Autosport

laymarket publication

22nd/29th December 1977 30p

INSIDE: FORMULA 1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP REVIEW



A memorable Grand Prix season

James Hunt column □ Interview: Fiat rally boss Daniele Audetto

Derek Daly on FF1600 □ Christmas Quiz □ Private Eye

Autosport

December 22/29, 1977 Vol 69 No 12/13

this week

2 Pit & Paddock

8 Paul Ricard: New Lotus looks good

10 Correspondence

11 Vatanen Verbatim: Ari looks back on his rally season

16 Dublin Bay GP: Bell fast in Dublin

18 Purely Personal: Jack Kemsley

20 Special Stage

26 Interview: Fiat rally manager Daniele Audetto

31 Christmas Road Test: Morgan Super Sports Aero

35 Road Test: Fiat 126

36 Fords revisited—Derek Daly drives three top FF1600s

40 Quotes of the Year

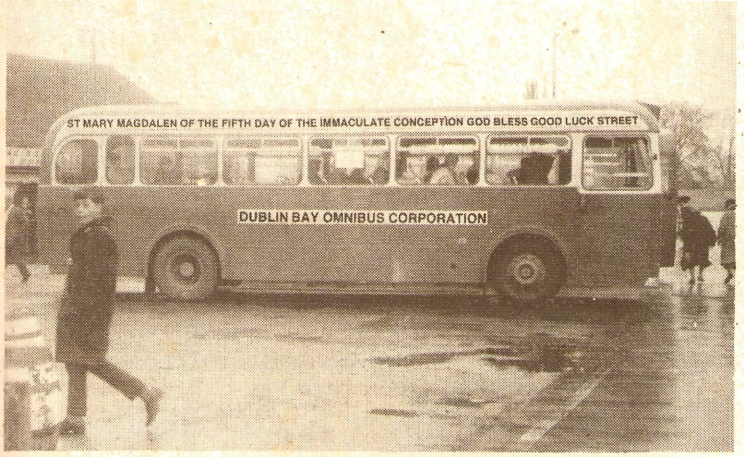
41 Private Ear

42 Sports Extra

44 Sportscard

46 Weekend Sport

AUTOSPORT columnist Gerry Marshall was out of luck in last Saturday's Grand Prix de Dublin Bay with this bus, which was used during the race in order to raise the prize money. Gerry was contracted to pick up passengers who wanted to buy 'total involvement tickets', but the popularity of these meant that he had to stop too many times to remain in contention. Report: page 16.



Editor: Quentin Spurring. *Assistant Editor:* Robin Bradford. *Sports Editor:* Nigel Roebuck. *Technical Editor:* John Bolster. *Rallies Editor:* Peter Newton. *Assistant Rallies Editor:* Ann Bradshaw. *International Rallies Editor:* Henry Liddon. *Club Editor:* Marcus Pye. *Chief Photographer:* Jeff Bloxham. *Editorial Assistant:* Linda McRae.

American Editor: Gordon Kirby. *European Editor:* Jeff Hutchinson. *Midlands Representative:* Derek Hill. *Correspondents: Scotland,* Bill Henderson; *Northern Ireland,* Esler Crawford; *Eire,* Brian Foley; *Canada,* Chris Waddell; *New Zealand,* Peter Greenslade; *Australia,* Bob Jennings.

Advertisement Manager: Mike Trew. *Group Advertisement Director:* Derek Redfern.

Publishing Director: Simon Taylor.

Published every Thursday by: Haymarket Publishing Ltd, 76 Dean St, London W1A 1BU. *Telephone:* Editorial, 01-734 4242; Advertising, 01-439 6016. *Telex:* 23918 Haymarket LDN. *Subscriptions and back numbers:* Craven House, 34 Foubert's Place, London, W1.

Annual subscriptions: Home, £22.50; *Overseas, surface mail,* £22.50; *Airmail, Europe,* £30.00; *Airmail, USA and Canada,* £40. Other airmail rates on application.

Printed in England by: David Brockdorff Ltd, Forest Road, London, E17. *Colour sections printed by:* B. R. Hubbard Ltd, Callywhite Lane, Dronfield, Sheffield. Registered at the PO as a newspaper.

ABC
Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations

Reprinting in whole or part of any matter appearing in AUTOSPORT is forbidden, except by permission of the publishers © AUTOSPORT 1977.

Prospects for 1978

Christmas is the time of year when we can sit back and reflect on the successes and failures of the past motor racing season, and it is especially useful to do so with particular consideration of its appeal to the British public.

On an international level, in truth it cannot be said that motor racing has been completely successful in this area during last year. These days, public interest is unprecedently high in Formula 1, but this has been achieved at the expense of other international FIA categories. The increase in the popularity of F1 has been due not only to the increase in the influence of the Formula 1 Constructors Association, but also to the failure of the FIA to provide the valid alternative classes now so eagerly demanded by Europe's major car manufacturers. The F1CA has followed the lead of such organisations as the PGA in golf and the WCT in tennis. There are many drawbacks to the monopoly which the Association now enjoys, but to the independent observer these are outweighed by the advantages. The F1CA has taken the initiative away from the FIA, and recent history suggests that only when the manufacturers who wish to promote their products on the race tracks form a similar, dictatorial association, will sports and touring car racing regain its past prestige.

Formula 2 continues to maintain its stature as the primary proving ground for up-and-coming drivers, although the unwillingness of British sponsors to back British drivers in the series has resulted in a lethargic attitude among British spectators. The racing in this category is excellent, with the added bonus of active competition between chassis and (more importantly) engine manufacturers. But it will never get the media coverage it deserves unless there is more British driver participation, and as a result the crowd figures must seriously concern British promoters.

Now that there will be no participation from Leyland, the European Group 2 championship must surely go into another decline, and by many people, who would prefer it to be absorbed into a revitalised World Championship of Makes, it will not be missed.

At national level, Formula 3 has become more competitive than ever, despite the ever-rising costs. This is where we will find the young talent for the future, for there are signs of a return to the heady days of the late sixties, when F3 produced many of our current Grand Prix stars. We have criticised British promoters for their lack of faith in F3 before, and therefore welcome MCD's recent decision to back the formula. MCD's own Group 8 series grew up last year thanks to the participation of pukka F1 cars, and in 1978 the new F1/F2 series has every chance of becoming a British national championship of real value, surpassing all others. Group 1, too, looks like being very healthy indeed next season.

All in all, the international prospects for 1978 are again mixed, with Formula 1 and Le Mans spreading the word virtually alone until sports car racing gets back on to its feet. However, nationally the prospects are very good indeed, and we can look forward with confidence to a season in which motor racing further broadens its appeal.

cover picture

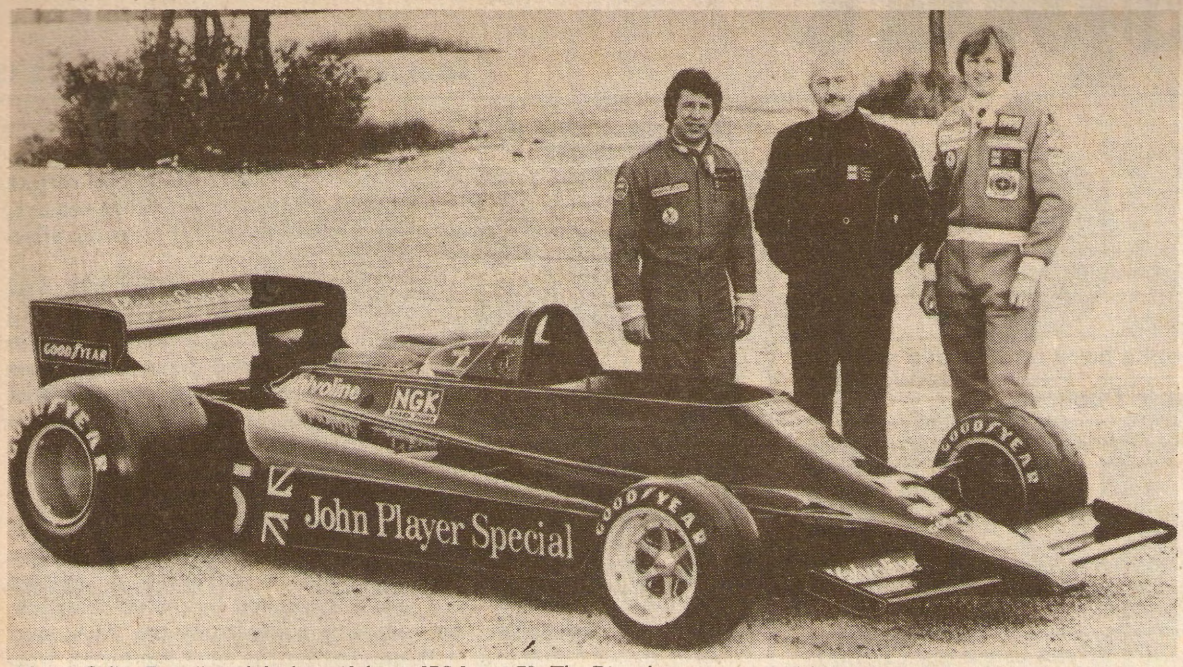
James Hunt takes the Marlboro-McLaren M23 down to the Station Hairpin at Monaco during the Grand Prix there last May. Our seasonal survey of Formula 1 racing is contained in a special supplement to this issue.

next week

Peter Newton's full report of Andrew Cowan's victory in the Bandama Rally on the Ivory Coast—Our annual review of Formula 3 racing—David Kennedy describes his Formula 3 season in Europe—John Bolster reports on the latest developments in engine technology—John Nicholson describes the Formula 1 engine business—Boxing Day Brands—Alfa Sud Sprint on test*.

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

edited by Nigel Roebuck



Mario, Colin, Ronnie and the beautiful new JPS Lotus 79. The Ricard tests were promising.

Chapman's latest supercar

Any new Formula 1 car from the John Player Lotus team is an event. And it seems that the JPS MkIV (or Lotus 79, as it will inevitably be known) is exactly what Mario Andretti's doctor ordered. Completed only ten days ago, the new car immediately showed itself capable of turning in competitive times at Paul Ricard. "Already it has a lot of nicer points than the 78, and we've only just begun," said a smiling Andretti, who flew back to the States last weekend.

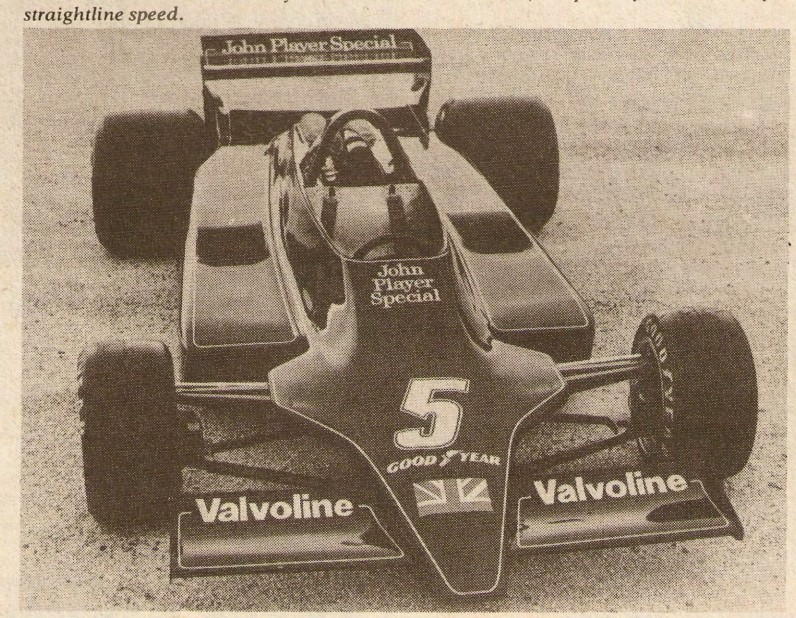
Colin Chapman, talking of his latest creation said that the 78 had done most of the things they wanted it to do, but it had been quite a large car, and for that reason was about 60lbs overweight. Hence there had been occasions this year when it lacked straightline speed. The team's objectives with the latest car had been to tidy up the bodywork and general aerodynamic configuration, and to build a car which met the minimum weight regulations. "In the area of aerodynamics, we've accumulated a lot more data since we introduced the last car. The new car incorporates all the lessons we learned during 1976 and 1977, and benefits from experimental track and wind tunnel tests we've been carrying out during this period." (Despite this, early Ricard tests so far indicate that the new one is actually *slower* in a straight line than the 78).

The most notable feature of the 79, of course, is its new gearbox, which has been designed and developed by Lotus themselves. It will accommodate five, six or seven speeds (although Mario has in the past expressed a preference for just five), and incorporates free-wheel and clutchless gearchange capabilities. The last two features, however, will not be tried until all other aspects of the 'box have worked satisfactorily under race conditions. Chapman: "Having made substantial progress with the aerodynamic performance of the car, the gearbox offered itself as the next most obvious area for development. In fact, almost every other aspect of the modern Grand Prix car *except* the gearbox has evolved progressively in recent years. The new 'box, in addition to the savings which it will offer in terms of overall weight (it is said to be 30lbs lighter than a Hewland), will also be simpler and quicker to maintain, and will do away with the need to fit completely new sets of gears for every race, and deliver a considerable reduction in power losses.

"Our approach to this project has been influenced by three fundamental considerations: weight, cost and reliability. We feel that our investment in a new generation of racing car transmission systems is well justified on these grounds alone. In the medium to long term, the extra sophistication of which the system will be capable are a welcome competitive bonus."

During Andretti's tests with the new car last week, the new gearbox was, in fact, giving Mario his only real problem with the car. "When the 'box gets hot, the gears expand and the selection becomes too stiff," he said, and Jackie Stewart found the same thing when he tried a 78 with the new gearbox. Andretti was otherwise delighted. "I thought the 78 was a pretty fabulous car but this one is a knockout. I think it's gonna be a winner."

The new car is remarkably clean and uncluttered—all part of the search for straightline speed.



Elgh's Opert Chevron

Having made an encouraging Formula 2 debut in one of Fred Opert's Chevrons at Estoril nearly three months ago, Sweden's Eje Elgh is expected to be joining the portly American's team on a permanent basis next year.

Although Eje wasn't saying anything about it, prior to spending some time at the Val d'Isere skiing tournaments recently on behalf of his sponsors Marlboro, it's generally accepted that the Swede will once again be teaming up as part of Opert's Scandinavian double-act in F2 next year—the other driver being Keijo Rosberg of course. However, Elgh did say that he had more than one possibility for 1978 but then, what driver doesn't shop around for the best deal?

Expected backing for this talented driver is assumed to stem from both Marlboro and Plastic Padding. Opert's team will once again run the latest Chevrons and will be based, as before, at the factory in Bolton. Brian Hart will again provide the power.

Clay's Shadow

Shock, news of the weekend was, of course, the decision of Clay Regazzoni to move from Ensign to Shadow. As AUTOSPORT mentioned last week, the Swiss was in a difficult position. On the one hand, he wanted to stay with Morris Nunn's team, and on the other, there was considerable inducement for him to move to Shadow.

"Yes, it's true," Don Nichols told us on Monday. "Clay signed his contract here in Northampton last Thursday. Both his and Hans Stuck's cars will be sponsored by Villiger (whose brand-name 'Tabatip' has appeared on works Shadows for some time now). We've never had a number one driver as such, and we're regarding Clay and Hans as equal number ones. It was always our intention to run the DN8s in South America, and that's what we'll do. When we get back from Brazil, we'll start testing the DN9s, and we hope to run them in South Africa. As regards further sponsorship, we are talking to one or two companies and I'm hopeful that there will be other names on the car before the season's out. But we have quite enough money to run both cars for the whole season. There's no worry on that score at all."

Nichols went on to say that Jo Ramirez had joined them from Fittipaldi, and that they would be announcing the identity of their new designer very shortly.

So what are Mo Nunn's plans now? "Well, it's amazing. Since the news got out, the 'phone hasn't stopped ringing. I've spoken to Ickx, Ongais, Neve, Binder, Pescarolo, Jabouille, Rosberg, even Kessel! We'll sort something out. But Clay *is* still under contract to us. . . ."

Argentine GP live?

As we went to press, exciting news came in about live closed-circuit coverage of the Argentine Grand Prix at 'at least one' large London cinema. The company behind the project has not yet been named, nor are negotiations completed. However, one of the company's representatives said he was confident that the transmission, with English commentary, would go ahead, and there were hints that further races might be covered if the venture proved a success. Watch this space.

Bruno for McLaren

It was a surprise that McLaren were prepared to run a third works car at the Italian Grand Prix for Bruno Giacomelli. Therefore it will come as even more of a surprise to hear that the Colnbrook-based team are intending to run this promising Italian in no less than five European Grands Prix next season.

Instigators of the deal are thought to be Marlboro, influenced no doubt by their Italian subsidiary.

If Giacomelli is to drive a third M26 alongside James Hunt and Patrick Tambay (and not an ATS as first thought), then it will probably be run separately.

Saudia-Williams launched

Launched at Frank Williams's Didcot workshops last Wednesday was Frank's new Formula 1 car, the Saudia-Williams FW06, and very pretty it is.

Designed by Patrick Head, the new car is strikingly small. It is conventional in concept, not surprisingly, but the press release describes it as 'the most serious F1 challenger to come from the stable of Frank Williams', and that is certainly the way it looks. The front suspension features cast magnesium uprights and fabricated steel wishbones, and the inboard spring/damper units are operated by means of top rocker arms. At the rear the uprights are again cast in magnesium, with lower wishbone and toe control link. The rear wheels are mounted directly onto flanges at the end of the driveshafts' outer constant velocity joints, eliminating the need for separate wheel hubs. The outboard front brakes have Girling four pot calipers.

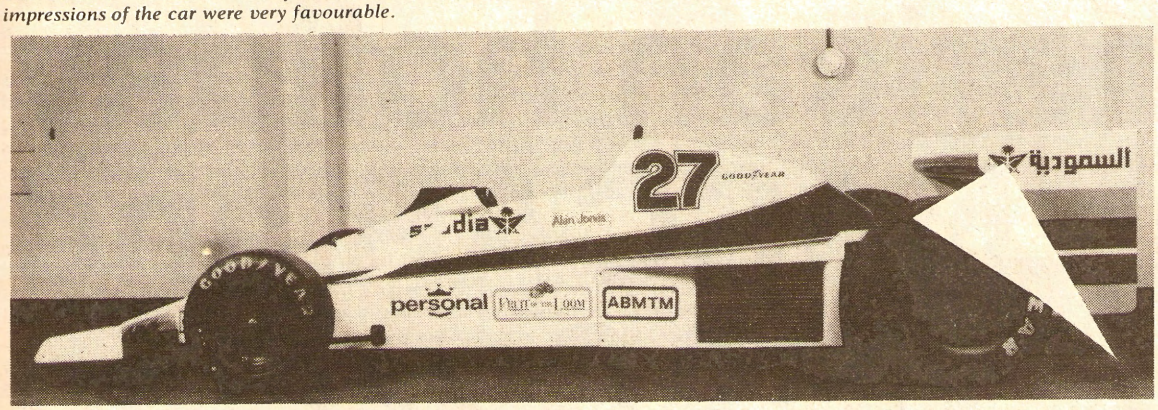
The oil tank is mounted within a seven-inch adaptor between the engine and gearbox, and this also provides the pick-up points for the upper end of the rear dampers, leading edge of the lower wishbone and top link. Water radiators are side-mounted, with the oil cooler situated in the nose. A compressed air starter system is fitted. The end plates upon which the rear wing is mounted are manufactured from carbon fibre.

Frank's major sponsor is, quite obviously, Saudia, known in this country as Saudi Arabian Airlines. They were part sponsors of the Williams March 761, driven this year by Patrick Neve. Other backing comes from Fruit of the Loom (an American clothing company), Personal, Associated British Machine Tool Makers Ltd, Goodyear and Champion.

As you will read elsewhere in this issue, the car's early testing, at Paul Ricard last week, went extremely well. Alan Jones will race it for the first time in Argentina on January 15.



The Saudia-Williams is a very small car indeed. At its first weigh-in, it proved to be in need of ballast! Alan Jones's first impressions of the car were very favourable.





Mass—Ricard test for ATS.

Sony to back ATS

Jochen Mass was due to test the new ATS Formula 1 car at Paul Ricard last weekend, after an encouraging first run at Hockenheim. No details have arrived yet, but it seems that the two Herd-designed cars are to be sponsored by Sony.

FIA prizes

Last Friday, the FIA held their annual prize-giving of awards for the winners of their various championships. Not surprisingly, pride of place went to Niki Lauda for the World Championship of Drivers. Among others present were Rene Arnoux for the European Formula 2 Championship, representatives from Porsche, BMW and Alfa Romeo for Group 2, 5 and 6 titles, Dieter Quester for his Group Two championship, Bernard Darniche (European Rally champion) Michele Mouton (European Ladies title) and Daniele Audetto, looking more shorn than ever, to receive the World Rally championship title on behalf of Fiat.

