in the race.

Official opening

Almost four years after moving from London's West End to Thruxton circuit, the BARC staff are now happily installed in their new purpose-built offices beneath the grandstands at Club Corner. As part of the Hampshire circuit's £120,000 improvement plan, the new permanent accommodation replaces the club's temporary offices which were situated in the old flying club and its outbuildings. The new offices were officially opened by the Mayor of Test Valley, Councillor A. E. Parke, who cut the ribbon at noon on November 16.

BARC 1978

The BARC will organise eleven championships next season with repeated sponsorship from Britax (prodsaloons), British Air Ferries (FF2000), BP (F3) and Oceanair (Clubmans). New series sponsors are Philips, backers of the club's F2 fixture, who will support FF1600, and Wendy Wools, who sponsor the two special saloon series. Unsponsored series will be run for Sprints, Hillclimbs, modsports and thoroughbred sports. Full details will appear next week.

Briefly. . .

● The 750MC's annual gala clubnight will this year be held at London's Commonwealth Institute cinema, Kensington, on Friday, December 9 commencing at 7pm. The evening will feature a special screening of the Steve McQueen film *Le Mans*. Admission is £1, and attractions include photographic and racing car displays plus the inevitable bar. Tickets are available from Phil Stone, 13 Ember Lane, Esher, Surrey (please send SAE with application).

● An interesting entry for this Sunday's MGCC race meeting at Brands Hatch will be Richard McKoen's MGA. The car has been undergoing a complete engine rebuild which has taken over a year to complete. Why so long, we hear you ask?

Well, being a merchant seaman, away for long periods of time on the high seas, is not really conducive to rapid preparation. In fact McKoen has appeared only spasmodically with the car in the past three years and, despite a lack of practice, has some good results to his credit. Watch for Richard's spectacular driving style on Sunday!

The lengths to which some people are willing to go to progress up the racing 'ladder' are quite amazing. David Leslie has proved himself one of the best young British prospects with his successes in Formula Ford this year but he knows that he has very little chance of making rapid progress unless he can obtain some financial backing. Thus, David is prepared to travel the length and breadth of the country if it will help him to achieve his aim. Last Thursday, he and his father journeyed down to London to collect his spoils for winning the BARC FF1600 Championship; they arrived in time for a quick meal, collected their prize and then made off directly for home—about 400 miles away! Why? David explains: "I've got to meet people, to show them how badly I want to make it to the top. It's the only chance I have". If that wasn't enough, David went to Scotland on Friday evening where he received the coveted Ecorie Ecosse trophy at Ingliston and then to Ilkley, Yorkshire, on Saturday to collect the Yorkshire Post Trophy. In all, he probably travelled over 1500 miles to add to the 25,000 odd that he's already clocked up attending race meetings throughout the season! That is real dedication. He's a fine young driver who deserves to make the grade rather than become another of the British prospects to fall by the wayside.

Russell Douglas took a break from his commentating activities recently at the 432 Solihull MC's autocross meeting and then, so it would appear, took a break from that too, by indulging in a barrel-rolling competition at the same venue. Surprisingly the car landed firmly on its wheels and Douglas was able to continue undeterred, albeit some ten seconds further behind Phil Wilson's similar vehicle.

● Bose Hi Fi, who fielded an impressive four-car team in international rallycross events this year, are to sponsor a two-man team in British events next year. Although no drivers have been nominated as yet, it is known that a pair of Minis will be used in an assault on the Castrol/BTRDA championship.

● Over the years, the rules regarding Sporting Trials cars have become more and more complex. In a bid to iron out the difficulties with existing and projected cars the BTRDA have appointed an eligibilty scrutineer. He is John Bailey, long time member of Rent-a-Hill and he will be making spot checks on cars at BTRDA events up and down the country. Drivers who would like any points concerning the rules are welcome to get in touch with John at Prescott, 82 High Street, Wootton, Northampton (Tel 0604 61551).

● Rex Chappell, father of Lee and staunch supporter of sporting trials many years back, is contemplating a return to the sport after a lay-off of several years. It is reported that Chappell is having an Ibex chassis constructed, into which will be slotted an Imp engine.

● The winner of the national 'Lucas Sport' competition is Mr John Pryor of Friern Barnet, who received his prize, a new Range Rover, from TV and radio star/racing driver Noël Edmonds at a reception in London recently.