For whatever reason, Ferrari did not send a representative to receive the constructors' championship, but left it to their French agent, Charles Pozzi—who sent a representative!

The good news for Britain was that Sir Clive Bossom received the FICA award for the best Grand Prix from the entrants' and competitors' point of view. Apart from this appearance, Britain's only other good news came from the karting fraternity: Mickey Allan, Terry Fullerton and Martin Hines were all called to the stage to receive awards.

BMW Austria

Dieter Quester had more good news for Group 5 fans at the FIA prize-giving: he and Hans Binder will represent Austria with yet another BMW 320i, making a total of five national teams in BMW's outfit for the World Championship of Makes title. In fact Quester reckoned that in total there should be around 12 320is in G5 racing next year.

When Quester is not driving a 320i, he'll be back in Group 2 again, driving his 1977 championship-winning BMW CSL, which has been bought by Martino Finotto. He will contest as many Group 2 events as his Group 5 schedule allows.

F1CA award for Silverstone

The Formula 1 Constructors Association prize for the best organised Grand Prix of 1977 has been won by the RAC for the John Player British Grand Prix at Silverstone. The award, a solid silver trophy worth more than £6000, was received by RAC Chairman Sir Clive Bossom at the FIA prize giving in Paris, last Friday. The presentation was made by Bernie Ecclestone.

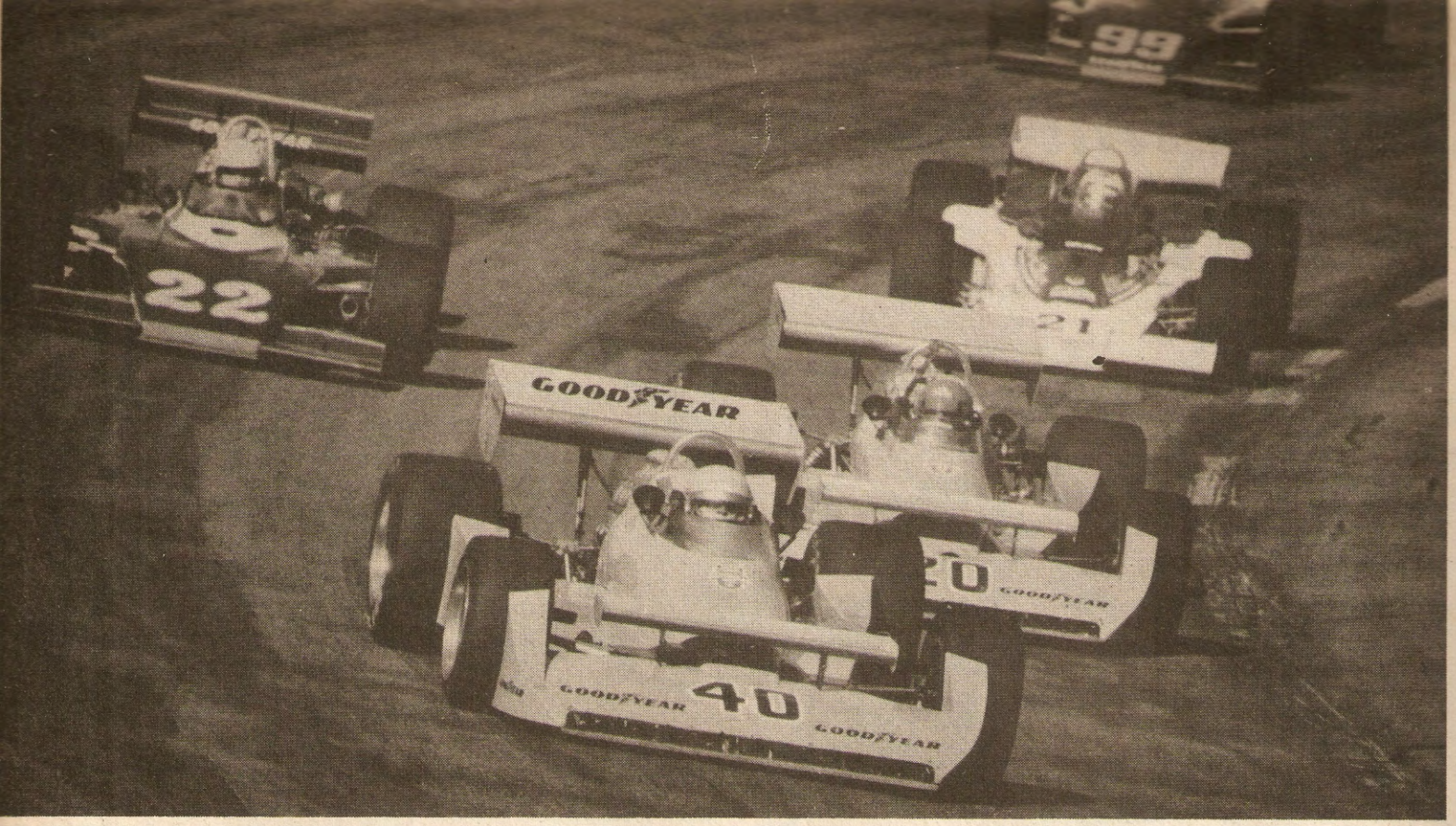
The F1CA award supersedes the similar award from the Grand Prix Drivers Association which the RAC won in 1967, also for the organisation of the British Grand Prix at Silverstone.

Commenting on the award, Sir Clive said: "It is really a splendid achievement by the RAC Motor Sport Division. However, although the award is made to the RAC, I must put on record our thanks to Silverstone Circuits Ltd and the team of voluntary marshals and officials who helped my staff. Without this co-operation, we could not have won. I can say without false modesty, after seeing the majority of European Grands Prix this season, as well as the Brazilian and Long Beach races, that the organisation at Silverstone was outstanding. It is also flattering to remember that Basil Tye, the RAC Motor Sport Division's Deputy Director, is entrusted by the FIA to inspect all the World Championship Grand Prix Circuits. He has now walked—yes, I mean walked—every foot of every circuit in the Championship."

MCD increase F3 money

It has been a frequent criticism of Motor circuit Developments in the past that too little attention has been paid by them to Formula 3. In the future, however, F3 competitors should have no cause for complaint. In a press release issued this week, John Webb had this to say: "I hope that our strong F3 programme for 1978 will satisfy people who have felt, misguidedly, that we did not favour this exciting proving ground for up-and-coming drivers."

The MCD circuits, Brands Hatch, Mallory Park, Oulton Park and Snetterton will stage a total of 12 F3 races next year. The big date of the season is undoubtedly the BP Championship round which supports the British GP at Brands. This will have a prize fund of £2,000, but there will also be three races with £1,000 prize funds.



A fantastic 15-day American holiday –plus NASCAR and USAC racing



There are holidays, and there are motor racing package tours. But this special American deal that AUTOSPORT has put together with Page & Moy for 1978 really does represent the motor racing holiday of a lifetime.

We think it's got everything. Lazing on the dazzling beaches of Florida: seeing the sights of New York City: partaking in the celebration atmosphere of America's Independence Day: and experiencing at first hand not one but both types of true American motor racing at their very best—USAC's classic Indy-style Pocono 500, and NASCAR's Firecracker 400 round the 190-mph banked oval at Daytona.

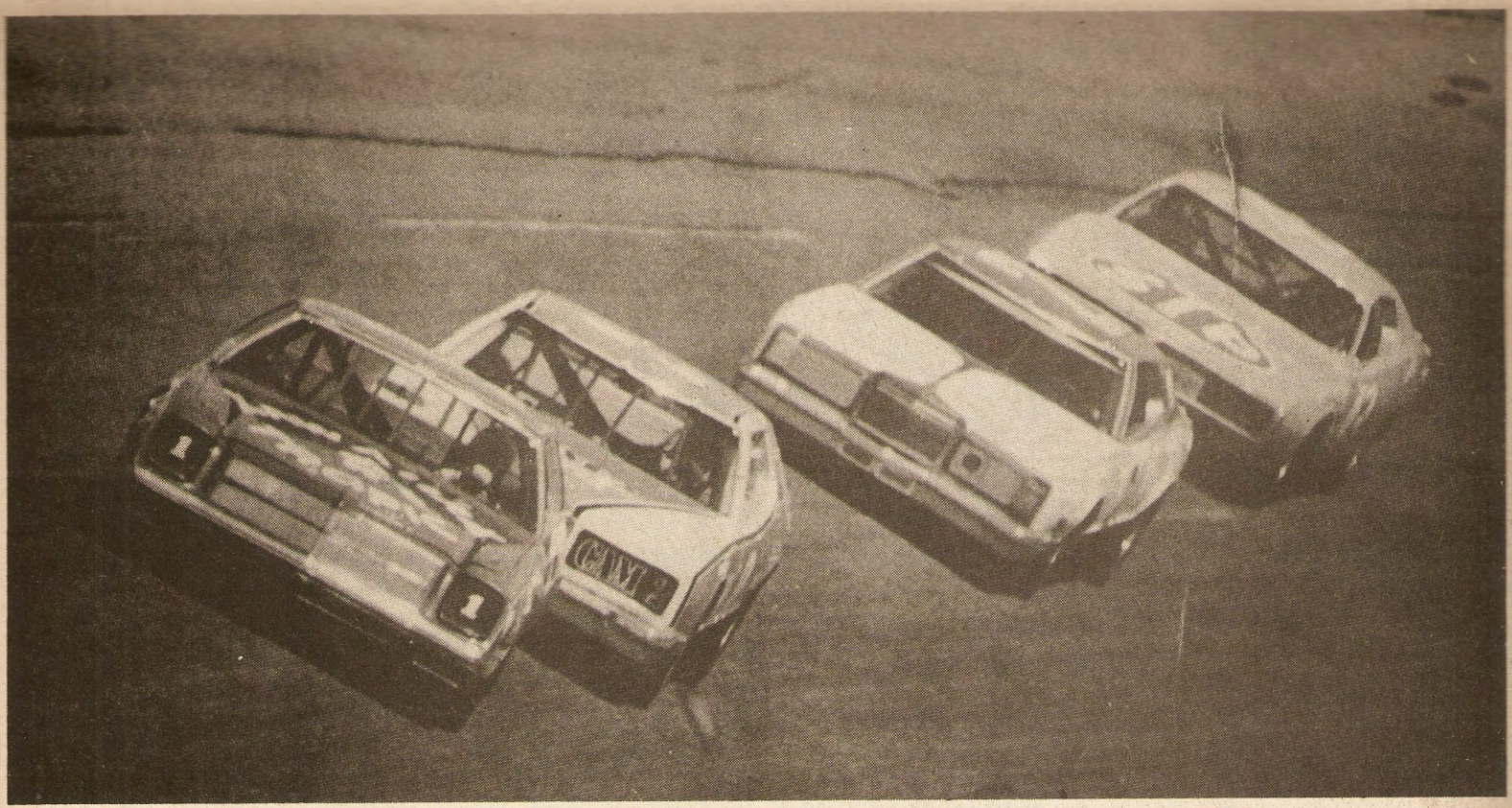
If you're an AUTOSPORT reader, this year you can give the Costa del Sol a miss and have a two-week holiday that you'll really want to remember.

The itinerary

Using scheduled transatlantic services we'll fly you by TWA Boeing 747 Jumbo Jet—in flight movies and all—from London Heathrow direct to New York's Kennedy Airport, and thence by air-conditioned luxury coach to your hotel right at Pocono. You'll stay at the Holiday Inn on the beautiful Lake Harmony, where your room will have private bathroom, TV and all amenities, and the hotel itself has indoor swimming pool and live cabaret entertainment.

You'll be able to sightsee in the area—Pocono is a noted beauty and holiday spot—and of course be at Pocono for the Saturday qualifying sessions. With Indianapolis and Ontario, the Pocono 500 is one of the three USAC 500-mile classics, and all the big names of Indianapolis-type racing will be there with their 800-hp, 220mph turbocharged single-seaters—names like A. J. Foyt, Bobby Unser, Gordon Johncock, and more. Foyt took pole last year at just 189.474mph, and 14-hundredths of a second covered him, Johnny Rutherford's McLaren and Mario Andretti's Penske-run McLaren. That's real motor racing.

Then, after the race itself, it's back to New York City and the famous Sheraton Hotel on Seventh Avenue, just off Times Square, where once again your room will be to luxury standard with bathroom and colour TV.



With three nights in New York you'll be able to see the sights—scale the Empire State Building, go to Radio City and Rockefeller Centre, take the ferry to the Statue of Liberty, or just soak up the amazing sights, sounds and smells of this unbelievable city.

Then we fly you south to Florida and Daytona Beach, where you'll be staying at the Surfside Holiday Inn, right on the dazzling white 22-mile beach (where in past years Land Speed Record attempts were run). Once again your room has private bathroom and colour TV, and the hotel has its own swimming pools and shops plus a roof-top cabaret lounge with top-name entertainment.

The Firecracker 400 takes place on Independence Day itself, which gives the race a very special atmosphere all its own. All the big names of the NASCAR world will be there, battling wheel to wheel at speeds approaching 200 miles per hour. If you've never seen a NASCAR race, with its incredible split-second pit-stops, its metal-to-metal contact at 180mph, its flat-out slip-streaming queues, its larger-than-life drivers, its hysterical crowds, its incredible showmanship atmosphere—you owe it to yourself. NASCAR is something you should see at least once in your life.

Altogether you'll have nearly a week at Daytona, so you can take advantage of that fantastic beach and the sub-tropical Florida climate for sunning, swimming, sailing, surfing and water-skiing. You can live it up with Daytona's sparkling night life, and take advantage of all the amenities of this sophisticated American playground.

Just south of Daytona is Cape Kennedy, the nerve-centre of manned space flights, where you can see (and photograph) the Vehicle Assembly Buiding—the largest building in the world.

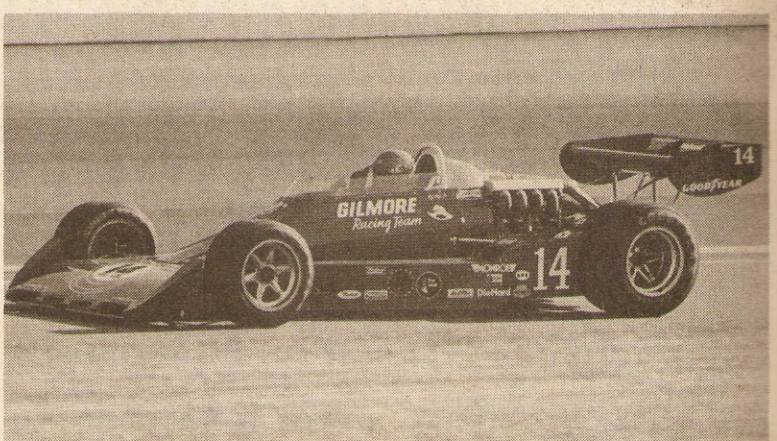
Then there's Disneyworld, a fantasy kingdom—or, to be more precise, six kingdoms—set in a vast 27,000-acre world of their own to delight, amuse and fascinate everyone.

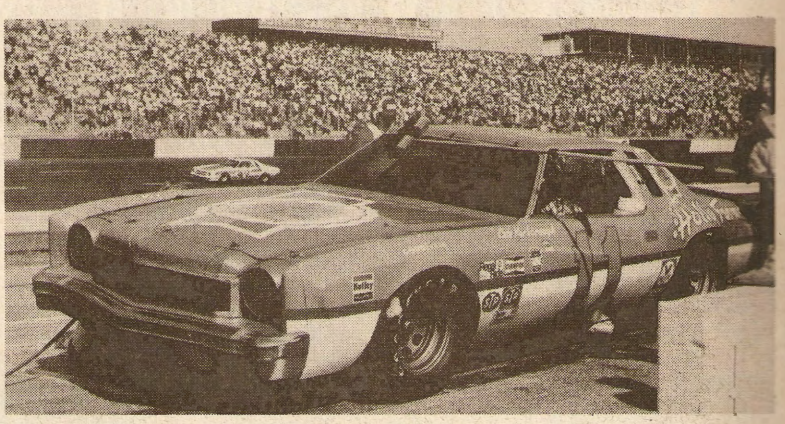
All this costs just £548—and that covers virtually everything. Here's what you get:

* Flight by scheduled TWA Boeing 747 London (Heathrow) to New York (Kennedy), Thursday, June 22.
* Transfer to Pocono and four nights' reserved accommodation at Lake Harmony Holiday Inn, Thursday, June 22—Sunday June 25.
* Transfer to and from Pocono Speedway for qualifying, Saturday, June 24, and for USAC Pocono 500, Sunday, June 25.
* Transfer to New York City and three nights' reserved accommodation at the Sheraton Hotel, Monday, June 26-Wednesday, June 28.
* Flight from Kennedy Airport to Daytona Beach, and seven nights reserved accommodation at the Surfside Holiday Inn, Thursday, June 29-Wednesday, July 5.
* Transfer to and from Daytona Speedway for NASCAR Firecracker 400, Tuesday, July 4.
* Flight from Daytona Beach to New York (Kennedy) Thursday, July 6, and overnight by scheduled TWA Boeing 747 from New York to London (Heathrow) Thursday, July 6-Friday, July 7.
* The services of an experienced Page & Moy courier throughout the trip.
* American departure taxes, baggage transfers, etc.
* Accommodation at all hotels based on two people sharing twin-bedded room with private bathroom.

Remember, this special tour is only available to AUTOSPORT readers—your application for details has to be made on a form clipped from the magazine.

If you want to know more, fill in the coupon and return to the address shown. Places on this tour have to be limited, so don't delay. You may never again have the chance to put together NASCAR, Indianapolis racing, New York and a Florida beach holiday all for such a low all-in price. Why not join us this summer for the holiday of a lifetime?





Autosport USA Motor Racing Holiday
Page & Moy Limited
136-138 London Road
Leicester LE2 1EN
Telephone: Leicester (0533) 552521

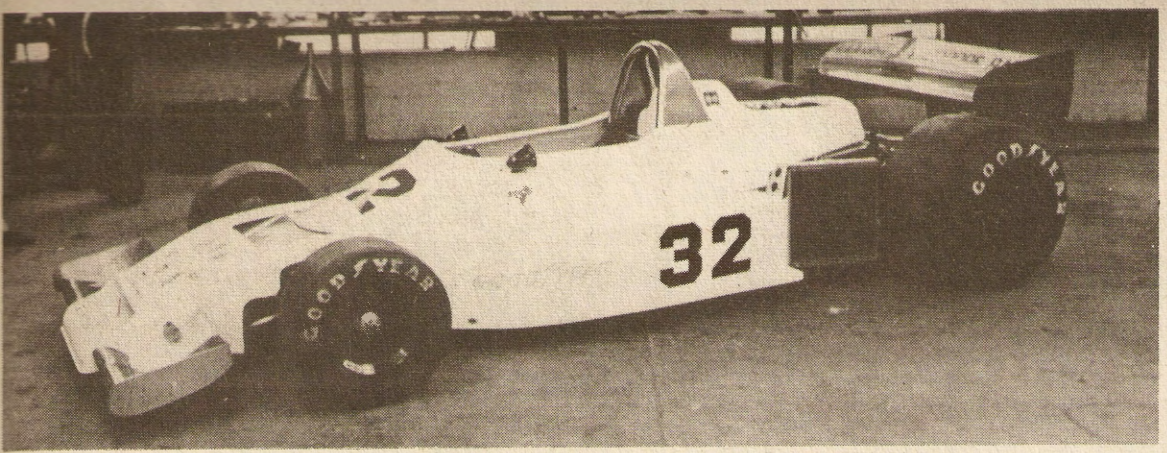
Name .....

Address .....

.....

Please send me full details of the AUTOSPORT USA Motor Racing Holiday.

ATOL 133BC



The Theodore—very obviously from the pen of Ron Tauranac. The TR-1's first day of testing at Goodwood went extremely well.

Daly tests the Theodore

Last week was a big one for new car launches. On Thursday we went to the Theodore Racing workshops in Woking to have a look at the TR-1.

There were rumours about this car a year ago, and, in fact, initial work began in February. Only in the last three months, however, has a concentrated effort been put into its completion. The car, of course, was designed by Ron Tauranac, with Len Bailey as Chief Design Engineer, and the first tub was built by Theodore mechanics at the Gomm workshops.

As you might expect, the car is completely conventional and, in fact, resembles a large Ralt. It is sponsored by Teddy Yip, but the final choice of driver has not yet been made. Many names have been mentioned, including Masahiro Hasemi, Jean-Pierre Jabouille (until the Renault runs next year), Michel Leclere and Jean-Pierre Jarier. The last two both have a lot of money to spend, apparently, and both are 'shopping'. Another such, believe it or not, is Renzo Zorzi but it seems unlikely that the Italian will be seriously considered.

On Friday, however, it was Derek Daly who drove the Theodore in its first test session, at Goodwood. Chief mechanic Andy Graves was very impressed with Daly's approach: "You could tell within two or three laps that he's going to be really good." The performance of both car and driver received favourable comment. This was Daly's first experience of a Grand Prix car, and the weather was bitterly cold. However, he put in 60 laps and got down to 1m 8.6s, a remarkably good time under the circumstances.