● Bar Engineering of York, under the directorship of regular hillclimb competitor Mervyn Bartram, are now able to undertake complete engine preparation for all competiton use. Regular customers already include Jim Evans, John Bury, Jon Fletcher, Tony Sugden and many others.

● A substantial reward is offered for any information leading to the recovery of a complete pop-on tool kit and various other spares all engraved 'G. S. MEDWAY RACING', stolen on November 19. They belong to Medway Racing Developments, 400 Industrial Estate, Vicarage Lane, Rochester, Kent (tel: Medway 252300).

● On Saturday, November 12, the Formual Vee Association held their annual dinner/dance and prizegiving at Beadlow Manor Golf and Country Club in Bedfordshire. Guests of honour were Brian and Sue Henton, who presented Keith 'Olly' Hollamby with the Super Vee award and Dave Greenwood with

● With the acceptance of the 1700cc engine in 'A'-class clubmans racing next year, has come a major resurgence of interest in this exciting category. Mallock Racing have already received 14 firm orders for their new Mk20 model, ten of which are destined for the quicker class. The new car will have a higher, wider front end aimed at lower drag for suspension, engine and cockpit. A composite BL/Ford differential overcomes the star wheel breakages suffered recently while rear disc brake kits are now available for existing chassis.

● Due to difficulties with Public Relations, the Committee of the Taunton MC have regrettably decided to postpone the Taunton Rally scheduled for December 10/11.

● The BRSCC are holding their annual end-of-season party in the clubhouse at Mallory Park next Saturday evening starting at 8pm. Marshals, competitors and mechanics are welcome with their respective wives/girlfriends, and attractions will include a free disco, free food (courtesy of Edwina Overend) and licensed bar until midnight.

BRANDS HATCH

The MGCC will organise one of their highly entertaining 'clubbies' at Brands this weekend with races predominantly for their own marque. The sixth ten-lap event is for Modsports, with no doubt a fair smattering of MGs adorning their ranks too. Practice starts at 9am with the first race scheduled for 1pm.

LYDDEN

The promising TEAC/Lydden Rallycross Championship kicks off on Sunday with a superb entry for the opening event. Heading the line-up are the two ex-Bose Hi-Fi Porsches to be campaigned by Rod Chapman and Dutchman Jan de Rooy (remember him for his antics in the BDA-powered DAFs a few years back?). Minis are strongly represented by Gordon Rogers, who dominated the recent international at Lydden, Trevor Reeves (Dove Group/Castrol-sponsored), Keith Ripp, Richard Painton and Barry Hathaway. They are up against the Graham Hathaway and Barry Lee Escort, Colin Richards's Chevette, John Greasley's Carrera, the Saabs of Brian Stabler and Will Gollop and the TR7s of Roger Dowson and Mick Bird. Action starts with practice from 12.30pm and timed runs at about

edited by Robin Bradford

Five-start fiasco

Did you hear the one about the Midget race that took *five* starts before a result could be achieved? Well, it happened at the Rochester Motor Club's day out at Brands Hatch last Sunday. The race had to be stopped twice with crossed flags due to accidents, then the starting lights failed twice causing false starts and, finally, the event was properly started with a Union Jack! Even then, however, it was only for four laps and this ridiculous delay meant that all subsequent races had to be shortened to a mere six laps. Even this measure did not allow the last modsports race to be started before darkness fell altogether and the chequered flag was shown at the completion of only one lap. All in all, it was a sad day for the Kentish club with very little going right for them but at least the racing that did take place was of a high quality.

Following an incident-packed practice morning, the racing began, only fractionally behind schedule, with a Graham Hill Mini 7 Championship race. Stephen Hall headed the cars away from the grid amid a flurry of light rain and his 850cc car was piloted to an excellent win while those behind struggled on the treacherous track. Fellow front row men Chris Dobson and Dave Mabbutt spun at Druids and Graham Hill Bend respectively on the first lap, so Peter Hill's smart Wallace Windscreens Mini was left in second place. He was caught by a bunch of cars before the end and any of six people were in with a chance of the place as they entered the final lap. Hill, it was though, who soaked up the pressure and held second from Jeff Vowles, Peter Daniels, Roy Finlay, John Bailey and a recovered Mabbutt.