"There's an awful lot left in the car and in me, as well," commented Derek afterwards. He was expected to continue testing this week, before the TR-1 is shipped out to Argentina. Favourite for the GP ride at present is Jarier. It seems clear that this outfit is not about to run short of funds. According to Teddy Yip, there are plans to build a brand-new chassis in April, this one to be designed entirely by Len Bailey.

Derek's Formula 2 plans

"I can't really say too much about it", said Derek Daly last week while appearing as one of the guest speakers at a British Motor Racing Marshals Club forum, "but what I will say is this. Yes. I will be driving in Formula 2 next year and the car will be a Chevron. It will be powered by one of Brian Hart's engines. Other than that, you'll have to wait until the end of February when it's announced officially."

The young Irishman wouldn't be drawn into any further comment, save that he would be sponsored in his European Formula 2 foray by a large international company. What was evident was that Derek McMahon, his enthusiastic backer from this past year, will once again be involved.

Briefly . . .

● Now that you have a few days of booze and contemplation ahead of you, dear reader, why not give some thought to your summer holiday? And, in particular, think hard about AUTOSPORT-/Page Tours trip to America next summer. In addition to visits to New York, Florida, Pennsylvania and so on, you will also get to see a USAC 500-mile race and a NASCAR race at Daytona. From our own experience, we cannot recommend too highly either of these. All right, it costs a little more than Torremolinos, but, believe it, you will never forget it.

● We were delighted to see that Niki Lauda won the BBC award for the 'Outstanding Overseas Sports Personality of 1977' on the Beeb's *Sports Review of the Year* last week.

● Expected to be seen in Britain next season contesting the BP Super Visco Formula 3 series is 21-year-old Stefan Johansson, the Swedish driver who caused such a furore at Monaco this year. Johansson, who gave the Argo marque its first (and only) win in Sweden this year, is reckoned to have a lot of potential, according to Anders Olofsson, this year's Swedish F3 champion. Although Stefan has found sufficient backing for next season, his choice of chassis is still undecided.

● Another Formula 3 hot-shoe expected to be seen more often in Britain next year is Brazilian Nelson Piquet. Now that's bad news for his fellow competitors. He's good.

● Currently searching around for a good F3 team likely to contest the European Formula 3 Championship are Dunlop. They're very interested in moving back into single-seater racing, starting, at least, with Formula 3. The tyres are currently ready to test. Dunlop have to find a team racing in Europe because British F3 cars are restricted to using Goodyear tyres only. One possible team is Jo Marquart's Argo outfit.

● The Renault F3 engine is so far not working the way the French had hoped. It appears to be overheating badly when actually installed in one of Tico Martini's F3 chassis, and is lapping Magny-Cours three or so seconds slower than Toyota-engined chassis.

● Rumours from Paul Ricard suggest that the new Tyrrell 008 may well have a Renault turbo in the back soon! See page 8.

● We regret that James Hunt's column does not appear in this issue. James was due to come to London at the beginning of the week, but was unable to do so due to the closing of London Airport because of fog, and we have been forced to hold the column over.

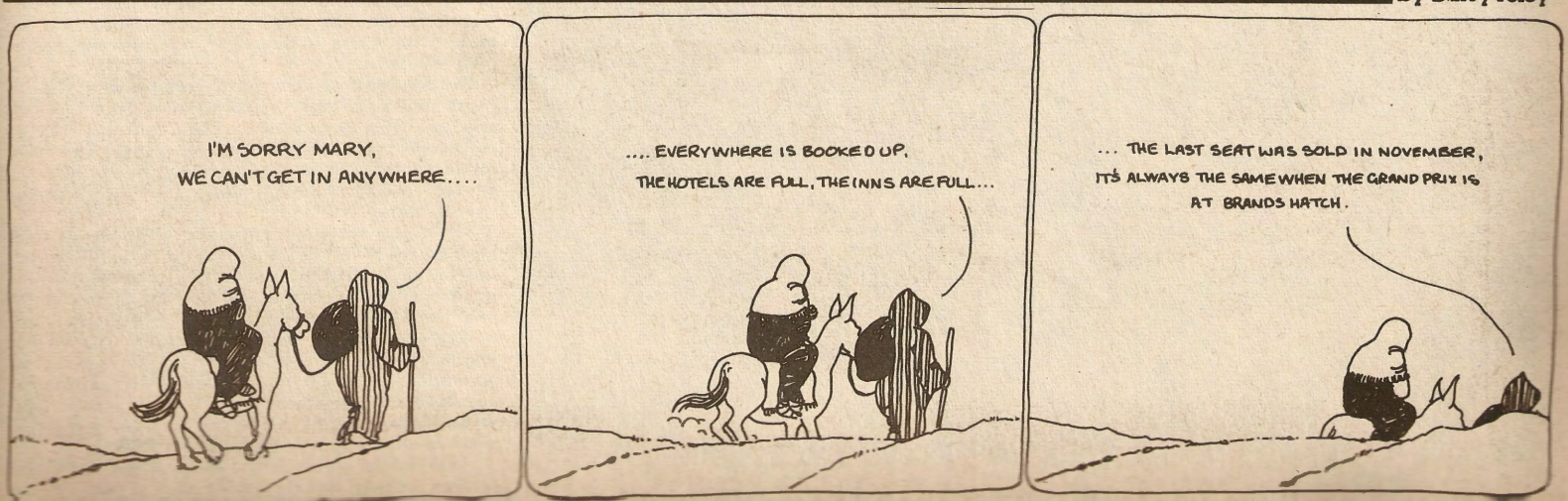
● On pages 26/27 of the Formula 1 supplement in this week's issue there is a Christmas Quiz contributed by Griffin Helmets. Terry Ogilvie-Hardy of Griffin is still trying to fox our readers, and feels that this may be the quiz to beat you. Identify the people wearing the helmets (not necessarily from motor sport) and answer the Formula 1 quiz. Answers should be sent to Griffin Quiz, Griffin Helmets Ltd, Highfield Road, Halesowen, West Midlands B63 2DH. The applicant with the first correct entry opened will receive a Griffin Clubman Helmet, the second a Griffin Speedstar Helmet, and the third a Griffin Jetstar Helmet. Closing date is January 19.

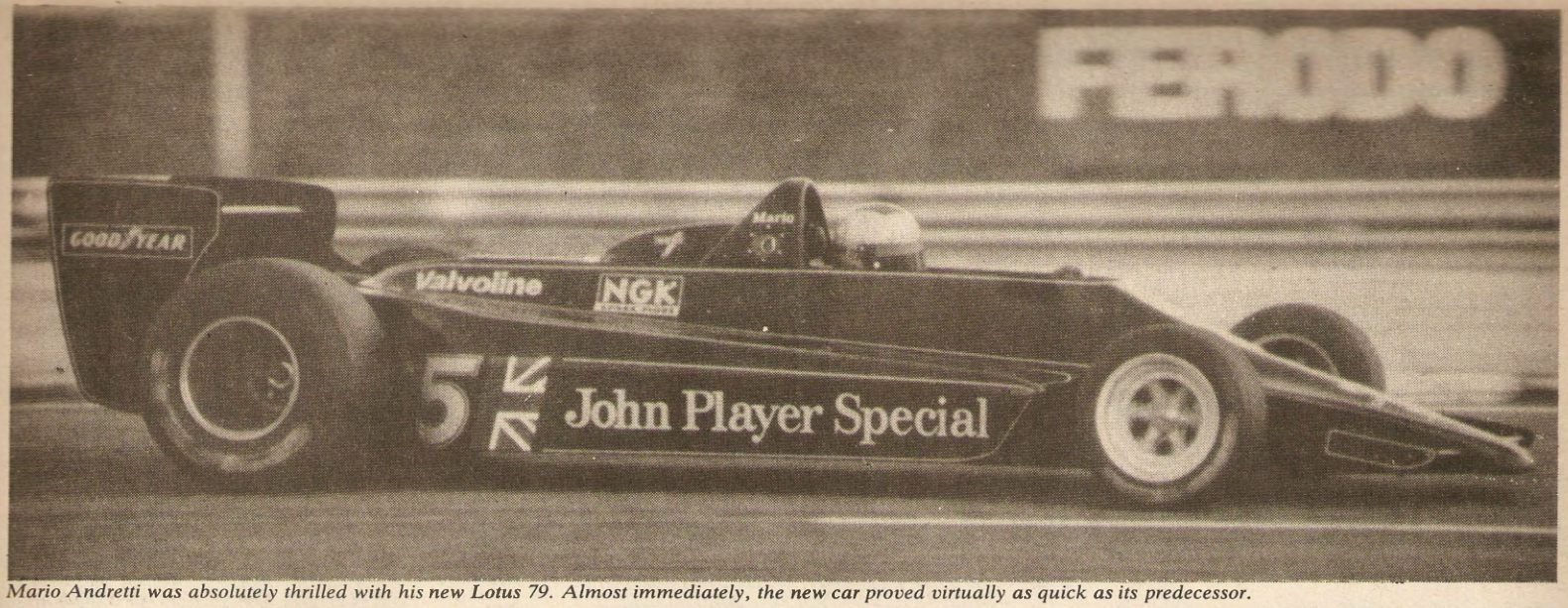
Happy Xmas

The Editor and all the staff would like to wish all AUTOSPORT readers a very Happy Christmas and New Year. Owing to unworkable printing and distribution schedules, AUTOSPORT will not be published next week, and the next issue will appear on Thursday, January 5, 1978.

catchpole

by Barry Foley





Mario Andretti was absolutely thrilled with his new Lotus 79. Almost immediately, the new car proved virtually as quick as its predecessor.

New Lotus looks good

JEFF HUTCHINSON reports from Paul Ricard where many Formula 1 teams have recently been testing.

Bright sunshine and T-shirt temperatures, hundreds of people hanging over the long pit-lane balcony. It was a bit like taking a six-month jump into the future and getting a glimpse of next year's French Grand Prix at the Paul Ricard circuit last week. It was only when the tartan-coloured helmet of Jackie Stewart was seen in the Lotus 78 that you could be really sure that you were dreaming.

Mario Andretti and Ronnie Peterson were there trying their hands, in their new Lotus mounts. So were James Hunt and Patrick Tambay, driving the familiar McLaren M26 and a completely new and very different looking McLaren M26/7, a prototype of the new M27, which is still in the design stage.

Niki Lauda and John Watson were trying out the 'interim' Brabham BT45Cs they will be using until a solution is found to cool sufficiently the new Brabham BT46. Alan Jones drove his first laps in anger with the neat, new Saudia-Williams designed by Patrick Head, and Patrick Depailler put a lot more miles under the wheels of Maurice Phillippe's Elf-Tyrrell 008.

Jean-Pierre Jabouille found his turbocharged Renault engine 'constant' for the first time this year and Brett Lunger and Hector Rebaque had engines break in their respective private McLaren and Lotus 78 chassis. It was a week of interesting developments, but one which still points to James Hunt and the McLaren M26 and the Lotus 78s of Andretti and Peterson as being strong favourites among those likely to win the opening Grands Prix in South America.

As with the early testing at Ricard after Japan, it was again the McLaren team that set the pace both on 'standard' 38/39 tyres and the several test tyres they tried for Goodyear throughout the three days they tested. Hunt, driving on the short circuit only, set a best of 1m 8.7s on 'standard' tyres, while running test 96/59 front and rear tyres he set a best of 1m 8.3s, just outside his overall best of 1m 8.2s with a new rear tyre back in November.

Tyres were not the only new things to appear on the McLaren M26. The team was also trying an 'external' high pressure fuel system, which is to say that the high pressure needed for starting the engine was supplied by an outside air bottle, like the air starter, and once the engine had fired up, it kept running on the mechanical fuel pressure pump. The advantage of such a system is that both the high pressure pump and battery to run it can be left off the car. A new and closely-guarded clutch operating system with the slave cylinder mounted on the top of the engine bell-housing was being tried out and revised rear wheel aerodynamic 'spats' were still being used after initial tests a few weeks before.

The most interesting feature around the McLaren garages, however, was the second McLaren M26 which the team were running, which had a completely new back end, a prototype version of what may well be the McLaren M27. By using a rocking arm attached to the rear upright at one end and operating an inboard coil spring damper unit at the other, it leaves a far 'cleaner' air-flow around the rear wheels and does away with the top radius rod. This also allows room for a new tail assembly, consisting of two long side fins incorporating the oil and water radiators in the 'gap' behind the monocoque at the front and the rear wing at the back, similar to the Porsche arrangement. A second combination was also tried with the side plates cut back and the rear wing fixed in conventional style. Both Tambay and Hunt tried the long wing arrangement, Tambay finding the set-up gave a smoother feel but a much quicker breakaway at the rear which he backed up with his first spin for the McLaren team.

James Hunt did three laps before he also spun then did only a few more laps before getting out of the car and declaring the set-up not to his liking. With the shorter side plates Tambay lapped in 1m 10.3s, which, considering the extra weight of the new set-up, was an encouraging performance. "If the new rear end is adopted for the new car, then it will have a matching front end to go with it," said designer Gordon Coppuck.

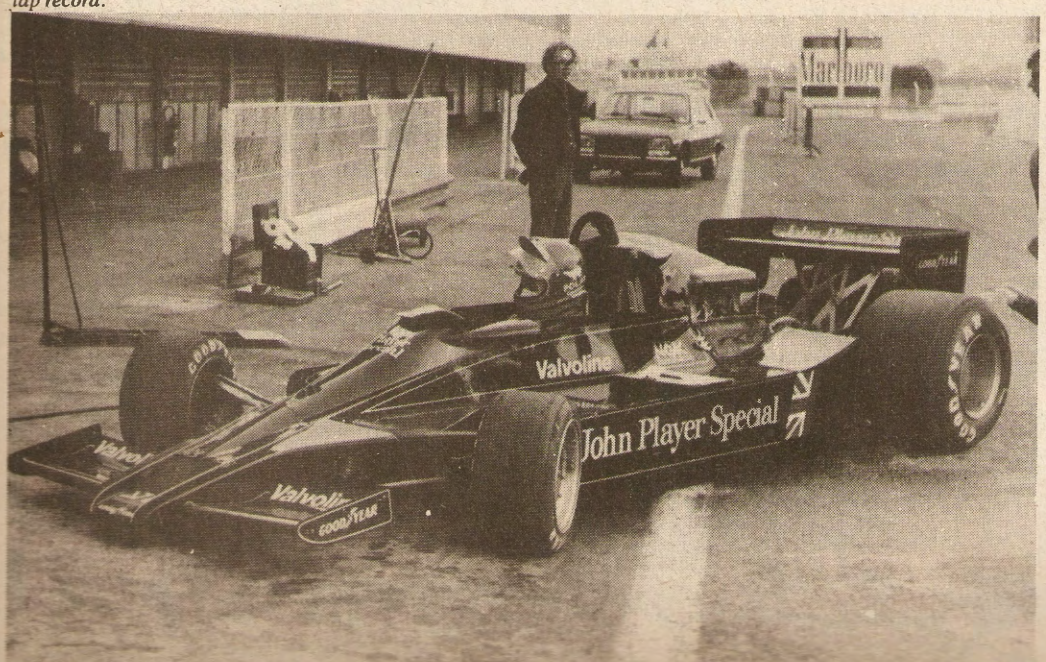
The only team to come close to the McLaren's times was the Brabham team who were testing a couple of days after McLaren, but under similar conditions. Lauda matched Hunt's times on standard tyres and was only a fraction slower on 'specials', the Brabham team concentrating their efforts on a pair of BT45Cs for the moment which are very similar to the BT45B. A long thin full-width front water radiator has resulted in a considerably different nose shape, not unlike the Tyrrell P34 shape, while the car also features a revised rear suspension geometry and wing mounting arrangement. There is also a more streamlined cockpit section, but the general concept is that of the BT45B. "We shall be using these cars for at least the first three races," said designer Gordon Murray who, along with Lauda and the first of the new BT45Cs, had just returned from Rio tyre tests. "It will be a case of which tyre melts first, I reckon," said Herbie Blash who mentioned that temperatures were 43°C and are likely to be even hotter for the race. "The circuit is very tight, but otherwise seems OK," he added.

Gordon Murray described working with Niki as "very much like working with Carlos Pace. He tells you just what you want to know and has a lot of experience at knowing what he wants. The most important thing of all to me, however, is that he fitted straight in with the team and everything is running very smoothly."

The Lotus team were literally finishing off their new Lotus 79 in the pits at Ricard. Mario Andretti saw the car all together for the first time the morning he arrived to start testing and was very impressed. "I didn't think that the new car could make the old one look so out of date," he remarked, while after his first few laps in the car just as night fell on Tuesday, he was immediately impressed. "It feels very agile under acceleration," he noted after half a dozen laps, several minor points in the car then being rectified before testing began seriously on Wednesday.

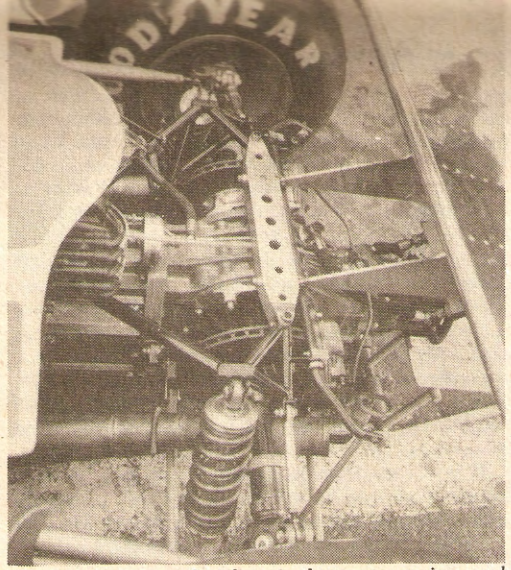
After initial adjustments, most of the work was centred around aerodynamics and, above all, the

Ronnie Peterson found the Lotus 78 every bit as good as he had hoped, eventually breaking the Ricard long circuit lap record.





"Is it all right if I have a bit of a go?" Stewart was in raptures about the Lotus 78.



The Ligier appeared with revised rear suspension, and a Hewland FGA400 gearbox.

cooling system, which ran too hot at the beginning. After opening up the water radiator air intake and modifying the ducting system the car ran much cooler. But the new Lotus gearbox suffered from teething troubles, both drivers finding the short and delicate selection movement difficult to get used to and often missing gears. "When the 'box gets hot it also becomes very difficult to change gears. Like it is, I hate to think what it would be like around somewhere like Monaco," said Mario, although each modification helped things considerably, Peterson also helping develop the gearbox with a 78 chassis fitted with the new gearbox and a revised rear suspension.

Despite the early problems, Andretti managed a 1m 11.2s during the short test sessions and when he returned to America on Friday Peterson got his chance to try the car on the long circuit. Late Friday afternoon, he set a creditable 1m 47.7s in the new car despite being 20kmh slower on the Renault speed trap down the straight than he had been earlier on in the afternoon with the standard Lotus 78 in which he set a new outright long circuit record of 1m 46.4s with little problem. The previous day he had set the best time of the day on an oily short track with the same car, a 1m 9.2s, which he felt he could have easily bettered were it not for the oil laid down by Brett Lunger's McLaren when a motor blew soon after he started testing.

Ronnie's sideways driving in the Lotus 78 which, until then, had only been lapped quickly with smooth Andretti-style driving, proved spectcular to watch. Ronnie was delighted with the Lotus and when asked by a spectating Didier Pironi how it compared with the Tyrrell P34, Ronnie replied, "the difference is like night and day. This car gives me my inspiration back."

By the end of the week, the new Lotus, which, surprisingly, features no down-force producing aerodynamic sides (which when removed leave only the oil and water radiators sticking out from each side of the narrow monocoque chassis), a similar rear suspension principal to the experimental McLaren and straightforward front suspension, was looking very cut about. Skirts had been added to the sides, and the aerodynamics altered around, including trying a high-mounted front wing at one point to see what effect it had on the cooling. After a couple of laps with the turbulence buffeting Andretti's head around, the wing was put back to its original position. Another interesting feature of the new car is its single fuel tank behind the driver's seat which puts the driver 15 centimetres further forward in relation to the engine, although the rear wheels are still in the same relative position as in the 78. The entire engine/gearbox area aft of the inlet trumpets is filled in by a flat body section to ensure 'clean' air to the rear wing, the car soon earning the name of the 'Batmobile' from the mechanics.

While it is still early days to predict the future of the new car, which is not expected to make its debut until after considerably more testing in South Africa, the first signs are that it will turn out to be another winner, like the Lotus 78.

The Tyrrell team had a mixed week with their new 008 chassis, back at Ricard for the second time after fuel and oil system problems cut short testing the first time. Patrick Depailler strenuously denied rumours of chassis flexing problems which had sprung up in the press, although several of the suspension pick-up points had been strengthened or braced. "Within a few races I will be as quick as the McLaren," said an enthusiastic Depailler after setting an encouraging 1m 10.1s on the first day, but then a problem with a rear hub caused the team to lose half a day while a fresh one was sent out from England.

Despite long hours each evening studying the many paper rolls of technical 'read-out' given by the on-board instrumentation system (a similar but less compact system also being used in the tests of the standard Lotus 78), Karl Kempf and Maurice Phillippe did not manage to improve lap times which were never as good as the first day. Depailler's biggest problem seemed to be bad oversteer which Peterson confirmed after a few laps behind the Tyrrell, and if *he* said it was bad, it was bad.

Testing was further interrupted when the left radius rod pick-up point, already braced, split. And then, on the final day, the engine began to seize up. Rumour has it that the important modifications Ken Tyrrell spoke of when the car was announced might well be concerned with the fitting of a Renault turbo engine, a rumour supported by a large 'hole' between the back of the Tyrrell's monocoque chassis and the current engine which, other than extra space for an anticipated change of power unit (with the bulky intercooler and turbo system?) would seem to have very little point. The Elf link between the Tyrrell team and the Renault engine is another good reason for the change, which would be likely to come after the two South American races, for South Africa (the altitude suiting the turbocharged Renault engine running at sea-level pressure). We shall see. . . .

Meanwhile, Renault continue to test their engine and Michelin tyres. Jabouille set a best ever 1m 9.3s on Sunday, although this does not mean so much unless he was running race rubber, which only the secretive Michelin men (not even Renault themselves) know. What was significant, however, was that Jabouille said after a hard day's running on Friday that it was the first time that he had run a long period without the need to boost the turbo pressure, in order to keep up the same sort of performance. This is an encouraging sign for the engine, while Jackie Stewart's high regard for the chassis when he that things are looking up for the Renault team.

The new Saudia-Williams FW06 also made its debut at Ricard, and impressed everybody who saw it. Patrick Head has produced a very neat, well thought out chassis which Frank's engineers have put together in fine style. "There's not a single piece that was not properly drawn up before it was made," says Frank, and the result is what is undoubtedly the best ever of the Willians line of racing cars. Jones was soon driving the car to its limit, and each adjustment brought improved times, which were soon down in the low 1m 10s bracket. Alan was as delighted with his new mount as the team: "We have still got a lot of sorting out to do, and there are a lot of things I would like to try, especially with the wings. The main thing is that nothing has gone wrong and everything seems to work fine. I think it's going to be a great little car," said Jones.

The car is sturdily built, yet right down to the weight limit, mainly because of the intelligent multiple use of components, in particular the oil tank which does the job of several other components normally found on a car. Following on from the Lotus principle, it not only acts as the bellhousing between gearbox and engine, but also as the cross-member for the shock absorber pick-up points, the pick-up point for the forward-facing lower toe control link (which does away with a lower radius rod) and the mounting point for the anti-roll bar. More weight is saved by an internal direct hydraulically operated piston for the clutch release mechanism, which cuts out the weighty slave cylinder and linkage arrangement normally used. The hefty-looking rear uprights, which incorporate carefully tensioned large tapered roller bearings, are in fact very light also. Head said, "If we have any troubles, I expect it will be with the rear hubs, although so far there do not seem to be any."

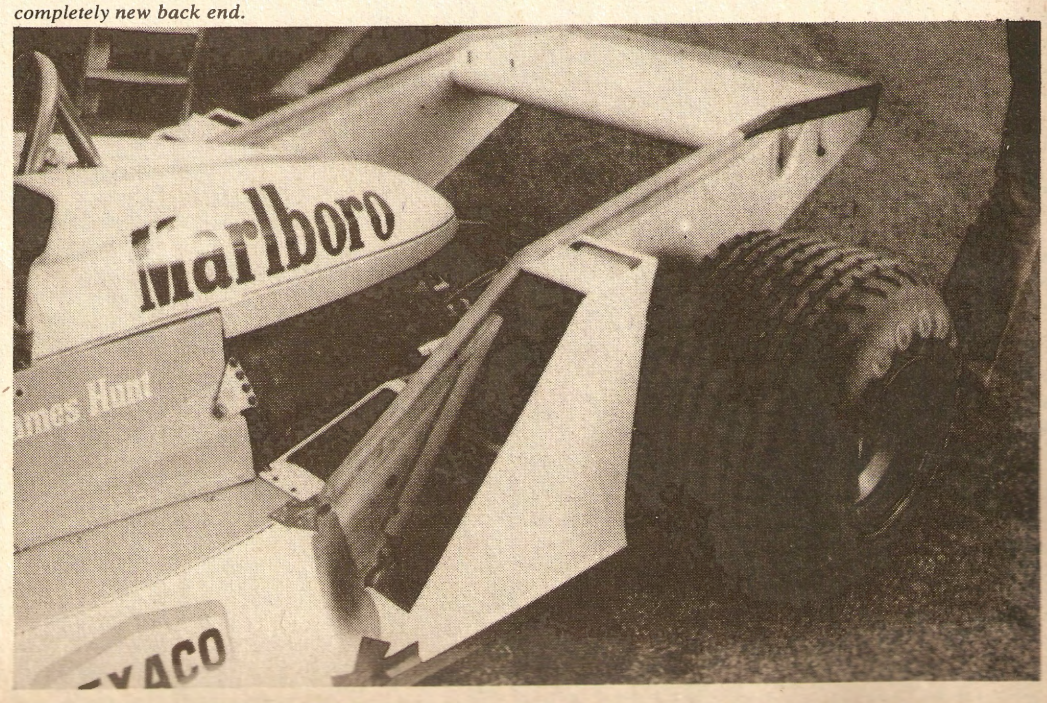
When the car was finally finished, it was found to be under weight by several pounds.

A very disappointed Jacques Laffite left Ricard early, his testing cut short by a broken driveshaft (the team had no spares to replace it, for the Ligier was running an experimental rear suspension). Before the breakage, he had lapped in 1m 9.7s. Other features on the car included a bigger seat fuel tank and other detail changes, including an FGA400 gearbox for the first time (5 kilos lighter).

Another brief appearance was put in by Brett Lunger, who hardly had time to say "It's good to be back" before he was on his way home again thanks to a blown engine. Bob Sparshott, who runs Brett's McLaren M23, did not want to risk another engine in the car before Argentina until he found out why it should have blown without warning.

Hector Rebaque, who is now employing ex-Lotus mechanic Ian Dawson and ex-ATS team manager Peter Reinhardt to run his Team Rebaque original long-wheelbase Lotus 78 in all the Grands Prix for the next two years, showed promising form with his first run in the car. He lapped in 1m 11.9s, but his testing was interrupted by a broken valve in one engine, which was changed for a second engine which developed a high-speed misfire. The car, which had come straight from the Jochen Rindt Show, was still in its Lotus colours, but will be raced in a dark and light brown colour scheme for the rest of the season. Two more cars should be delivered to the team, along with all Lotus's 78 spares, as soon as the Lotus team change over to the type 79. ■

McLaren were at Ricard with two cars, a conventional M26 and this car, dubbed the M26/7, which had a completely new back end.



Tyre monopolies in racing

Having read your excellent Seasonal Survey of Group 8 racing (December 15), we would echo your hopes that the new F1/F2 format will become the proving ground for up and coming drivers.

This should not be limited to drivers alone, however, if the sport is not to stagnate. Quote: "A British or even a foreign racing car constructor in the process of moving up the ladder would be able to use the series to evaluate his F1 project."

There should also be provision for any up and coming tyre company to do the same.

Your caption a photograph: "Tyres were a significant factor in Group 8 last year . . . ." This photograph showed an overheated tyre 'chunking', illustrating that standardised tyres do not suit all cars for all conditions. John Miles echoes the problem in his track test: "Unfortunately Group 8 regulations lay down . . . . the use of one type of tyre construction and compound . . . . This limits the possibilities of trying to cure the vibration problem, as it is caused to a large extent by an incompatible tyre construction to chassis character."

Outside a monopoly situation, such problems would have to be cured within weeks. This year, however, Group 8 competitors have not only had to live with them, but also pay for them.

The present tyre restrictions throughout most UK formulae severely handicap tyre development, not only by those outside the monopoly, but also by those within.

BRIDGWATER, SOM NIGEL SULLIVAN-TAILYOUR,
PETER GRZELINSKI,
M&H Racemaster Tyres

Spreading the word about the sport

I would like to use your *Correspondence* column to suggest to the automobile sport enthusiasts of this country a method of helping our sport increase in popularity.

I'm sure that fellow enthusiasts will agree that comparatively ordinary sports such as football and cricket owe their popularity to the extensive media coverage given to them. As our sport is so different from others, the media could be failing to give it the extensive publicity it deserves because of their lack of authentic correspondents to cover it.

This is where the enthusiasts come in. Probably as many as 75 per cent of you could claim to have a good knowledge of a particular branch of the sport, be it karting, hillclimbing, rallying, hot rod racing or whatever. You all have a local newspaper or radio station (even hospital radio) to which you could contribute.

If you have any local events to cover your task should be easier, as the local media are interested in local events. An ability to write accurately and the enthusiasm to do so may be all that's required, together with access to a typewriter.

I urge you to write to the Sports Editor of your local newspaper or radio station and offer your services as an automobile sport correspondent, or specialise further by covering karting or something. I mention karting because it must be the best form of four-wheeled motor sport available as a competition medium to higher paid members of the public. Perhaps there's a future Alan Burgess among you.

Perhaps you'll soon be presenting your own programme on the local radio station. Your voice isn't the equal of Simon Taylor's? Don't despair, it must be clearer than Eddie Waring's. I recently heard a local radio presenter state that local dialects are preferred.

Perhaps you'd like to contribute to a local daily newspaper, but you're worried about getting reports to them before their deadline. And how do you think I manage it? By telephone of course. The newspaper offices have a copy department where a young lady patiently listens and types your story before rushing it to the Sports Editor for publication. Simple, isn't it?

If you can provide coverage for local events then you should have little difficulty in persuading the organisers to grant you a press pass.

Similarly, the photographers among you may like to submit some of your best monochrome work to the Picture Editor of your local weekly newspaper. Offer to provide photographic coverage of local meetings, perhaps to supplement the reporter's work. Once again, access to a typewriter would be required for the accompanying letter. You want to look professional, don't you.

So, how will this affect the national media, which I've so far avoided mentioning? When the nationa media people notice the trend towards automobile sport, they will feel obliged to conform.

Don't worry, our friends at AUTOSPORT will not be thrown to the Social Security men. Look at horse racing, where The *Sporting Life* exists as a specialist publication despite the extensive coverage by the general media.

Even if you lack the confidence to become a contributor, at least write to the Sports Editor of your local newspaper or radio station to complain about their lack of coverage. Then, if he receives a letter from Joe Bloggs offering contributions of automobile sport coverage, the Editor will be prepared to consider some action because a demand will have been created.

I have a dream that in five years' time our sport will receive a greater amount of media coverage than any other sport. Interviews with personalities from our sport will replace all those boring interviews with illiterate footballers. Surely my ideas are a step towards this?

Let's give it a try. You know as well as I do that automobile sport is superior to all other sports. Or perhaps you have some better ideas?

SALISBURY, WILTS. ANDREW S. POULTON

Dublin Bay debacle

After seeing in AUTOSPORT of December 15 a request for entries for the Dublin Bay GP, my husband entered and was most displeased with the organisation of the event.

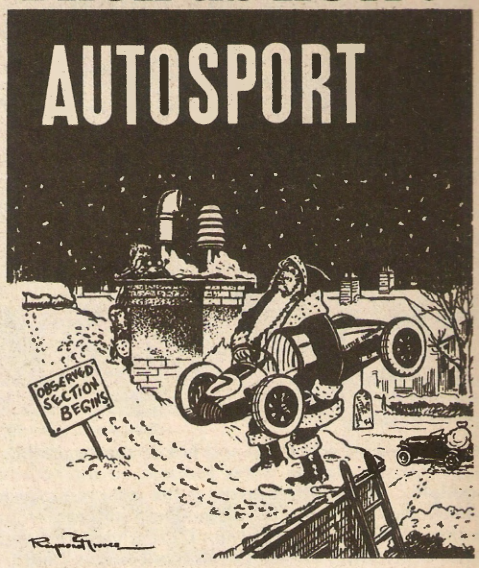
His problems began with scrutineering when he was informed that the letters JCB on the side of his excavator were too large; I understand that they completely filled the viewing screen of the Irish Television Super 8mm camera. He was then forced to remove the aerofoil from the roof of his cab and as he didn't have a set of slick tyres with him, you can imagine that handling was a problem.

The notes in the regs (number 2) said that practice times would be given in GMT, yet my Lucian was put on the back row of the grid with a time of 17ft 3ins. I timed him myself at 8ft 1in quicker, a time which would have put him on the front row.

It was also unfair of Mr Flynn, the club secretary, to ask Lucian if he would dig up an earth bank for him during the race and I feel that it was this which caused him to have a lap time of 6h 10m on lap 4, and not the spin which the organisers claimed to be the reason.

LONDON E14 EVE O'MAHARTY.

Then as now?



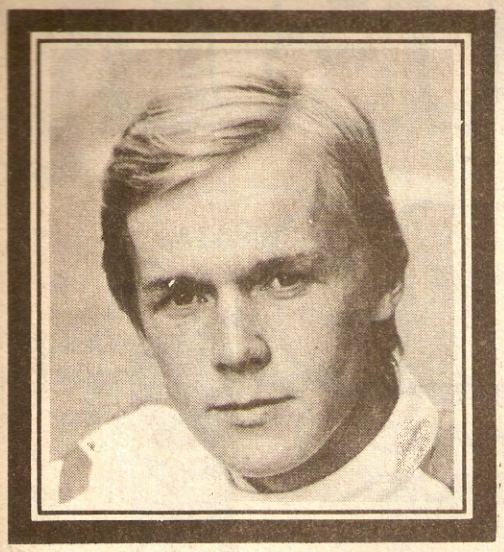
Twenty-five years ago this Christmas (AUTOSPORT, December 19 and 26, 1952) we featured plenty of absorbing articles to see the reader over the festive season including an interesting article on the art of handicapping by the Earl of March. This was, in fact, an appraisal of a similarly titled piece by Barclay Inglis which appeared earlier in the year and was written in the light of a year's experience gained with the BARC at Goodwood circuit. John Bolster had had an extremely busy time prior to Christmas and had come up with a splendid feature on PA Commentary as well as finding time to sample the delights of the strange AC Petite three-wheeler.

The BRDC Silver Jubilee was celebrated at a spectacular Banquet and Ball at the Royal Festival Hall and wa graced with the presence of HRH the Duke of Edinburgh, President-in-Chief of the Club. Among those present was Prince Chula Chakrabongse of Thailand, Lt-Col Goldie Gardner and, of course, Stirling Moss who received the 1952 Gold Star from the Duke. Moss had previously taken part in an endurance run in which, with Leslie Johnson, John Cutts and David Humphrey, he visited 15 countries in 90 hours in a Humber.

Cyril Kieft, a leading manufacturer of 500cc F3 cars, launched a road version of his racer complete with windscreen, lights and cycle-type wings. The car could be fitted with either a 650cc BSA engine or a 500cc version and weighed about 8cwt on the road. Although the Kieft sports car was only an experiment at the time, considerable interest was aroused and maximum speed was as high as 75mph. Also on the manufacturers' front, the Cooper factory in Surbiton was busy fullfilling orders for their MkVI F3 cars. Twenty cars were bound for the Argentine, a further 15 for Chile.

Interestingly enough, one Everard Boyd (?) wrote a feature along the lines of Maurice Hamilton's 'GP du Dublin Bay' report featured in this issue and this was entitled 'The Wigan Sporting'—a trials event. This meeting, run under the watchful eyes of resident 'experts' Gilbert Harding, Groucho Marx, Dr Marie Stopes and Reg Phillips, attracted a motley entry headed by Juan Manuel Fangio himself in, of all things, "the latest Bartlett Special, which is a Type 159 Alfa Romeo chassis with a 300SL Mercedes engine driving the nearside front and offside rear wheels". The great man was destined to finish second (the winner was unknown), while the Committee Cup went to Tony Rumfitt in his BRM V16-powered Cotton.

Vatanen



Verbatim

"I admit that I have made a lot of mistakes and have not learnt from them as quickly as I should have done. . . "

Looking back on my 1977 rally season the best way I can sum it up is to say that the finish was as bad as the start was good. It really had an excellent start with wins on the Artic and Mintex rallies but, oh dear, how my fortunes went from bad to worse: the final disasters happened on the RAC and Northern Lights rallies, which I would really rather forget and, anyway, I am sure you have read enough about them in the pages of AUTOSPORT.

I am sure that many people expected my year to continue in the way it had started, and I was certainly one of them. However, things did change. But I must say that the Ford mechanics were marvellous: no sooner had we had experienced one disaster than they were saying to me that, next time, it would be right. They were fantastic for my morale as, despite the fact that they were the people who did all the hard work after my problems, they were the keenest to get going again and try to do better on the next event.

I must count myself very lucky to have won three Finnish championship events and the Mintex and the Scottish, but winning a World Championship round would have made my year that much brighter. I know that must be every rally driver's ambition but getting so near and then missing out really was frustrating. Still, all I can say is that I am just as determined to win one next year—you never know, the Swedish just could be my event.

The lessons I have learned this year have been innumerable. Each event has had its own particular character and, with it, new challenges but, for me, the Safari was like entering a completely different world of rallying. It was quite unnerving going there for the first time and I just hope that I shall be able to go there again as I am sure I will feel more confident. I know that I should not blame my results on good or bad luck, but if there is ever an event that depends on luck it is the Safari. I do not feel a driver necessarily has to do it a lot of times before he wins—I just feel that he needs a good car and a certain amount of luck on his side. For instance this year, with the deep rivers, there was no way of knowing whether you were still on the road when trying to cross them; it was just as easy to hit a boulder or lose the road as it was to find the correct way across. It is a very hard rally on cars and one on which every competitor usually suffers some sort of mechanical breakdown. Again it is just a matter of luck as to where your service crew is when the trouble hits you. This rally is a great challenge with so many natural hazards outside the control of the crew which bring competitors on to more equal terms.

I have had some high and low spots this year, but my most enjoyable time was on the South Pacific Rally in New Zealand. It really was my favourite event of all time, mainly because of the absolutely fantastic stages. The length and quality of these stages are difficult to convey but they make even the nice long RAC Rally and other British event stages seem 'Mickey Mouse'. Please do not think that I am trying to criticise the RAC Rally as, this year, it was definitely an excellent event. I must admit that for me it started badly and continued in that way, but, of the three that I have now done, it was by far the best. It is just that in New Zealand the stages were in the region of 50kms in length and these really give a driver a chance to show his skills: of course, I am still remembering the stage on which I passed three works Fiats, something which I was extremely pleased about.

Other events that stick out in my mind are the Portuguese and San Remo Rallies. Both of these were particularly enjoyable as I was able to practise for them on nearly empty roads. Although we should always remember the public on practice events, it is impossible to practise properly at slow speeds. Countries where this is a particular problem include New Zealand, Canada and Finland so practising for the events there was not that easy.

Another reason why I remember San Remo was because I had the opportunity of going out the night before the rally with Bjorn Waldegaard in his rally car. It was an incredible experience for me as, even though we are team mates, we are both usually too busy with our own cars to have time for such things. All I can say is that I am pleased that there was no one else on the roads as Bjorn really showed me his full driving ability. His speed and car control are just incredible and I now know what to aim for in rallying. If I am ever as good a driver as he is I will know that I have reached the ultimate in my profession. From now on, if anyone dare suggest to me that he only drives nine tenths and is simply a good reliable driver I shall have a ready reply. Okay, he *might* be driving at nine tenths of his ability but, if he is, then we are all driving at about seven tenths! I was always certain he was a good driver, but I am even more certain now and I am sure that he is faster now than he was at the beginning of the season and is improving with every rally.

Rallying is very much a team effort and, for me, this year has been most memorable for my associations with my regular team at Ford and with David Sutton, who has looked after my Gandy car. At Ford, we work things out together and, in particular, Peter Ashcroft and myself have always been able to be honest with each other. If he wants to tell me I am doing something wrong he tells me straight to my face and never lets me hear secondhand. I admit that I have made a lot of mistakes and have not learnt from them as quickly as I should have done, but he has been patient with me, never getting excited and simply explaining things to me. I have now been with Ford for two years—which is really a comparatively short time—and in this time I have learned the importance of having a close association with my team manager who is always willing to help both me and the team whenever the situation arises. I shall always remember Peter lying on the ground underneath my car on the 1976 Scottish changing the rear axle—I wonder how many team managers would have done that. My proudest boast is that, with both Peter and the Boreham mechanics, our relationship is not just in building and rallying cars as we are all firm friends.

As I said before, I have also been involved with David Sutton and his team and am very proud that I was able to give them their first international win this year. I think what David has done for Finnish drivers has become legend both here and in Finland and I am sure that his approach is just as professional to the sport as that of most works teams.

I suppose in summing up my year I must also mention something about the large number of rallies I have done this season. I admit that at times I have felt rather tired with so much work but never would I say that I was attempting too much. In fact I feel that I have gained a great deal of experience from so many varied events.