Steve Everitt was comfortably leading the Midget race from Lawrence Cutler and Fred Taylor after three laps but mid-field runner Rupert Flynn rolled at Clearways and the race was called to a halt, rather unnecessarily some viewers thought, as Flynn was apparently unhurt and soon out of the car. The remaining cars were restarted some time later, only for a multiple shunt at the bottom of Paddock Hill resulting in the further use of crossed flags! Again, no one was hurt but several more mid-field runners were eliminated. This should have been the end of it but the officials decided to try again for a further four laps—a decision that only succeeded in using up valuable daylight. After a couple of abortive attempts with the starting lights (the battery had gone flat, I was told!) the race way finally started in the 'old-fashioned' way—by flag. Everitt was caught totally off-guard (nobody had told him that the flag would be used) but still scrambled into the lead from Mike Chalk's Lenham-bodied Sprite and a very rapid road-going car driven by David Sheppard. On a now very damp track, Sheppard soon moved up to second place and began to pressure the leader. Everitt, on unsuitable slick tyres, found this car's extra power more of an embarrassment than a help and, although he hung on as best he could, the young Sheppard took the lead brilliantly around the outside of Clearways on the last lap to take a well-deserved win.

A three car accident on Brabham Straight at the end of the first lap of the FF1600 race left Wil Arif, in Tony Howard's Crosslé, and Peter Lawrence (Team Mansell Royale RP3A) well clear of the pack. Lawrence took the lead entering Paddock for the final time and fought hard to keep the Crosslé at bay but the Brookside Garden Centre-sponsored Arif nipped smartly out of the yellow Royale's slipstream on to Brabham Straight and just edged ahead to score a narrow win. **Paul Sleeman** closed rapidly on these two but had to settle for third place after a troubled practice.

Peter Hill hurls the smart Wallace Mini through Paddock in the Mini 1000 race.

Special Saloon race with his glorious-sounding Escort-BDG but his constant shadow had been John Homewood's fleet little Davrian-based Imp. The Charing farmer then made the very best possible use of back-markers exiting Clearways on the last lap and while poor Ed was looking for a way around the slower cars, John forged through to win. Tony Whibley never made up for a poor start and was unable to offer a strong challenge in third place.

On wet tyres, Damien Magee surged into the lead of the *Libre* race with the E. L. Gibbs Ltd Racing Lola T332C and pulled out to a clear win. Ronnie Grant held second place for most of the first lap with his Volkspares Taurus but then understeered on to the grass at McLaren and dropped behind his team-mate Olly Hollamby, who had made almost unbelievable progress from the back of the grid! This order remained the same until the end, although Grant had knocked the nosecone askew on his Super Vee car and the consequent deterioration in handling allowed Wil Arif to close up in his Brookside FF2000 Reynard.

If it hadn't been for the Lancia Aurelia of John Savage, which started the Combined One Make Clubs Championship Handicap with a whole credit lap and never looked remotely like being caught, the race would have been a good one. Some spectacular driving by Henry Adlam in an Opel Manta looked like netting him second place ahead of a close-following pair of Morgans driven by John Milbank and Bob Chaplin but an inspired charge by Mark Niblett saw his Porsche steal past all three of them on Brabham Straight for second overall.

As previously mentioned, darkness had already descended by the time the modsports cars came to the grid for their six-lapper. They gallantly disappeared into the gloom but several spins on the first lap, thankfully without major incident, finally brought out the chequered flag and the race was declared void.

JEREMY SHAW

results

The Weber Carburettor Trophy Race for Mini 7 Formula (10 laps): overall: 1, Stephen Hall (850 BLMC Mini), 10m 44.4s, 67.24mph; 2, Peter Hill (1.0 Wallace Mini), 11m 08.6s; 3, Jeff Vowles (1.0 Leyland Mini), 11m 09.8s; 4, Pete Daniels (850 BL Mini), 11m 11.8s. **1000cc:** 1, Hill, 64.81mph; 2, Vowles; 3, Peter Calver (1.0 Morris Cooper). **Fastest lap:** Chris Dobson, 59.6s, 72.70mph. **850cc:** 1, Hall, 2, Daniels; 3, Roy Finlay (850 BMC Mini). **Fastest lap:** Daniels and Hall, 1m 01.6s, 70.34mph.