As yet my plans for 1978 have not been announced, though I will make no secret of the fact that I shall be rallying with Ford again. Finally, congratulations to Russell for winning the title which has meant so much to me during the past year. I would like to wish all the followers of AUTOSPORT a Merry Christmas and an eventful New Year. ■

Vatanen on the opening stage of this year's RAC Rally—Blenheim Park.



Merry, merry Christmas

FROM BARRY FOLEY AND EVERYONE AT AUTOSPORT.



Compliments of the Season from **Silverstone Circuit Ltd & the British racing drivers' club**

BARRY FOLEY


merry
Seasons Greetings from durex Team Surtees
Seasons Greetings from CHEVRON
A Merry Christmas from all at Lombard North Central Ltd
Season's Greetings from PIRELLI
A Merry Christmas from DONINGTON PARK CIRCUIT The heart of British Motor Racing
Merry Xmas & Prosperous New Year from John Aley, Trevor Hunter & everyone at Aley Bars
Jack Knight Developments Ltd wishes everyone a Happy Christmas
Season's Greetings CHAMPION The World's Number 1 spark plug
A Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from all at COSWORTH
FOILED AGAIN
Season's Greetings from MARTINI RACING
Have you had AUTOCOURSE this year! Happy Christmas to all our readers
A Merry Christmas from all at Melchester Racing
GUMBOOTS
BATESON
I BET HE WISHES HE WAS A BIT TRIMMER TONY TRIMM
Back on four wheels for '78. A Merry Christmas to all motor racing enthusiasts & Autosport readers & good motor racing in 1978
elf Tyrrell
C/o sponsors First National City Travelers Checks
HOW TO WIN FRIENDS AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE
TO NICK BRITTAN
TO M. TURNER FROM CATCHPOLE
Season's Greetings from all at TON TYRES
SURPLUS
TO D. GARDNER FROM K. TYRRELL
Martin Whale Engineering can guarantee Xmas will arrive early this year. We prepared his sledge to GRP4 spec.
Greetings from the 'Kamden Kids'

Season's Greetings from **SODASTREAM**

WITHERS OF WINSFORD

Wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year wherever you are

The Gordon Spice Group

Wish all their customers a very Merry Christmas and Prosperous 1978

HESKETH RACING, DIVINA & OLYMPUS OPTICAL

Wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Season's Greetings

DUCKHAMS Q MOTOR OIL

SANTA IS NEVER TIGHT WITH HIS PRESENTS MY DEAR.

Merry Christmas to all Autosport readers and especially customers of **Marshall Wingfield Ltd** from **Gerry Marshall** and his staff

TO JAMES FROM THE MARSHALS

DOUBLE 'D' CUPS

HAWKE RACING CARS LTD

Wish everybody in motor racing a very Merry Christmas

Season's Greetings to all our Customers and Suppliers from the staff of the **RACING GEARBOX CENTRE**

RACING GEAR BOX CENTRE?

THOMAS MOTORS

Wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

TO MRS. J. BROWN FROM MR. J BROWN

Merry Christmas

John brown wheels

Wedgnock Lane
Warwick CV34 5YA
Tel: 0926 46131

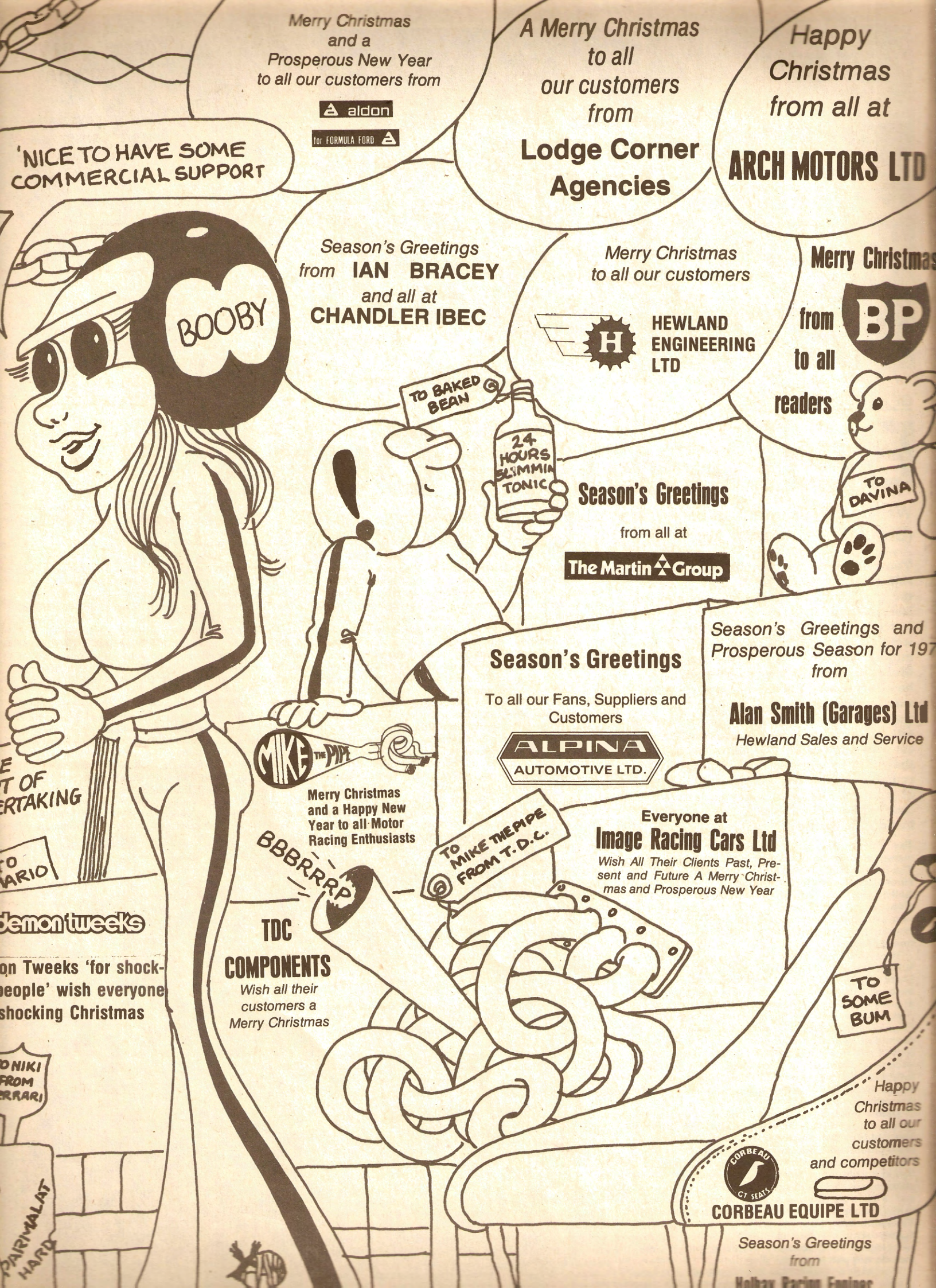
Happy Christmas from

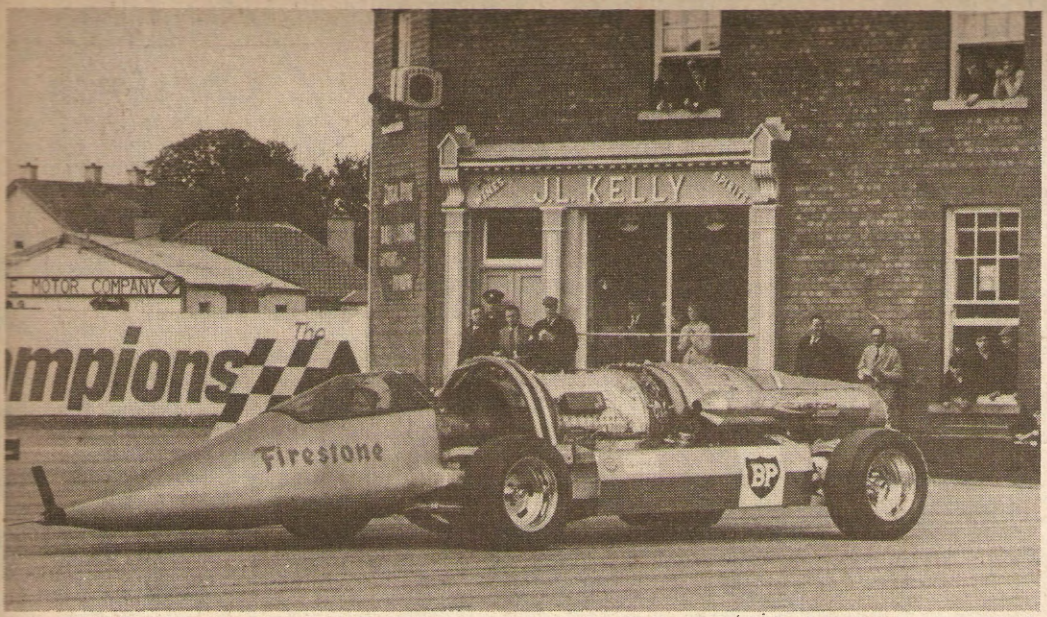
HERMETITE

Season's Greetings to all the Sport

LOLA

A Merry Christmas and Successful New Year to all Our Clients from all at **Robin Hamilton's**, Aston Martin Specialists


Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year to all our customers from
aldon
for FORMULA FORD
'NICE TO HAVE SOME COMMERCIAL SUPPORT
A Merry Christmas to all our customers from
Lodge Corner Agencies
Happy Christmas from all at
ARCH MOTORS LTD
BOOBY
Season's Greetings from IAN BRACEY and all at CHANDLER IBEC
Merry Christmas to all our customers
HEWLAND ENGINEERING LTD
Merry Christmas from BP to all readers
TO BAKED BEAN
24 HOURS SLIMMIN TONIC
Season's Greetings
from all at
The Martin Group
TO DAVINA
Season's Greetings
To all our Fans, Suppliers and Customers
ALPINA AUTOMOTIVE LTD.
Season's Greetings and Prosperous Season for 197
from
Alan Smith (Garages) Ltd
Hewland Sales and Service
MIKE THE PIPE
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all Motor Racing Enthusiasts
BBBRRRP
TO MIKE THE PIPE FROM T.D.C.
Everyone at
Image Racing Cars Ltd
Wish All Their Clients Past, Present and Future A Merry Christmas and Prosperous New Year
TDC COMPONENTS
Wish all their customers a Merry Christmas
TO SOME BUM
Demon tweeks
on Tweeks 'for shock-people' wish everyone shocking Christmas
Happy Christmas to all our customers and competitors
CORBEAU CT SEATS
CORBEAU EQUIPE LTD
Season's Greetings from





Left: Derek Bell takes the fifth-placed Starfighter past the race HQ, Kelly's Bar. Right: John Watson—new beard, new luck.

GP de DUBLIN BAY

Bell fast in Dublin

Watson (Crosslé) drives backwards to his first 1977 race victory—Lap record to Bell (Starfighter) and Jordan (Begorrah)—Kennedy (Argo-Mercedes) second—Report: MAURICE HAMILTON.

You could hear the rumpus from the other side of the customs shed. Competitors in the first (and, in hindsight, probably the last) Grand Prix de Dublin Bay were watching their machinery being steam-winched off the Liverpool boat. A last-minute entry, the Durex-sponsored McLaren M23 (driver tbn, but believed to be either Barry Sheene or Henry Cooper) was surrounded by confused customs officials and irate clergy. There was hysterical talk of sexual mayhem in the streets if the car was allowed to race; fears were voiced that the economy of the country might crumble if Guinness was deserted in favour of women. The team manager argued his case while fellow competitors set off to inspect the course.

The Dublin Bay circuit would be a tricky one—mainly because no one knew exactly where it went. The Dublin Bay MC & AHDC (Motor Car & After Hours Drinking Club) had decided over a few pints in Kelly's Bar one night that a Grand Prix would be nice. After several pints, it was a foregone conclusion. A course was mapped out on the bar and changed by the pint. But general agreement was finally reached.

The start/finish area would be on O'Connell's Wharf, just outside the DBMC & AHDC caravan. Quite what would happen to the team of donkeys was anyone's guess. Competitors would turn sharp right at Lynch's Bar and proceed across the municipal car park to enter Market Square from the south side. (They knew it was south because that end was downhill). A quick dash across the square led to the foot of the tricky St Patrick's Hill and the start of a sweeping climb past Dooley's and Hogan's. There followed a fast right on to the main Ring Road which would be a flat-out, two-mile blind—road works permitting.

Then a quick right on to the downhill run past the chapel followed by a sharp left at McCabe's Grocery and Bar into St Mary Magdalen of the Fifth Day of the Immaculate Conception God Bless Good Luck Street. From that point things were a little vague, thanks to scrutineer Seamus Flynn having wiped his elbow across the bar map. But it was generally agreed that a right at Mooney's would be the thing as it brought competitors back on to the waterfront again. Then followed a quick blast past one of Dublin's Stately Homes—the Guinness Brewery—before swinging on to O'Connell's Wharf again, providing the tide was out.

Mick Malone should have been Clerk of the Course thanks to his above-average intelligence (he once concentrated safety campaign. A strong believer in the 'Wear Something White at Night' theme, Mick dressed himself in white wellies, white mac and white hat one drunken evening.

Poor chap was run over by a snow plough.

The DBMC & AHDC had gathered what could best be described as a varied entry. Damien Magee had bought a chain-driven Trojan with solid tyres (previously on display in the Snug Bar of the Shamrock & Shillelagh in Kilburn) and fitted a CanAm body. Sidney Taylor announced his return to racing with a F10000 Lola. An interesting device this: Sid had fitted two V8 Chevrolets into the back of an old sports car chassis, saying that although he knew it would drink more petrol, the car would go a lot faster and therefore finish the race before it ran out of fuel.

The Grand Prix was to be run to *Formule Libre* regulations but Derek Daly and Derek McMahon thought that *Formule Libre* meant Formula Ford with no scrutineering. Accordingly, they bolted a DFV on to the back of a Hawke. David Kennedy made a big effort and entered an Argo with a turbo-charged Mercedes straight-six in the back, while Brendan McInerney made a comeback in a device that baffled the Press. It was basically—very basically—a Formula Ford with an extremely narrow track and bicycle wheels. Low drag was assumed to be the reasoning behind the design. But the bold Brendan knew better.

Louis Stanley had announced over tea and buns in the Dorchester that he was making another grand comeback, this time with a V16 for Stirling Moss. Unfortunately, the Dublin Bay dockers were unable to lift the machine from the hold of a sailing ship that had departed from Plymouth twelve weeks previously.

Several saloons were to grace the event, the most notable of which were a turbo Zephyr Zodiac for Billy Coleman and a Chevrolet with a Skoda engine for Arthur Collier. A young racer by the name of Eddie O'Cheever brought along a miniature car complete with scaled down DFV which, it was rumoured, ran on grape juice and vegetable oil. A mystery man, who refused to reveal his identity, arrived with a Starfighter with the wings chopped off while local man Eddie Jordan had entered a very fast home-made turf-burning single seater.

The lap record was held by Rory 'Spinner' O'Dron. Or so said the official programme tacked to the Town Hall wall. In truth, there couldn't have been a lap record because there hadn't been a race before. But word had leaked out that O'Dron, a construction worker with a passion for racing, had done a quick lap of the circuit by candlelight at the wheel of his V7 dumper. The officials were angered by this secret 'recce' and penalised the unfortunate O'Dron by insisting that he carry rubble in the bucket of his dumper as ballast.

Scrutineering was held in the back yard of race HQ, Kelly's Bar, and apparently posed quite [illegible] carburettors are permitted by normally aspirated engines are banned". Flynn's adamant stance virtually ensured that no more than two cars would be able to start the race. After much disorder and confusion, Flynn took what he later described as a 'wee weak turn' and had to be helped into the public bar where it was noted that he had not lost the power of his right arm. After emptying the contents of several glasses, he eventually relented and from that point on, the cars had to be brought into the public bar for checking.

Gerry Marshall just happened to drop into Kelly's for tea on his way home to St Albans and in no time he had consumed a large gin and had signed to drive what was described as a 'semi-works big Leyland'.

Upon reading about the event in last week's AUTOSPORT, the sponsors of James Hunt and Niki Lauda thought that their men should be present at the event just in case it really took off. James arrived at Kelly's and, when asked to fill in the questionnaire, stepped outside and punched the doorman's head in.

Practice was a haphazard affair. The timekeeper's

Below: Sid Taylor's F10000 Lola is escorted by the Garda to the start. Bottom: Young Eddie O'Cheever was an early retirement.







Eddie Jordan—joint fastest lap.

watch broke down on Thursday, while Friday's practice was scheduled to take place in Phoenix Park because the Market Square was full of cattle on Friday—Market Day. "Practice in Phoenix Park?" said Derek Daly. "They can't fool me like that. Sure, everyone knows there's a speed limit in the park." Most of the competitors took the day off and went Christmas shopping or drinking—or both. Journalist Denis Jenkinson wandered into a large department store, stood still for two seconds and was almost gift-wrapped and sold as a Little Leprechaun.

The grid was decided by ballot and Daly won pole—his name was easy to spell. Niki Lauda inspected the track and said that they needed a chicane. The organisers responded by building a beauty in the paddock. James Hunt was introduced to the delights of draught Guinness and settled down to have a thoroughly enjoyable weekend. A commentary point for Plum Tyndall and Robin Rhodes was erected outside Lynch's Bar. But the ladder was too short so a more suitable site at the top of St Patrick's Hill was chosen.

Race day dawned at about 10am and the city was buzzing with the exciting news that John Watson had arrived with a last-minute entry. 'Wattie' had been at home for a quiet holiday and was growing another beard in secret. However, the event sounded too good to miss and he asked John Crosslé if he would be kind enough to provide a car. The only single-seater left on the factory shelves so close to Christmas was a front-engined example which was slung on to a trailer and covered with a tarpaulin. John arrived with his Alfetta GT, hitched up the trailer without looking at the car and set off in an effort to reach Dublin before the Scrutineering Bar closed. Scrutineering passed in a haze of draught Guinness and the organisers agreed to let Watson start from the back of the grid.

THE RACE

There was much pomp and ceremony as the Earl of Meath & Most of Mayo set off in a jaunting cart to open the track. It was a 1978 de luxe model with splined shafts, inboard Slumberland springs, toilets and a bar. Drivers climbed into their cars and it was at this point that Watson made what could have been a costly error. Still not having examined the car closely, he naturally assumed that it was rear-engined and he therefore climbed in backwards.

After 50 minutes, the Earl of Meath & Most of Mayo had not returned, so it was decided to start the race as Sid Taylor's thirsty Chevvies had emptied the car's tanks twice while he sat on the grid. The Clerk of the Course gave the competitors a final warning: "Don't stop at Hogan's whatever you do. They serve a terrible pint in there." The Assistant Starter dropped the flag—which was the signal for the Chief Starter to turn the lights to green.

Poor David Kennedy was caught in neutral and the lights had changed from green to amber and back to red again before he could get going. The BRM was duly penalised 10secs for non-starting while arguments over the Durex M23 still raged in the customs shed.

Daly had taken the lead, closely followed through the Market Square by McInerney in his almost monotrack Formula Ford and Damien Magee's CanAm Trojan. Disaster had struck poor Sidney Taylor on the grid when, for some strange reason best known to Sid, the two Chevs had pulled in opposite directions, tearing the Lola asunder and leaving a puzzled Taylor sitting on the grid amid a heap of junk. Watson was soon into his stride and driving magnificently—in reverse of course. He had slipped past Coleman's misfiring Zephyr on St Patrick's Hill and was chasing Collier.

Up on the Ring Road, the race took on a surprise twist when a babbling Rhodes informed the spectators that the race was being led by Desmond Titterington in a D-Type Jaguar. Seamus Flynn thought he was hearing things and repaired to Kelly's feeling sure that another 'wee weak turn' was imminent. Daly was leading as the cars streamed off the Ring Road and roared past the Chapel—of Titterington there was no sign. It later transpired that Desmond was on his way to a VSCC Rally in Cork and just happened to be passing at the time. Hence the total confusion, although most of the spectators seemed to take it in their stride.

O'Dron was struggling with his ballasted V7 dumper, so he craftily pulled off the Ring Road and dumped the rubble into the foundations for a new block of flats. Unfortunately he was spotted by a race official who happened to look out of the back window of Dooley's. The luckless O'Dron was disqualified although he did claim double time for working on a Saturday.

Caught in the act: lap record holder Rory O'Dron about to be disqualified. O'Dron was spotted by race officials trying to dump the rubble ballast from the bucket of his V7 machine.



As the cars filed into St Mary Magdalen of the Fifth Day of the Immaculate Conception God Bless Good Luck Street, the crafty McInerney made his demon move. The bold Brendan knew of a narrow entry just wide enough to take his machine and present him with a short-cut on to the waterfront. It worked like a charm and within seconds he was comfortably in the lead.

Sadly the same could not be said of Magee. He had tried to follow McInerney but merely succeeded in jamming his Trojan on the front steps of Durkin's Bar. Landlord Liam Durkin, never having seen a racing car before, rushed out and, in a moment of enthusiasm, announced that drinks were on the house. Quick as a flash, the bar had emptied and customers were scaling drain pipes and scouring the roof.

McInerney held his lead until O'Connell's Wharf, where Daly soon powered past and led through the car park and into Market Square. Unfortunately for Daly, the Dublin Bay Cleansing Department had failed to do their job properly and Derek skidded on a cow's calling card; the Hawke almost landing in the grandstand. (Fortunately the stand was empty as it was still under construction.) Derek McMahon threw down his pipkin in despair and retired to his hospitality craft—a disused Liffey barge powered, it is believed, by an oil-fired side-draught Baxi Bermuda. The marshals were quick to wave the brown flag (dung on the track) and the Clerk of the Course called for the Dublin Bay Dung Collection Vehicle.

Innes Ireland had been specially imported to drive the device but he was in Kelly's at the time suffering from that well known complaint alcholic constipation—he couldn't pass a pub. A Boy Scout was dispatched to seek Ireland out and send him on his way.

McInerney was back in the lead but Watson was getting to grips with this unusual seating position and soon had the Formula Ford car in his sights. Kennedy was making up for lost time and was in fourth place while Jordan, who had started without his spectacles, eventually found his pit. O'Cheever was an early retirement, saying that his car was smoking to much.

The commentators were in trouble again. The box and scaffolding had been erected at the top of St Patrick's Hill and the structure claimed as being the tallest building in Ireland, while Dublin Airport said it was interfering with incoming aircraft. Rhodes and Tyndall vacated their tower and spent the remainder of the race on bicycles addressing the crowd with the aid of loud-hailers. Bob Tyrrell, who had set up shop in Market Square, said business had been brisk and there had been an unusually high demand for flame-proof balaclavas and paramilitary rally jackets.

On the fifth lap, Coleman's turbo suddenly came on song for the first time and he was halfway into County Kildare before he cold stop the thing. Collier soldiered on in his Chevrolet-Skoda while Jordan, in a big hurry now, set fastest lap before ramming a pile of potatoes on O'Connell's Wharf.

What of Gerry Marshall and his 'Big Leyland'? Poor Gerry was most disturbed to discover that his Leyland was in fact a single-decker Dublin Bay bus. Always one to have a go, Gerry was running strongly in a mid-field position and later commented that he would have finished much higher if he hadn't had to keep stopping to pick up passengers, all of them keen to buy the £20 'total involvement' tickets.

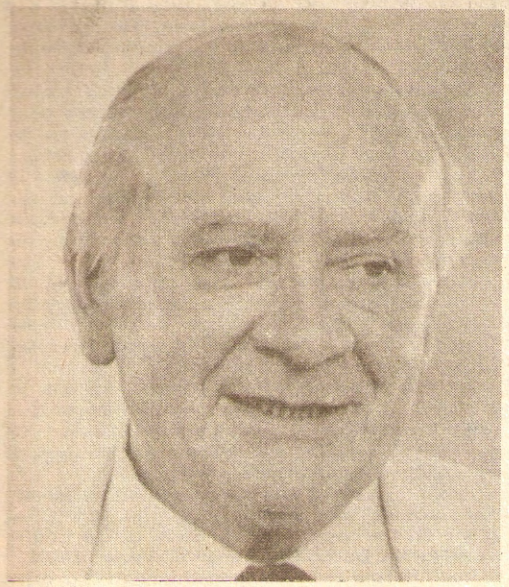
John Watson moved into the lead with one lap to go and eventually took the chequered flag before completing another lap and taking the flag again—to be sure, to be sure. Kennedy finished strongly in second place while McInerney was a distant third ahead of Collier and the man in the Starfighter. Later, this was revealed to be none other than Derek Bell. Flynn then tried to disqualify him on the grounds that he was English, but Derek told him that he had raced a Jaguar XJ5.3C, thus convincing him that he was, in fact, Irish.

Prize giving was held above Kelly's, and Watson drank his magnum of Guinness from Moët & Shannon while waiting for Marshall's bus to finish in order that the fares could be collected and given to John as prize money. Sporting a natty trilby, John said that he had had misgivings about the cockpit layout of the car. "Very unorthodox", he told us, "and rather uncomfortable. But I just had to make the best of it. I felt that the side-valve Ford was a little down on power and there seemed to be only one forward gear". John then dashed off to a waiting horse which whisked him away to his Alfetta GT.

Rumours quickly spread that the CSI are to hold an extraordinary meeting to discuss ways of putting a stop to future racing at Dublin Bay. The reported uncontrollable outbursts of overtaking and dicing for the lead had to be stopped and the notion of people actually having a good time was unthinkable.

Meanwhile Kelly's was packed to capacity and Seamus Flynn declared that they would continue racing at the circuit no matter what. As if to endorse his view, the Earl of Meath & Most of Mayo suddenly reappeared with a distinct list to starboard and declared that the circuit was now officially open and racing could commence.

purely personal



JACK KEMSLEY

Recently retired from the Organising Committee of the RAC Rally—after 21 years' service—Jack Kemsley is one of the most authoritative voices in the rally world today.

It all happened at the Burmah Rally when, sitting at the corner of the bar, I was listening to some well-known competitors laying down the law about the future of rallying. A small voice at my elbow said "would you like to put into print your personal view of what has just been discussed". The voice was Ann Bradshaw's and, as you might guess, her suggestion had to be taken as a command.

It was not until I thought that I might be entered in the Guinness Book of Records as the oldest contributor to the *Purely Personal* series that I thought perhaps a few steps down memory lane and a little crystal gazing into the future might not come amiss around the Christmas period. So, as Alice once said, "let's begin at the beginning and go right on to the end". So what was the beginning.

In 1932 and, without my calculator, this makes it around forty-five years ago, I competed in my first event—the London-Lands End MCC driving a Riley Gamecock and actually secured a 'Gold'. There were no actual winners in those days but a gold was worth winning. In the same year I did the RAC Rally which, in those days, was equivalent to our 'nationals' and I well remember the thrilling and tense final classification test at Torquay: cars were given a distance of around 50yds to get into top gear before arriving at the start line, after which they had to proceed in top gear without using their brakes (an observer was carried to ensure that this was actually done), to the finish line some 100 yards away.

This test, to my mind, is the only one in 45 years which enabled spectators to go home, have tea and return to find the same car on the course—especially if it was Major General Loughborough's Lanchester Fluid Drive which necessitated having a mobile Tee-Square moved alongside the front wheels to ensure that the car was actually moving in a forward direction.

However, from then on motor sport became my first hobby and I suppose the records in my loft at home representing regulations, results, reports and photographs of events over that period must be as many as are stored in many motoring journals' files. During the war I had charge of the maintenance of some 3000 fire service vehicles in the London area but, from 1948 onwards until 1956, I competed in most internationals, the Monte, Alpine, Tulip, Lisbon and, of course, the first International RAC in 1951.

In 1956 I thought that I would move to 'the other side of the fence' and here, if AUTOSPORT allow is a plug for my book of that title, due to be completed in 1978 covering my fun and adventures in events all over the world. That year I joined the Organising Committee of the RAC Rally and this year retired as Chairman after 21 years.

I thought that the above remarks might be necessary to prove that the following 'purely personal' comments have come from experience and listening to the many other enthusiasts around the world.

My first comments are on Organisers. There are three essential features for the ordinary amateur Organiser: enthusiasm, plenty of spare time and the knack of persuasion. Believe me, without these don't even try to organise anything because if you can't spare the time to write three letters when you thought one would do, if you can put up with people saying 'yes' and never appearing or those who say 'no' and leave you to persuade them do not volunteer to organise anything.

If you pass this test and decide you are a born organiser watch out for the three most deadly phrases in the world: possessiveness, interpretation and 'I meant-to-say'. The first thing is easy to explain: when you are trying to convince 'the other fellow' over a point that he either agrees or is sure it can't be good enough or else he would have thought of it first or, last, if it is going to take too long to understand or implement he doesn't want it at any cost. Our own governing body, the Motor Sport Division, at times adapt this idea and, whereas you could not find people more dedicated to or capable of their work it is a pity that, at times, they don't talk to one another.

My second word 'interpretation' is a nightmare as it stems from committees producing, in all good faith, a rule, putting it in black and white and then finding it is possible to translate it in one, two or even three different ways. Ask competitors in the racing world who have had their cars passed by scrutineers at, say, Snetterton one week, and then refused at, say, Brands Hatch the next. What does the scrutineer say, ever so politely? "I am afraid I do not interpret this the way you do".

The third—'I meant to say' ties up with interpretation but again how many times, as a Steward, have I asked the Clerk of the Course for his 'interpretation' of a certain regulation only to be told—"Oh, I meant to say. . . ." The trouble is he didn't say it and so left the door wide open.

These phrases may gradually become obsolete, at least so far as international regulations in this country are concerned as, after a 12 month fight—sorry I meant debate—all the organisers of events in the new Sedan sponsored Open International have agreed on standardised regulations for 1978.

Probably my only technical personal view is about the grouping of cars, ie Group 1, probably the most expensive to prepare and Groups 2, 3 and 4 which the lay man does not really understand. I should like to see Group 1 being for standard production cars, Group 2 for cars modified with parts available to the public and, third, an experimental Group called, for the want of a better word, a Silhouette Rally group.

This means that the body outline must be basically as that of the production car, ie Ford Escort, TR7 or Vauxhall Chevette but, thereafter, a manufacturer or amateur can alter engine, transmission, suspension etc providing that the finished article adheres to the letter of the law and can be passed as safe and roadworthy within the correct limits of noise etc. This would finish this peculiar Group 5 which, in any case, is slowly dying and could be explained to the public as 'experiments on their favourite car in order to improve efficiency, etc in the future.'

This year's Lombard RAC Rally, easily the best in the series, produced complaints from competitors who were unable to obtain an entry and so, to finish on a modern note, my view on how this should be tackled in the future is as follows: As we have proved that the public will turn up in their thousands on a Sunday at sites capable of housing them in safety, such as circuits, and stately homes, I would use sufficient of these to make a competitive section *and* provide entertainment to the public, excluding, in this section of the rally only, use of Forestry Commission land which is so costly.



"We have proved that the public will turn up in their thousands on a Sunday at sites capable of housing them in safety such as circuits and stately homes."

By taking this action, every entrant would be guaranteed a start and thus the English clubman would have every chance of proving to himself and the organisers that he is better than the foreign entry. Of course it might be vice-versa but at least that would save him writing to AUTOSPORT and complaining.

At the end of the first section, namely at the overnight halt on Sunday evening, the first 180, or an agreed number, would be selected from the results obtained on the Sunday run. The remainder would have, say, two-thirds of their entry fee refunded which must be good value for those who entered.

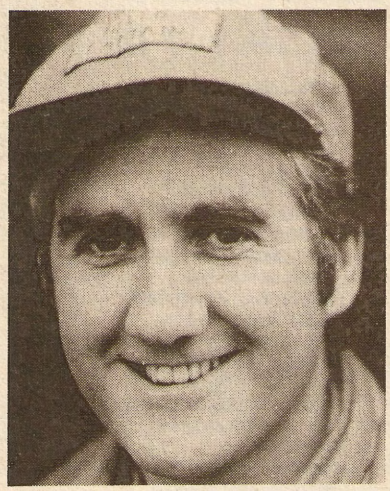
Finally, in the same manner as the Clubmans event is now operated, a number equal to the retirements at a certain stage would re-start, an event perhaps called the Birmingham Trophy Rally because it would no longer be exclusive to Clubmen as it is possible big names might figure in this event. These competitors would then repay, say, one-third of the orginal entry fee for this section of the event, which would carry separate awards to the main event.

By this method the Organisers would only pay to the Forestry Commission a fee for 180 starters, all entrants would be guaranteed an appearance before thousands of spectators which should please their sponsors. Those who have proved that their performance is better than others either continue in the main event or, for a reasonable fee, participate in a well organised but shorter event.

I am sure that these last comments will result in many letters from readers pointing out the errors. To them and the others who have taken the trouble to read my views on my favourite sport, I would just say that it *is* Christmas and with that wonderful spirit of goodwill(?) I suggest you forget the troubles of '77, have a happy Christmas, and look forward to trouble free rallying in '78. Best of luck. ■

edited by Peter Newton

The Captain leaves



On the 1967 Alpine Rally Brian Culcheth started his ten year rallying career as a full-time works driver for what is now Leyland Cars. From his class win on that event (in an 1800) to the present day Brian alias 'The Captain' has been one of the company's best ambassadors, both in and out of his cars, and the news from him that we shall no longer see him driving one of their cars is very sad indeed.

Brian is one of rallying's most likeable and easy going characters and the thought of him disappearing from the scene is a very depressing one. Although he has not definitely retired, he does admit that only the Safari Rally or marathon events would really tempt him to leap into a rally car in the future. He says that his plans are still fluid but even if he does not rally, any publicity conscious firm could do much worse than offer him a job in their publicity department.

Brian Culcheth (above) drove his last rally for Leyland on the RAC after ten years as a full time works driver for them.

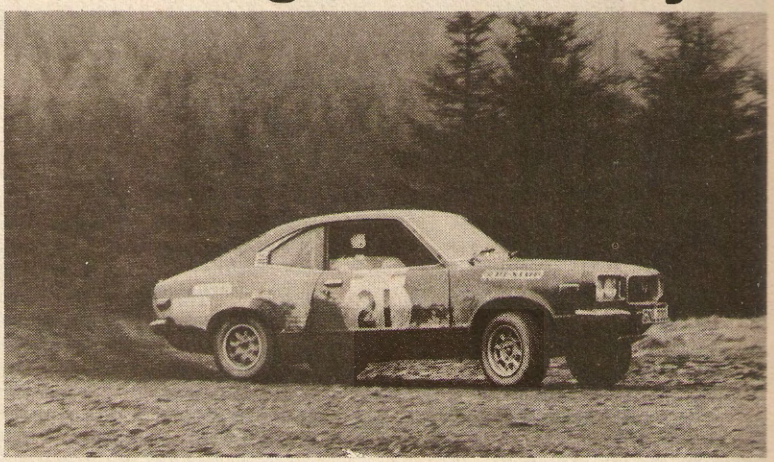


Although we are still waiting to hear what plans Leyland have for next year, Brian said the main reason for him leaving was because they were unable to offer him a full programme for 1978.

Although he has been a driver with them for ten years, his first event for them was as a co-driver on the 1963 Monte. His rallying career dates yet farther back to 1960 when he did his first rally as a driver. Since then his major successes have come on events in Hong Kong, Jamaica and Malaysia for Leyland where he won in such cars as Marinas and Triumph 2.5s. He also won the Scottish in a 2.5 and has been second on about ten major events. In fact a comment he made at the Pirelli Startalk just before the RAC Rally sums up his feelings about always coming second: "I have been second to all the best drivers in the world, Hannu Mikkola in Mexico, Ari Vatanen on the Tour of Britain and Pentti Airikkala on the Manx."

Hopefully Brian and his regular co-driver, Johnstone Syer, will not go into retirement but do some events, as the loss of their humour on the rally scene would be very sad indeed.

Willie goes rotary



Willie Rutherford's Ford engined Mazda RX3 has been driven very quickly by Willie (below) this year and his efforts have been rewarded with a Group 5 Hatchback.

An addition to the 25 strong Mazda Hatchback brigade in the 1978 Castrol/AUTOSPORT Championship will be a Group 5 version of the model in the capable hands of Willie Rutherford. No one who has been out on championship rounds this year can have failed to notice either the screaming pitch of the engine or the rapid driving style he has displayed in his Mazda RX3. Willie has emerged as one of our brightest hopes this year and, thankfully, his efforts have not gone unnoticed by Mazda Car Imports who will be supporting his Hatchback programme, and also helping him to find sponsorship.

Willie's car will have the 2.6-litre rotary engine. This engine's capabilities were clearly shown on this year's RAC Rally in Rod Millen's RX3 Saloon. Although this car was severely restricted because of its lack of homologated parts, spectators were most impressed with its straight line speed away from stage starts. Willie was also very impressed with this engine and is currently in Germany acquiring one for his car.

The Hatchback is already well on its way to readiness, as Willie is building the car himself and has had the shell for a few weeks. He will be doing considerable chassis development but the engine will be run in standard form with side intake ports; this differs from the set-up used in racing this year in the RX5 when the engine was modified with peripheral ports to give more torque. Both Mazda and Willie are confident that it will prove fast and reliable and are hoping for about 250bhp.

One of Willie's tasks will be to sort out the weight distribution, but he should have little problem with the suspension which has Macpherson front struts and a five link rear system.



Although Mazda are keen to carry out more development with the Hatchback (which they are running in standard form in the separate challenge section of the Championship) this rally programme could well be the forerunner of a bigger programme being considered for the new rotary engined sports car they are announcing soon. The new car, it seems, is a cross between the Porsche 924 and the TR7 and neither Mazda nor Willie are making any secret of the fact that they are considering this for rallying in 1979. The car is being released in Japan and America in the spring but will not be available in the UK until either the end of '78 or the beginning of '79.

New rubberwear

Goodyear have been working hard during 1977 to come up with some new rally tyres for their runners and for 1978 will be offering the new 195/60HR-13, a tubeless tyre for a six inch rim. Work on development over the past 12 months has been carried out by such people as Nigel Rockey and Geoff Simpson and the tyre is designed mainly for use by the enthusiast on restricted events or for tarmac stages on internationals.

In their official announcement of the tyre Goodyear say: "It is the first Goodyear rally tyre of 60 per cent aspect ratio and the first to be constructed with a steel belt to brace the tread. All radial rally tyres to date have been braced with fabric belts". For the technically minded the engineering data on the tyre includes: overall diameter 23.34ins; section width 7.38ins; inflation pressure 24psi; revs per mile 936.

GWYNNE PRITCHARD

We regret to report the sudden death of Gwynne Pritchard who has been one of the hardest workers for rallying in north and mid Wales. Gwynne has always been very popular for both his cheerfulness and enthusiasm and has worked hard to ensure that rallying is never brought into disrepute.

As well as his tireless efforts as stage commander on many occasions when the RAC Rally was held in Wales, particularly in Clocaenog, and as Chairman of the Rhyl Motor Club, he has been a regular competitor for many years. His career started in road rallies in which he was particularly successful with Barry Hughes as navigator. He has always rallied in a Mini and was a popular sight this year in his Ruthin Castle sponsored car. He was planning a change for next year and was hoping to build a 1300 Escort for the Esso/BTRDA Championship. His competition was not confined to rallying as he had a go at everything from autocross and sprints to circuit racing.

Gwynne will be sadly missed by his many friends and AUTOSPORT sends its deepest sympathies to his wife Lynne and two sons, Glen and Dene.

Virgo's perfect formula

Any rally that has 135 stage miles and merely 20 road miles must be about as perfect as a competitor could hope for, so drivers entered for the Port Talbot MC Virgo Galaxy Eppynt Rally on January 2 will really be in for a treat. The organisers have come up with 110 tarmac miles, including the Eppynt ranges, and 25 forest miles including Halfway, the only spectator area on the event.

The cars will be visiting Halfway twice during the day at 2.15pm and 4pm. Spectators should enter the forest at map reference 160/835327, which is just off the A40 from Sennybridge to Brecon, where there will be plenty of car parks. One particular plea from the organisers is that no cars should be parked on the main road.

The rally starts at 9am from Mynydd Eppynt (map reference 147/994433) and rally HQ will be at the now famous Abernant Lake Hotel at Llanwrtyd

One unusual aspect of the rally is that for the first time in ages pace notes are to be allowed on an event in this country. The rally has its origins as a road event, has been run with stages for the past two or three years in April and has now been moved to this date with the change of the Tour of Eppynt to an August event. The event is also the first round of the 1978 Welsh Stage Championship. An interesting entry for the event is that of Russell Brookes who will be putting the Boreham-built Escort 1300 through its paces before the first round of the Escort Championship.

1, Frank Pierson/Arthur Brick (RS1800); 2, Howard Davies/Phil Jones (RS2000); 3, Russell Brookes/ John Horton (Escort 1300); 4, Bob Fowden/Graeme Jones (Mini); 5, Brian Davies/E. Sugden (Escort 1600); 6, Graham Evans/R. Tansley (Escort 1600); 7, Andrew Stokes/R. Cebula (Escort); 8, Alun Morgan/Mike Bowen (Chrysler Avenger); 9, Rob James/Ken Rees (Chrysler Avenger); 10, Alun Rees/Hywell Thomas (Chrysler

Colt take it easy

A rally that is tougher and more demanding than the Safari is hard to visualise, but last week's ninth *Rallye International du Bandama* was just such an event with Andrew Cowan and Johnstone Syer leading nine survivors home to score a tremendous, well deserved win in their Mitsubishi Colt Lancer 1600.