Auto Renovations Cup Race for MG Midget Cars (4 laps): overall: 1, David Sheppard (1.3 MG Midget), 4m 52.6s, 59.23mph; 2, Steve Everitt (1.4 MG Midget), 4m 53.6s; 3, Mark Hales (1.3 MG Midget), 5m 02.6s; 4, Mike Chalk (1.4 Austin Healey Lenham Le Mans), 5m 06.0s. **Road-going class:** 1, Sheppard; 2, Hales; 3, Ian Polley (1.3 MG Midget). **Fastest lap:** Sheppard, 1m 10.2s, 61.72mph. **Modified class:** 1, Everitt, 59.03mph; 2, Chalk; 3, Rupert Russell (1.3 MG Midget). **Fastest lap:** Everitt, 1m 11.2s, 60.86mph.

Rostron Race Cars Ltd Trophy Race for Formula Ford 1600 (6 laps): 1, Wil Arif (Crosslé-Flint 30F), 6m 16.4s, 69.07mph; 2, Peter Lawrence (Royale-Minister RP3A), 6m 16.4s; 3, Paul Sleeman (Rostron-Minister CR77), 6m 17.6s; 4, Brian Songhurst (Huron-Rowland FP2), 6m 33.6s; 5, Marshall Pugh (Royale-Scholar RP24), 6m 37.8s; 6, Len Greeney (Royale-Minister RP21), 6m 38.0s. **Fastest lap:** Sleeman, 59.8s, 72.46mph.

Dutton Forshaw Trophy Race for Special Saloons (6 laps): overall: 1, John Homewood (1.0 Sunbeam Imp), 5m 59.0s, 72.42mph; 2, Ed Punt (2.0 Ford Escort), 5m 59.2s; 3, Tony Whibley (2.3 Vauxhall Firenza), 6m 00.0s; 4, Duncan Kirk (1.0 Hillman Imp), 6m 14.2s. **Over 2500cc:** 1, John Colburn (3.8 Jaguar MkII), 66.22mph, only starter. **Fastest lap:** Colburn, 1m 02.0s, 69.89mph. **1301-2500cc:** 1, Punt, 72.38mph; 2, Whibley; 3, Mike Newman (2.3 Vauxhall Firenza). **Fastest lap:** Whibley, 57.2s, 75.75mph. **1001-1300cc:** 1, John Davies (1.3 Transpeed Mini), 68.21mph; 2, Dave Rayner (1.3 Ford Anglia); 3, Juliette Slaughter (1.3 Renault 5TS). **Fastest lap:** Davies, 1m 00.6s, 71.50mph. **Up to 1000cc:** 1, Homewood; 2, Kirk; 3, Mike Scott (1.0 Ford Anglia). **Fastest lap:** Homewood, 58.2, 74.45mph.

Grayhire Rose Bowl Race for Formule Libre (6 laps): 1, Damien Magee (5.0 Lola-Smith/Chevrolet T332C), 5m 33.4s, 77.98mph; 2, Olly Hollamby (1.6 Crosslé-Volkspares/VW 24F), 5m 38.2s; 3, Ronnie Grant (1.6 Taurus-Jaktlund/Tom VW M24), 5m 46.4s; 4, Wil Arif (2.0 Reynard-Piper SF77), 5m 47.0s; 5, Roger Fullager (1.6 Mallock U2 Mk14), 6m 05.0s; 6, Chris Springham (Royale-Auriga RP21), 6m 08.0s. **Fastest lap:** Magee, 53.6s, 80.84mph.

The Motune Cup Handicap Race for the Combined One Make Clubs Championship (5 laps): 1, John Savage (2.5 Lancia Aurelia), 6m 16.0s, 53.99mph; 2, Mark Niblett (2.7 Porsche 911), 6m 33.4s; 3, Henry Adlam (1.9 Opel Manta), 6m 34.0s; 4, John Milbank (1.6 Morgan 4/4), 6m 34.4s; 5, Bob Chaplin (2.0 Morgan 4/4), 6m 34.6s; 6, Barry Thorne (2.6 Daimler SP250), 6m 38.8s. **Fastest lap:** Niblett, 1m 07.6s, 64.10mph.