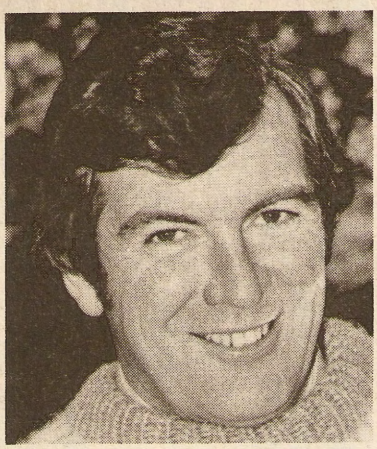
The rally looked set to be a Peugeot walkover, as the French company had one of the most impressive car/driver line-ups witnessed on any rally this season. Leading their assault were four of the most experienced men available—Timo Makinen, Hannu Mikkola, Jean-Pierre Nicolas and Henri Pescarolo—all in V6 Coupes. As if this alone were not a strong enough team, it was backed up by 504s for Jean-Claude Lefebvre, Jean Guichet, Raymond Touroul and local driver Assef. Their efforts did not even stop there as in the total 59 entries there were a further 13 Peugeots entered.

The rally itself was run smoothly and efficiently by Promocourse and the local motor club, FISA, who had sponsorship from Air Afrique and Sitram. It began on December 15 with a short classification test in Djibi to establish the start order and then was run over about 5000 kilometres in the bush with each of the four legs being special sections over some very tough roads.

Although the Peugeots were there in force, no one can deny that on past performances one of the best cars for these sort of conditions is the Colt Lancer. Mitsubishi provided the only real opposition for the Peugeots with two of their 1600cc cars brought over from Africa for Andrew Cowan and Joginder Singh. Colt really just took their cars along to have a look at the rally, especially as it is being considered for inclusion in the 1978 World Championship. Neither of their drivers had been there before and the cars had been brought over from Kenya where they had been used on the Safari. Although the team, as always, was very professionally run, this was really just an exploratory trip and, since the Safari the cars had just had their struts changed and the valve timing checked.

As the rally developed, so did a story of incredible disasters for the Peugeot team, which were just about unbelieveable, and reliability from the Colts that was just as unreal.

Although the classification test before the start was only short it was very important as, with dusty conditions, competitors wanted to be behind as few cars as possible. The outcome of this test was that Makinen was fastest by 4secs (he was the only competitor to use rallycross tyres for this), second was Nicolas, third was Mikkola and fourth was Cowan.





Cowan (left) and Singh (right) gave Mitsubishi Colt first and second on the Bandama. They were in ex-Safari cars and below Singh is pictured in one of the cars on the Safari.



One of the first disasters for Peugeot happened on this section as Pescarolo arrived at *Parc Ferme* to collect his car and found he had forgotten the ignition keys. He had to break into the car, but subsequently was very late and then had a road accident with a non-competing car on the way to Djibi. Unfortunately, the car was too badly damaged and the service crew could not repair it in time for the start.

Peugeot's fortunes looked good early on as Makinen was leading most of the first leg, but then his differential seized very near the end of the section and, due to a servicing mix-up, a new diff never arrived and he had to abandon his car and hitch a lift out of the stage in the Subaru service van. So at the end of the first leg Mikkola was leading from Nicolas and Cowan.

If they had had problems in the first leg they were nothing to what happened to them in the second leg. Nicolas had had braking problems from the start and oil leaking out of the engine, but his drama came soon after the start of the second leg when, apparently due to the braking problems, he rolled the car and was off for 3½ hours, effectively putting himself out of the running.

If this was not bad enough for Peugeot it was then Mikkola's turn and he also rolled. It seems he got too sideways in a rut and the car rolled and became filled with very nasty sticky mud. All this activity meant that Cowan found himself in the lead with Lefebvre second. But this situation was not to last much longer as in the third leg Lefebvre rolled while chasing Cowan.

So this meant that all the quick Peugeots were either out or not in contention and all four of the V6s were finally eliminated when near the end of the third leg Nicolas's engine expired after he had managed to get back to fifth.

While this tale of woe and disaster was surrounding Peugeot the Mitsubishi story was completely different. Their only problems were dirt in Cowan's fuel for about a third of the rally, which necessitated him changing the filters at regular intervals, and a drama when Singh lost a rear wheel and brake drum. It seems that at a service halt Singh's wheel nuts were not properly tightened and so he lost a rear wheel and drum, spending 40mins looking for the lost drum. This meant that he was left with only three brakes, which he completed 800 kilometres of the event with. Eventually, he got to a service halt and all was rectified.

Incredible though it may seem this was all that happened to the two cars and the service needed on them was nil. Nothing was replaced during the event and they went like clockwork, Cowan driving a magnificent event.

In the final reckoning there was just one Peugeot in the top five, an ex-works 504 driven by Jean Guichet who finished third. Apart from that it was Colt one and two and fourth a Datsun 180BSSS driven by M. Mitri. This car was an ex-works model and was doing its sixth Bandama in succession, its history goes back to 1972 when Gerard Larrousse drove it on the event and it has 30,000 rallying miles on its clock.

1, A. Cowan/J. Syer (Mitsubishi Colt Lancer 1600) 4hours 45minutes 27.2secs penalties; 2, J. Singh/M. Doughty (Mitsubishi Colt Lancer 1600) 6:18:33.2; 3, J. Guichet/J. De Alexandris (Peugeot 504) 8:23:44.9; 4, M. Mitri/M. Copetti (Datsun 180B SSS) 10:41:32.5; 5, J. F. Vincens/F. Giallolacci (Mitsubishi Colt Lancer 1600) 11:10:42.9.

A full report of the rally will appear in AUTOSPORT on January 5.

Doing it the hard way



Just before the RAC Rally Lars Carlsson clinched the Dutch Rally Championship for the third consecutive year. The last round of the series, where the title was decided, was the Belgian Condroz Rally. Things did not actually go well for Carlsson and co-driver Bob de Jong as they had an 100mph accident on the event. But it takes more than a few dents to stop the rally driver and he carried on to finish third on the rally with a somewhat secondhand looking car.

Briefly . . .

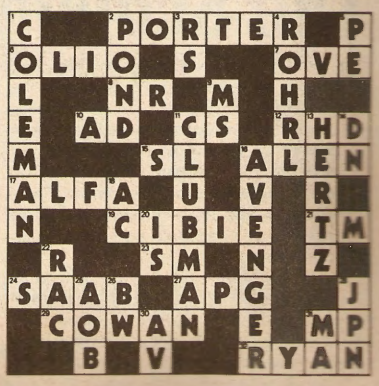
● News from France seems to support a strong rumour that Chardonnet will have very quick Opel Group 1 driver, Jean-Louis Clarr, driving for him in a Stratos next year. It seemed likely that Chardonnet would give up rallying after Bernard Darniche joined the Fiat/Lancia set-up, but now it seems he is about to sign the ex Opel BP Marseille driver to do the French Championship and some European Championship rallies.

● A good idea for a Christmas stocking filler for rally enthusiasts is a copy of the *Castrol Rally Sport Year Book*. This was published last week and, as a member of the staff of *Rally Sport* magazine put it, it is aimed at the 'thinking, drinking rally man'. The book, edited by Ross Finlay, has 60 pages filled with driver profiles, a review of the year, prospects for next year, a history of the RAC Rally, full championship results, etc. It is available from most bookshops at 75p.

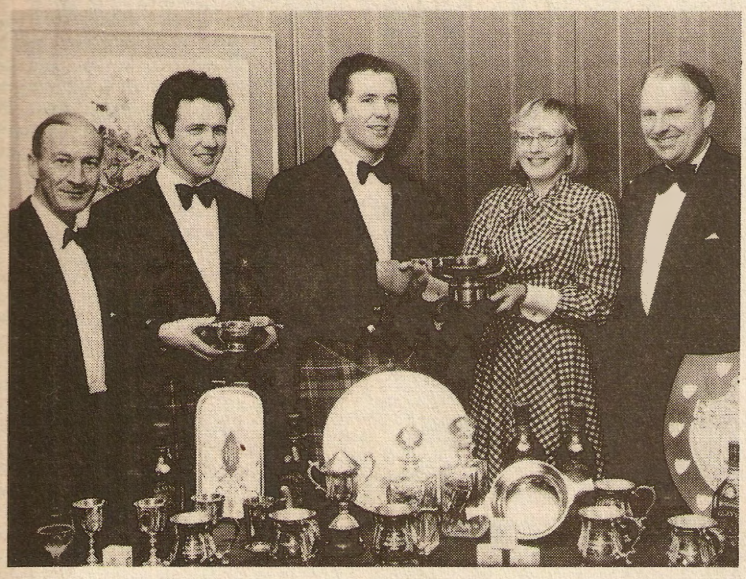
● Interesting news regarding entries for the Monte Carlo Rally has filtered through to us from France: it seems that, contrary to what was first announced, Darniche will now be driving a Fiat 131 instead of a Lancia Stratos and that the Stratos will be in the hands of Michele Mouton. Also the future of Francis Vincent with the Fiat France team seems uncertain.

● It is just about certain that Colt will not be seen in rallying next year, but this is just so they can carry out an extensive development programme in readiness for a return to the sport in a very big way in 1979. What their plans seem to centre round are a new rear wheel drive car, which should have an engine over 2-litres in capacity.

Below is the correct solution to the Griffin crossword published in the AUTOSPORT *RAC Rally Guide. The three lucky winners, who each receive a Griffin Helmet, were Mr Alan Jones of Barking, Essex; Mr T. Goode of Ely, Cambs; and Mr Mike Harris of Little Sutton, South Wirral.*

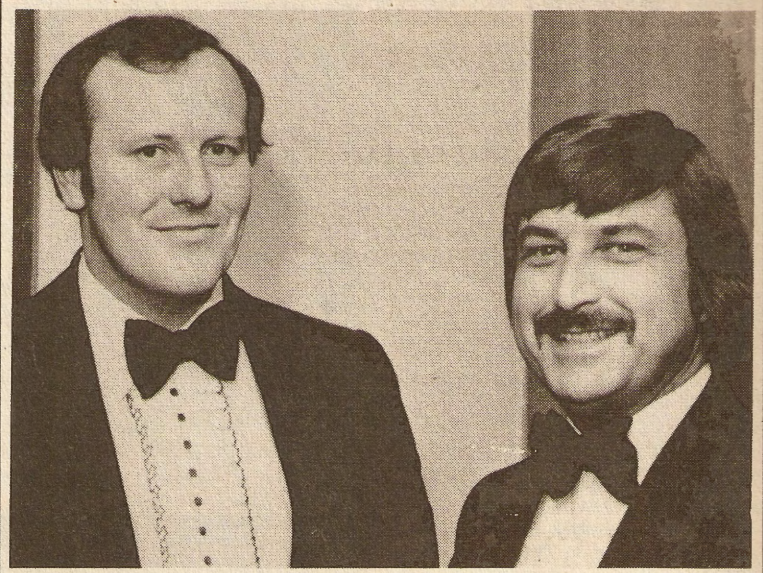


Scottish winners



The Scotsman/Glayva Rally Championship awards were presented at the series annual dinner and dance and Charles and Alec Samson (they are the ones in the kilts) were there to receive their trophies as overall winners. Presenting the awards was Mrs Maureen Morrison (wife of the Chairman of Glayva, Michael Morrison pictured left). Also in the picture on the right is Roger Ridley-Thomas, Assistant Managing Director of The Scotsman Publications, who took the opportunity to announce that The Scotsman would be sponsoring the championship again in 1978.

Ivor's Chevette drive



The man on the left will be seen next year on the Snowman Rally in a works Vauxhall Chevette. No this in no shock signing and Gerry Johnstone (right) is not just clinching the deal. In fact, it is Ivor Clark's prize for being voted 'the most promising driver in the championship' in the 1977 The Scotsman/Glayva Scottish Rally Championship. Ivor is usually seen in a very rapid Chrysler Avenger which he has regularly taken across the border from his Carlisle home to compete in Scottish championship events.

Escorts galore

Embarrassed, astounded and gratified were the words used by Graham Robson to describe his and the Ford Motor Company's reaction to the incredible response to their 1978 Ford Escort Rally Championship. Since the announcement a few weeks ago Graham has been flooded with enquiries and 328 sets of regulations have been despatched.

As promised, the regulations were published on December 12 and they contain all the information about the cars and championship that any competitor could ask for, plus a car specification sheet set out like an homologation form.

Ford are sparing themselves no trouble to make sure that this series is a success and the cars are practical. They have already built a 1300cc Escort to the championship specifications and Russell Brookes was testing it on Monday prior to doing the Virgo Galaxy Eppynt Rally on January 2. Russell was most impressed with the car and spec and said that he felt that one man by himself could prepare a car in three days.

The awards for the series are very well thought out and now include two half time awards (that cannot be won by the same person) of works Group 1 RS2000 drives on Castrol/AUTOSPORT Championship rounds and a drive in a similar car on a British international event in 1979 (though not the RAC Rally) for the championship winner.



It is Russell's job to put the championship spec car through its paces.

Neither Ford nor the Esso/BTRDA Championship organisers are putting a limit on the number of people who can register for the championship, but it is obvious that with this sort of response there are going to be some disappointed competitors.

The Scotsman opener

Any competitors wanting to give their cars a run before the start of either the Sedan Products Open or Castrol /AUTOSPORT National championships might be interested in the Snowman Rally on January 28. Competitors are being offered 75 stage miles on the classic Great Glen stages, the majority of which have recently been regraded and are in perfect condition.

The rally will be the first round of *The Scotsman* Rally Championship and for the third year is being sponsored by Mercury Motor Inns, who are offering a special accommodation deal at rally HQ, which is the Mercury Inn in Inverness (tel: Inverness 39666).

Prize money totals over £1,000 with the top ten finishers getting £40 each and the 11th to 20th placed finishers £30 each. The rally will have a total of 100 entries, the entry fee is £42 and the closing date is January 14. Another feature which may attract competitors is that the organisers, the Highland Car Club, will be using the target timing system. Regulations are available now from Mrs Monica Findlayson, 57 Kenneth Place Smithdon, Inverness, tel: Inverness 791307.

Kodak winners

Winners of the Kodak Quiz that appeared in the November 17 issue of AUTOSPORT are as follows: J. M. Kelly, Kilbrennan, Little Smeaton, Pontefract, West Yorkshire, WF8 3LH; Charles Norris, 28 Auchinloch Road, Lenzie, Glasgow, G66 5EU; Ashley Winter, 129 Nicholas Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester 21; Bernard Lowton, The Elms, Fole, Near Uttoxeter, Staffordshire; M. Parry, 19 Davenham Road, Formby, Merseyside.

Briefly . . .

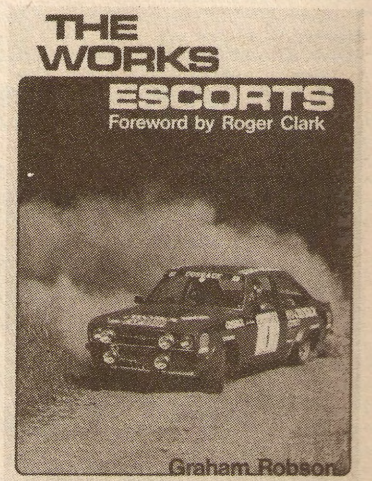
● Paul White, who not only co-drives for Chrysler but also works for them full time, is leaving them to go to work for another co-driver, Dave Richards, from January 1. He is joining Dave, who formed his company David Richards Autosport a year ago, to help him with his work for Rothmans in the Middle East and also get involved in some new projects that Dave has lined up.

● Regulations are now available for the Holfeld Pump Rally '78 which is being organised by the Dublin University Motor Cycle and Light CC on January 14. The entry list is limited to 75 crews and will close on January 4. Anyone interested should contact Richard Hamilton, 20 Sydney Avenue, Blackrock, Co Dublin, tel: (01) 889453 (home) or (01) 764131 (work).

● When early entries for the Galway Rally closed last Friday, the organisers, the Galway MC, had received 52 with 44 per cent of these in Ford cars, and 15 per cent each in Leyland and Porsche cars. Leading entries to date are Porsches for Derek Boyd, Steve Carr, David Shocklock and Frank Hogan and, RS1800s for Peter Thompson, Bertie Fisher, Ian Cathcart and Paul Windsor. Entries remain open until January 20 and anyone interested should get in touch with Brian Thornton, 12 Sylvan Avenue, Newcastle, Galway.

● It seems to be rumour time and the latest surrounds what Jean Pierre Nicolas is doing next year. He very much wants to do the Monte Carlo Rally and, after Renault's announcement, it is obvious he will not be in a R5 Alpine. We hear that he would very much have liked a Ford but they could not get a car ready in time, though our sources suggest that he could be in an Escort next year, probably a tarmac spec one for the French championship.

Now he is desperately looking for a car and, as a Porsche would be ideal, he could well be getting in touch with Walter Rohrl to see if his could be available.



With just three more shopping days to Christmas we have the ideal suggestion for a present to any rally enthusiast—a copy of The Works Escorts by Graham Robson. This book was first published in May and has been a tremendous success. It is an ideal present for any rally or non-rally fan and is published by J. H. Haynes at £5.95.

● At the last two Ford Rallye Sport/Lords Taverners forums in Newcastle and Ayr recently, about another £600 was raised for the charity. This brings the total raised for them this season by the series of forums to £1,500.

Daniele Audetto

MARTIN HOLMES talks to Fiat's team manager about the Italian company's victory in this year's World Rally Championship

The team manager of Fiat, Daniele Audetto, has had a long history in the sport, beginning as a driver then progressing to co-driver and ultimately, after a rally accident, turning to the administrative side and team management in general. He spent some years as an understudy to Cesare Fiorio with Lancia, for whom originally he used to rally, before progressing to manage the Grand Prix Ferrari motor racing team for a year. When the Fiat Group committee decided that the major rallying endeavour of the group should be centred on Fiat, Audetto was appointed as their manager. He has enjoyed a special reputation based on his command of situations and also on his ability to manage drivers. This past year has seen Audetto in full swing with the race for the World Championship against the Ford Motor Company. In his field, as stage director of such a vast and complex 'army', he is a man who has no equal.



When was it decided that Fiat would make a serious attempt at the World Championship in 1977?

Well, really after the Portugal Rally. The 131 was a new car, and the new philosophy of Fiat was to race with standard production cars. The car was ready for the first time in Elba in 1976, but only one year's experience was not very much. So we waited until the second place in Monte Carlo, the fourth place in Sweden and the win in Portugal—at this moment we decided to do all the Championship.

How much development was necessary on the car after Elba before it became a reliable rally car?

Well, a lot, because I must say that the car is not *yet* on the top. Every rally we discover something, we improve something. The car is much more reliable now for asphalt rallies like San Remo, Corsica and Monte Carlo because in Italy now all Italian rallies are 90 to 95 per cent on such surfaces, asphalt and very twisty roads. We go to rallies like the Acropolis and RAC and the car is not so competitive because, of course, there is much more development we have to do with suspension and so on. But we know that the car is new, and on every rally we improve a little bit, so now with the new dry sump it is much more reliable and much more powerful. Also over the bad roads like we have seen in Canada the suspension is doing much better. But we think that the car can improve a lot more and by Monte Carlo, we expect to have a car that will be almost at its best.

Were there many problems on the 1976 RAC Rally caused by the secret route—or should I say, was the suspension good for the secret route?

No, no, no, because our suspension for the RAC was not working well because it is designed for asphalt roads. Even the maximum movement that we can give now to this type of suspension is not enough for a rally like the RAC. This year I think that we had better suspension for the RAC because we made a lot of preparations—we had a 131 out on the Scottish and Welsh, and you saw Alen before the RAC on some national events to set up the car with different springs and shock-absorbers, giving more movement to the suspension.

Coming from Lancia, do you find that there is a special challenge with Fiat or are the problems the same and the work as difficult?

Really they are the same problems. I found a team that was a little bit complex with Lancia, because Lancia was the first ever rally team in Italy, and then Fiat came little by little. But this year we formed a new dimension, the team is very, very professional, the drivers are very, very good—and all the mechanics. I must say that now the Fiat team is on the same level as Lancia and one of the most competitive and efficient teams in the world.

Do you regret that you must use foreign drivers, or is it to you essentially an 'international' team?

For me it is essentially an international team, because Fiat is an international company. Our headquarters are in Turin, but Fiat build cars in Brazil, Africa and all over the world, so our image is an international image. I think that now we want to see a real European Common Market, and to take away the borders. It is not any more a question of national teams—of course, if I can help to make Italy better I will, but for Fiat it is not a problem. I like an international team because, of course, I prefer to have a good Scandinavian for rallies like the KAK, the 1000 Lakes or the RAC, and I like a Frenchman or an Italian for the Tour de Corse or the San Remo or the Monte Carlo. I like good experienced drivers like Lampinen and Rohrl for New Zealand, Canada, Morocco. . . . Yes, I think that to be very competitive the world over, you need an international team.

If you were negotiating with a Scandinavian driver, surely that driver would want a complete season with you, not just two or three rallies on which he was to be a specialist?