Frosty Sharmans

The Sharmans Rally organised by the Loughborough CC, and the penultimate EMAMC round, was run last weekend over a 150-mile route in Leicestershire and Northants. A disappointing entry of 35 cars started the event which was run in very frosty conditions during the first half causing the organisers to slacken the timing, most of the top crews having to wait at controls. As the frost cleared, several cars had been claimed including Parkison's Avenger (in a ditch) and Mike Farmer's similar car was having a good run but failed to collect a signature at a

At half-way Mike Hutchinson's Lloyds of Stafford Mexico was on 2mins with John Leyland 1min adrift. As conditions eased in the latter stages the timing was tightened again and Hutchinson extended his lead to 2mins over Leyland with M. Howkins maintaining third to the finish.

1, Mike Hutchinson/Peter Halkyard (Mexico), 16m 15s; 2, John Leyland/Neil Fairhurst (Escort/Sport), 18m 15s; 3, M. Howkins/P. Ashmore (Escort 1600), 20m 2s; 4, Neil Collingwood/Harold White (Viva 2300), 21m 2s; 5, John Haden/John Naylor (RS2000), 21m 25s; 6, John Taylor/Steven Wright (Magnum 2300), 25m 22s.

Best Semi-Expert: P. Mann/R. Neal (Escort), 25m 30s. **Best Novice:** K. Rylance/J. Hargrave

Jackson on top again

With the RAC Championship already decided the drivers could relax a little in the Johnson Cup last Sunday. Julian Fack, the new champion took things a little too far though, touching every marker he could see—for good luck perhaps. It cost him 55 marks and seventh place. Gordon Jackson, on the other hand, was out to show that Fack's win was a fluke and he drove superbly to overtake a marvellously on-form Hugh Pollard on the final circuit when the Jabs driver brushed a 10 marker on a hill that Jackson cleaned.

Organised by the Peterborough MC at Twywell, the Trial consisted of ten hills tackled three times each. As usual the organisation was the height of efficiency and a prompt start was made on the very tight sections. There were several items of interest in the entry. Brian Emerson had come over all the way from Ireland with his Facksimile and did well to finish 30th. Bob Furness, who ended up 19th, was notable for his most remarkable head gear: it resembles what can only be described as a certain part of a bear's anatomy and of course gave rise to much ribaldry. Also in the bottom half of the field was Marcus Croome who informed all and sundry that after his day's sport he was going to change his name to Markers Croome when he dropped a total of 116.

Of the newcomers to the sport, Roy Lane had moved up from last spot and was delighted to clean a few hills while Glyn Jackson, in only his third Trial in the immaculately turned out Glyncraft, impressed with a fine 23rd. As usual in the Peterborough events a large number of the Kent based drivers made the pilgrimage up to the Midlands and carried off a large quantity of the spoils. As well as Jackson's win and Pollard's second spot, John Benson was third, Chris Highwood fourth, Lee Chappell fifth, John Hopkins eighth and Dick Lee 12th. They were also supported further down the field by Cyril Gamblen, Bryan Small and Alan Brunning.

The hills at the venue tend to be rather short of height so that the markers are very close together which favours the narrow cars, a fact compounded when the ground is fairly dry and very grippy. Several cars nearly turned over due to the tremendous amount of grip on the clay at the far end of the course. One of these was Charles Pollard who was robbed of eighth place by a spectator who pointed out his passing acquaintance with an 11 marker which the officials had not noticed. Instead of eighth he had to settle for tenth spot.

Regulars who had been worried about his long absence from the sport must have been delighted to see Mike Smallwood's Dingo perched on the top of mounds as usual as he battled with a permanently flat battery in between his various assaults on the inoffensive little bushes. But the real credit in the Trial must go to Gordon Jackson. On a course as tight as this to lose only 18 marks after 30 sections must speak for itself.

1, Gordon Jackson/Tony le Gras (Ibex), 18pts; 2, Hugh Pollard/Colin Ellis (Jabs), 29; 3, John Benson/Brian Stapleton (Jabs), 30; 4, Chris Highwood/Tony Potter (Ibex), 32; 5, Lee Chappell/Lindsay Chappell (Ibex), 36; 6, Jack Pearce/Brenda Pearce (Kincraft), 39; 7, Julian Fack/Meg Marrion (Impunity), 55; 8, John Hopkins/Peter Mitchem (Ibex), 57; 9, David Slater/Robin Brazier (Dingo), 66; 10, Charles Pollard/Margaret Pollard (Kincraft), 67; 11, Tony Harrison/Peggy Harrison (Kincraft), 72; 12, Dick

Glenn Leece in determined mood retaining the Manx autotest series for the third year.

Treble to Leece

Despite only finishing second overall, but winning his class, Glenn Leece (1.3 Mini Cooper S) retained the Isle of Man Autotest Championship for the third year in succession. Outright winner of the final round, Manx Auto Sport's Autotest at Ramsey Car Park, on November 20, was John Dodsworth.

Dodsworth, who also won the penultimate round, drove his MG Midget superbly, winning by 3.62secs after four tests.

On the opening test Dodsworth opened up a 4.2secs gap on the reigning champion, but it was Haydn Minay (1.3 Mini Cooper S) who was second quickest in 35.75s with Dodsworth clocking 31.55 and Glenn Leece 35.75.

Leece showed why he has been champion for the past two years setting the pace on the second test in 25.30, with Dodsworth on 26.78, Haydn Minay third in 27.90.

Leece made a bit of a nonsense on test three and was fortunate to drop only 0.14sec, once again Dodsworth leading on 34.32. The champion's brother, Gary Leece was third in his Weber-carburettored autocross Cooper S in 35.63.

Despite the fourth test only being a short one it was Dodsworth who headed the field, posting 17.30, 0.76sec quicker than Leece with brother Gary a mere 0.06sec behind.

Pioneer Chambers

Driving their Autopoint Rally Centre Escort, Andy Chambers and Miles Bailey scored a 5mins win on the Pioneer Rally run by the Monarch AC in Shropshire last weekend. With 23 time controls and one selective the event ran into trouble with ice and fog facing competitors for most of the night and variations of times on watches also caused uncomplimentary comment.

Chambers/Bailey took the lead just before the half-way point when Toney Cox/Mike Sones lost 4mins through no fault of their own and they eventually finished sixth. Don Day/Nick Jones were runners-up in an Escort on 38m while Graham Evans/Paul Caswell (RS2000) were third on 41m. They beat the fourth placed Tony Robinson/Mick Chick crew in their Mexico who finished on the same time although they were 12secs slower on the selective.

The Mini-crew of 'Spud' Taylor and Jim Bothwell finished fifth on 42m which was equalled by Cox/Sones who both set identical selective times, Taylor getting the advantage on furthest cleanest. Another crew on 42m were Stephen Raines/S. Gregg (Anglia) who were placed seventh.

Nutcracker Rally to Bloxham/Harper

John Bloxham and Richard Harper gave themselves an outside chance of winning the *Motoring News* Rally Championship for the second time when they won the Nutcracker rally in South Wales last weekend. In their Fiat 131 they completed the 160-mile route with penalties of 31m 8s to beat current championship leader Bill Gwynne by 1m 23s, the two crews finishing a long way clear of the remaining 46 finishers.

On a night when icy patches caused problems for competitors, the Aberdare MC organisers also ran into trouble when, at a very late stage, they had to cut part of the route which lost them about ten minutes of a selective.

The rally, the penultimate round of the *MN* series, attracted only 59 starters and at the end of the event the organisers and stewards debated at considerable length before deciding to reject a protest from one of the crews in the top half dozen. Steve Courtney and Peter Watts alleged a discrepancy in a time on a selective but, as their protest was not received in writing within the regulation half-hour period, it was eventually thrown out.

Of the championship contenders, Mick Briant was the first to lose all further interest in the event and the series when he suffered a broken throttle cable on his Escort as, by the time repairs had been effected, he was virtually out of time. Dennis Pollington was the next to go when he was reported to have gone off on the first selective, while Howard Davies was another early retirement.

With nine selectives to be tackled, few crews were prepared to take major risks with the exception of the two leaders who pulled out over 7mins on third-placed Ted Cowell/Rod Palmer, who can also still win the championship as they are only three points behind Gwynne.

In fourth place A. Powell had leading navigators' series contender John Millington reading the maps, his points from this rally leaving him joint second with Harper just four points behind Dave Kirkham. Powell and Millington were 7secs ahead of Courtney and Watts while sixth place was taken by Geoff James and Bernard Hill a further 4mins behind.

1, John Bloxham/Richard Harper (Fiat 131), 31m 8s; 2, Bill Gwynne/Terry Thorpe (RS2000), 32m 31s; 3, Ted Cowell/Rod Palmer (RS2000), 39m 45s; 4, A. Powell/John Millington (RS1600), 40m 5s; 5, Steve Courtney/Peter Watts (RS1700), 40m 12s; 6, Geoff James/Bernard Hill (Escort), 44m 33s.

Best semi-expert: Andy Taylor/Rick Handy (RS2000), 55m 27s. **Novice:** John Davies/S. Jones (Mexico), 3F 86m 10s. **Aberdare MC:** Mike and Peter Goldsworthy (Avenger), 68m 6s.

Ellis extends lead on Ansa Dales

John Ellis took another step towards winning the ANECCC Road Rally Championship when he won the Durham Dales Rally, sponsored by Ansa Motors of Durham, last weekend. The Stockton driver, who is continuing to help his club retain their lead in the club series, dropped 44m 26s on the 182-mile route made more difficult by patchy ice and a fairly heavy snowfall at one point.

The snow, in fact, came just as the rally was about to tackle the seventh selective and only the first nine cars were able to get through from the slippery uphill start. The Durham club organisers eventually, however, decided not to cancel the selective with the result that the remaining 52 crews all collected a fail.

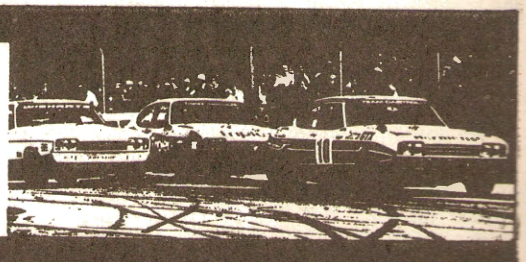
Ellis and his navigator Ian Irvine (currently second in the navigators table) won the event in their Escort with 2566 penalties, beating runners-up John Saint/Alan Hill (Toyota Celica) by 80 penalties. Another Escort, crewed by David Lewis/John Parker, was third on 2777 with John Pye/Sam Simpkins (Magenta) next up on 2797.

Escorts also filled fifth and sixth spots with Malcolm Wilson/John Teesdale on 2902 ahead of Eddie and Trudi Binks with 3014. The novices award was won by R. Wilkinson/P. Turnbull (Escort) on 2F 2832 penalties.

● Boston Mini driver Malcolm Leggate recently forsook his successful Leyland 1275GT Challenge racer for the comforts of a brand new Renault 20TS. What did he do with the car then? Well, only the day after its British launch he drove it back to France to compete in the 'Spirit of Boston' Beaujolais Nouveau Challenge—and promptly won the event, navigated by Peter Green of Skegness!

International events

Date	Venue	Event
Dec 3/4	Crete	Tour of Crete—European Rally Championship for Drivers



British events

Date	Venue	Event	Status	Club	Start	Details
Dec 3/4	Taw Garages, Victoria Road, Barnstable (MR180/565328)	Rally	R	N Devon MC	23.30	Ilfracombe Rally
Dec 3/4	F. W. McConnel Car Park, Knighton (MR148/296722)	Rally	R	Cannock & DCC	22.30	TBN Rally
Dec 3/4	UK Optical Factory Car Park, Kidwelly	Rally	R	Gwendraeth Valley MC	23.00	Pinged Hill Trophy Rally
Dec 4	Brands Hatch, nr Dartford, Kent	Race Meeting	R	MGCC	13.00	Six events for MGs
Dec 4	Lydden Hill, nr Canterbury, Kent	Rallycross	C	TEAC	13.30	TEAC/Lydden Rallycross Championship
Dec	Lydiatt Park, Bisley, nr Stroud (MR157/887063)	Sporting Trial	R	London CC	10.45	Gloucester Trial—RAC & Sampelt BTRDA Trials Championships
Dec 4	Weavers Down, Liphook, Hants (MR186809/314)	Production Trial	R	Southern CC/ Cosmopolitan CC	—	—

Secretaries of the Meeting are requested to report details of all forthcoming events to Miss Linda McCrae, Autosport Editorial Office, [illegible]

MIDDLE TAR GROUP As defined in H. M. Government Tables.

H.M. Government Health Departments' WARNING:
CIGARETTES CAN SERIOUSLY DAMAGE YOUR HEALTH