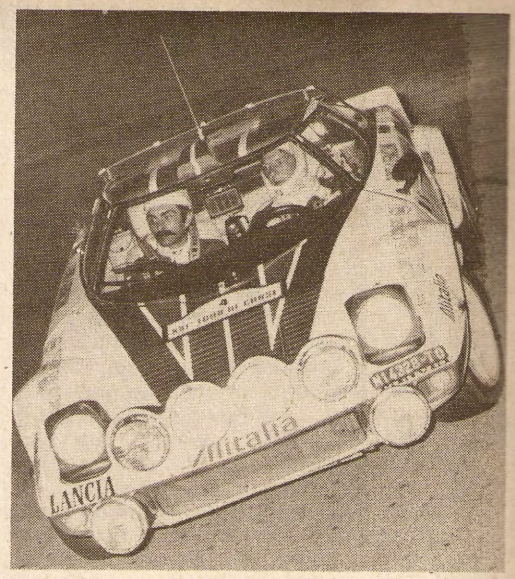
Well, we have had Alen in 1977 because we think that Alen now is one of the most experienced drivers. He is not only good in a Scandinavian type rally, like the 1000 Lakes or the RAC, but he is good in Portugal, he is good on the Acropolis, he is good in New Zealand, Canada, everywhere. In Scandinavia there are many good drivers not only for the Scandinavian rallies, like the young Vatanen and Airikkala. And I am looking to Salonen, who gave us a very good win in Canada and a good second place in the 1000 Lakes; I hope next season that he will continue with Fiat, I have made him an offer, and I had him in my team for the RAC.

But would you give these drivers a contract so that they would have a complete year with Fiat in World Championship rallies, or do you only expect them to do a few rallies for which they are specialists?

My idea is as you saw this year, to make national teams all over the world. That means that headquarters in Turin will have only three or maximum four drivers who are specialists all over the world. In the case of our team in Finland, they will use national drivers like Salonen to do all the national championship. I will also give a car to them, like I did this year on the RAC and Canada—but I would not do this for San Remo or Corsica.

Why do you concentrate on Group 4 with Fiat—surely there would be an advantage if you had also cars in Group 1 and Group 2? For instance, Ford gained points in Sweden through Hamalainen in Group 1.

Well, that was a good point for Ford, but we think that it is better to concentrate our thoughts in one direction and not to have Group 1, Group 2, Group 3, Group 4, a prototype and so on. That is one of the mistakes Fiat have made in the past. with the X1/9, with the prototype, with the Abarth cars, with the



Below: Alen visited Britain for the Castrol '77 to see our forests before the RAC. Above: the Stratos also had a successful year.



Daniele Audetto

continued

Group 1, the 125, the 124, the Spyder, the Group 3 and so on. This year I asked my team to make an effort in only one direction. This is the reason why we have had success, because we were all concentrating on the Group 4. But, of course, we have to think also that our rallying participation is for commercial reasons. Many young people cannot buy the Group 4 car because it is very expensive. But we make the basis of our programme to give a new image to Fiat, that of a winning marque, and on the same basis we will make a Group 1 car—that is for sure. I can tell you now that soon there will be a new 131 2-litre engine and the Group 1 will not be very expensive because we want to give the chance to young people to start in competition rallying, like we did this year with the Autobianchi trophy with a 112.

What do you think is the strong point of the Fiat team—is it money?

Not only money! The money needed to do the championship is the same that Ford, General Motors or Lancia all must have. For financial reasons we did not compete on the Safari this year, for example—but Ford did do the Safari. Money is very important in competition, but it is not everything. You need a very strong team, you need very efficient cars, you need a will to win—you *must* have the will to win. Our mechanics, technicians and drivers all have the will to win, and they have a competitive car and they are very strong. The money, of course, gives you the possibility to be at the top, but of course all the official works teams that compete in the World Championship have money enough to do that, otherwise Ford, General Motors and Lancia would not be in the series. The money that Ford spent on the Safari was good money—because they won. But if they had not spent all this money it would not have been possible to have such organisation and, therefore, not possible to win.

You went from Lancia to Ferrari and then from Ferrari to Fiat. What experience gained in Grand Prix racing has helped you to run the Fiat rally team?

Well, very good experience, because it was something new. But I think that for a team manager it is much more difficult to manage rally organisation than Formula 1. In Formula 1 you are much more competitive, but the rally problems tax the brain of a competition man more. You have to keep all the organisation, the technicians, the drivers very quiet, they have to work like a family all together, and that is what I was trying to do with Ferrari. Of course, the pit organisation, the timing and so on is also very important, but that is nothing to compare with rally organisation when you need radio liaison, when you need aircraft, when you need servicing all over the country, with timing and servicing a car, rebuilding a car. . . A rally is really much more difficult than Formula 1, but it is also very different. If you understand, it is a different approach, because in Formula 1 there are other problems. The drivers in Formula 1 are more difficult and the stress that you have in Formula 1 is not the same that you have in rallying. All the experience is very good. When I started it was as a driver, then I carried on as a co-driver, and then I helped Fiorio for one year at Lancia before I was team manager at Lancia for four years. I was team manager for Ferrari for one year and now Competition Manager for Fiat. All experience is good, and really gives you something.

Where are the problems in the government of the sport of rallying?

Some of the problems are in the CSI, because the CSI allows too much influence from the manufacturers. We must work altogether with the CSI to find the right solution for our problems, but the interests of one factory are different from any other. Of course this is only to be expected, but the CSI must not be influenced by the manufacturers. They must find the right way, and only do what is best for the sport.

What ideas do you have about how the sport could be improved?

I think the sport can improve if we carry on from next year with the production car. That Formula 1 produces a lot of publicity is very good, because Formula 1 is the top for engineering, but it has nothing to do at the moment with production cars. It is a circus, but it is a very nice circus—the people enjoy themselves, the sponsors spend money, there is good publicity. In rallying we are much nearer the production car, and rallies are really more serious. In rallying we must consider the image of the company, and cars and the fact that we are using the same car that people can use at the weekends.

What do you think about the Lancia Stratos, as a rally car, then? Was its development a good or bad thing?

It was a good thing. The Lancia stopped the Alpine and Porsche domination, and it was introduced in a period when it was possible to invest a lot of money to make a special car for competition. Now all the factories prefer to invest money in other directions, improving the standard production car to make it into a competitive proposition for rallying. They take the standard production car, improve it and rally it, because this, as I have said before, is very important for technical, safety and commercialisation reasons. The Stratos was just not the same. With the Stratos it was possible to have a three or four year period of Italian domination—now it is finished, because the Stratos was an era.

I meant was the Stratos good for the sport, not was it good for Fiat. Do you think the Stratos was good for the sport?

Well, I remember the first time the Stratos was entered on the RAC, three or four years ago, when Munari finished third after leading. The people were so impressed to see the Stratos in the forests—it was really incredible to see a racing car in the forests. So the Stratos was definitely good for the spectators. Of course, now it is time to think in another direction.

What do you think was the greatest achievement of the Stratos?

For me, the second, third and 11th places on the Safari provided a moral victory, because we only had problems with the tyres. We had 11 punctures, and Munari lost one and a half hours because of the shortage of spare tyres! That was for me the best achievement of the Stratos, and it is a pity that the Safari is the only major rally the Stratos did not win.

Finally, do you have some burning personal ambition, something you would really like to achieve in rallying?

I want to win the Safari some time with Fiat (or with Lancia). I want to be team manager on the Safari with a car built by our group of companies and win.

And that would be a Fiat 131?

I hope so.

Daniele Audetto, thank you very much.

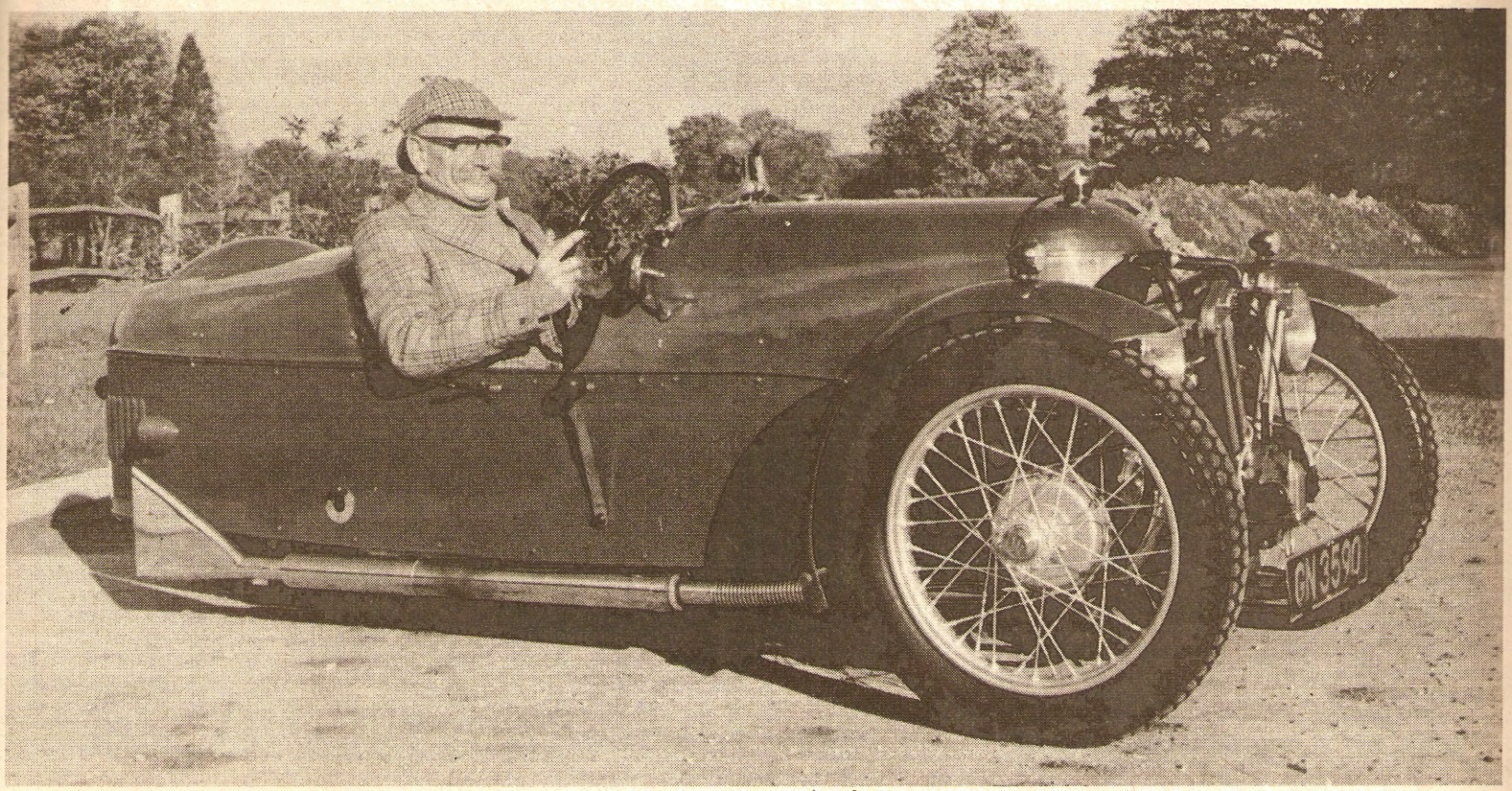


Alen took victory in Portugal despite a very strong entry from Ford, for whom it was the first big World Championship event outside Britain for some time.


OLIO FIAT
M. ALEN
I. KIVIMAKI
PANTA
CINZANO
3

by John Bolster

Ye Olde Yuletide Roade Test



John Bolster relives the old days in Peter Agg's magnificent Morgan at Effingham Park. Note the external gear lever and neat exhaust system.

Morgan Super Sports Aero

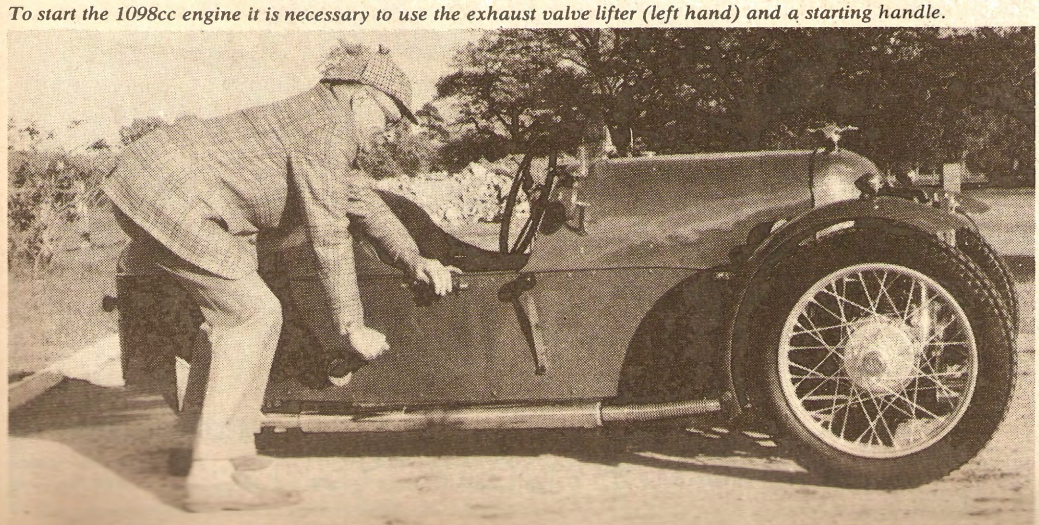
At Effingham Park in the wilds of Sussex, Peter Agg has a magnificent automobile museum. There, delectable vintage cars rest on thick pile carpet, but this is no mere static display, for they are all in full running order and ready to go. They really are the *crème de la crème*, from luxury cars such as the Rolls-Royce Phantom III, adorned with the creations of the great coachbuilders, to competition machinery ranging from an Indianapolis "Offy" to a D-Type Jaguar.

Yet, when David Watson, Peter's right-hand man, offered me a drive in any one of these beauties, I did not hesitate for an instant. To me, the apogee of tough, he-man motoring is represented by the really hot versions of the Morgan 3-wheeler, and Peter Agg has the ultimate in road-going "Moggies", This, the Super Sports Aero of circa 1929, has the specially tuned version of the 1100cc JAP V-twin engine, two speeds and no reverse, selected by a right-hand lever outside the body, and non-detachable wire wheels.

We dyed-in-the-wool Mog enthusiasts look down our noses at the later models. There's something effeminate about 3-speeds and reverse, and who wants the extra weight of a spare wheel, when any real motorist carries tyre levers and an inner tube in the pockets of his oil-stained leather coat? Good heavens, its almost as bad as putting up the hood, and only cissies do that!

The appointed day was blessed with brilliant sunshine and there she stood, incredibly low and wicked. Surely no car could be smaller, and yet carry two people! The V-twin engine looks enormous, standing naked and unashamed ahead of the radiator. The "cooking" Morgans had air-cooled engines of 980cc but this one has water-cooling by thermo-syphon, needing no water pump. The big 10/40 hp JAP is 10mm longer in the stroke than the air-cooled jobs and Peter's car has the magic letters CS stamped on the aluminium crank-case. This means such things as polished ports and saucy cams, the roller-bearing engine having a total-loss lubriction system, with visible drip-feed from a gravity tank. The petrol tank is also scuttle-mounted and feeds a twin-float Amal carburettor.

To start the 1098cc engine it is necessary to use the exhaust valve lifter (left hand) and a starting handle.



Such a hand-built engine was naturally expensive and while the basic Morgan cost £85 this speed model had a ticket of no less than £145. A light cone clutch takes the power to the crown wheel and pinion, via a propeller shaft that is sensibly enclosed in the main frame tube, thus avoiding the embarrassment of having one's trousers whipped off by the revolving rod. Two smaller tubes, running down either side, support the body, and everybody knows that the chassis floats on the traditional Morgan sliding stub axles and coil springs in front. Behind, the single wheel is located by a fork and rides between a pair of quarter-elliptic springs, the drive from the bevel gears to the hub being by two chains and their appropriate sprockets, selected by dogs.

I nearly forgot the brakes, and perhaps HFS Morgan did too. For years, his trikes had only band brakes on the rear hub, but later he would fit tiny, cable-operated front brakes for £6 extra. The Super Sports Aero, being an 80 mph car, had front brakes as standard, operated by

Morgan Aero

continued

the left hand, the right foot applying the rear brake, without any inter-connection. The left foot controls the clutch and there is no foot accelerator, the throttle lever being on the steering wheel, along with those for the air and ignition. Another little lever, on the side of the body, lifts the exhaust valves to reduce compression when starting, which is achieved after inserting a handle in the side, to engage the bevel shaft.

There's some knack in starting the big motor, but it soon idles impossibly slowly, with a deep mutter from the two huge exhaust fishtails. It's easy to get into a Moggie, assuming you're an acrobat, and with great courage David Watson jumped into the staggered passenger's seat. The sensation of travelling in this tiny projectile is a complete contrast to anything else, and entirely different from what one would imagine.

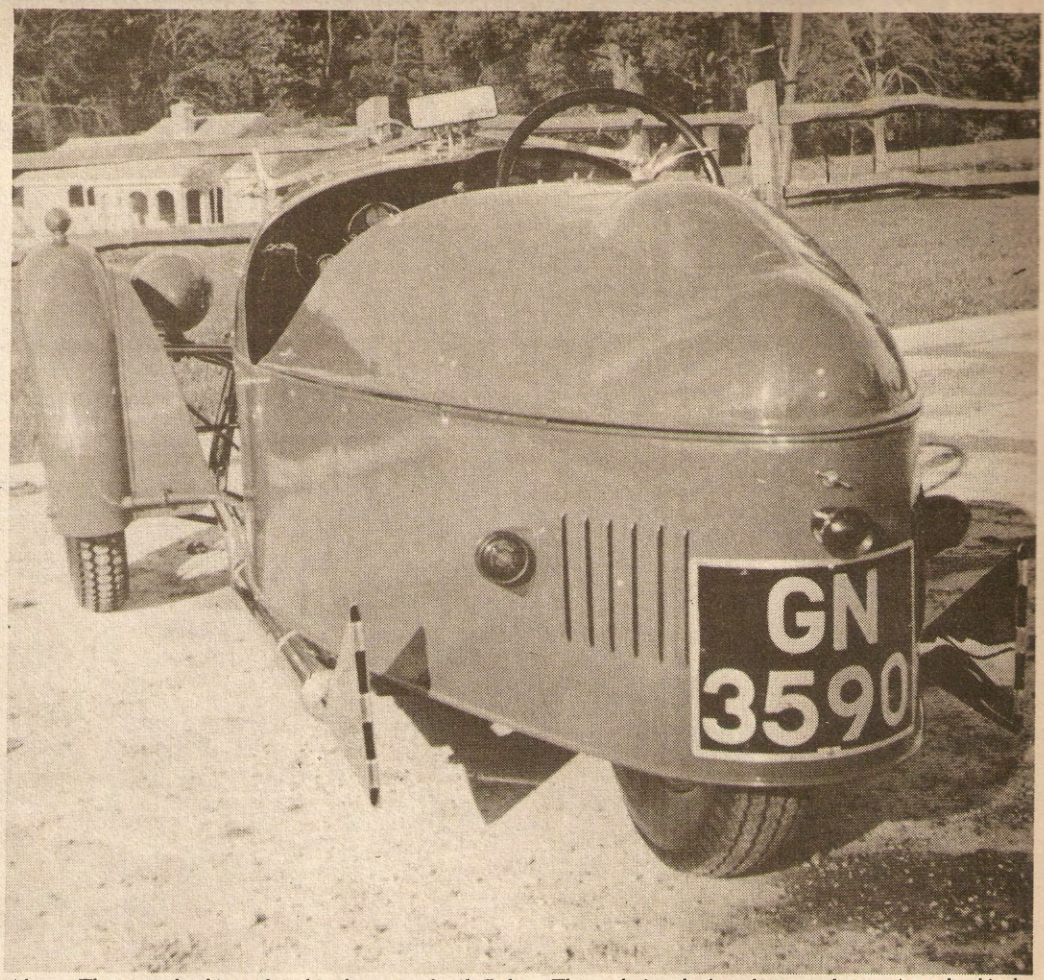
For a start, the ride is incredibly comfortable, which is contrary to most of the literature on the subject. Other three-wheelers, with their high, heavy bodies, pitch and roll sickeningly, but in a Moggie you sit almost on the road, which you can touch with your hand. The test car had no shock absorbers and the supple springs simply ironed out the bumps. The very high-geared steering—three-quarters of a turn from lock to lock—lies steady in the hands and the car runs straight, without any conscious correction. Cornering is typical of a low-built sports car, with a neutral response but with power-oversteer available at will. When racing, Mogsters used to carry passengers to balance the ship, but the little thing seemed quite stable when driven one-up. Like the early Bugattis, Moggies were made for going rather than stopping, but there's so little weight that one can soon scrub off the speed.

I didn't time the machine as the setting of the carburettor was on the weak side, and obviously it would have been inadvisable to hold peak revs for the necessary distances. However, with 42 bhp and lots of mid-range torque applied to a 7 cwt car of an excellent aerodynamic shape, it can be calculated that the acceleration must be something like that of quite a good 2-litre car. The light weight renders the very high bottom gear (or should I say chain) ratio entirely practicable and I can state definitely that two speeds are ample.

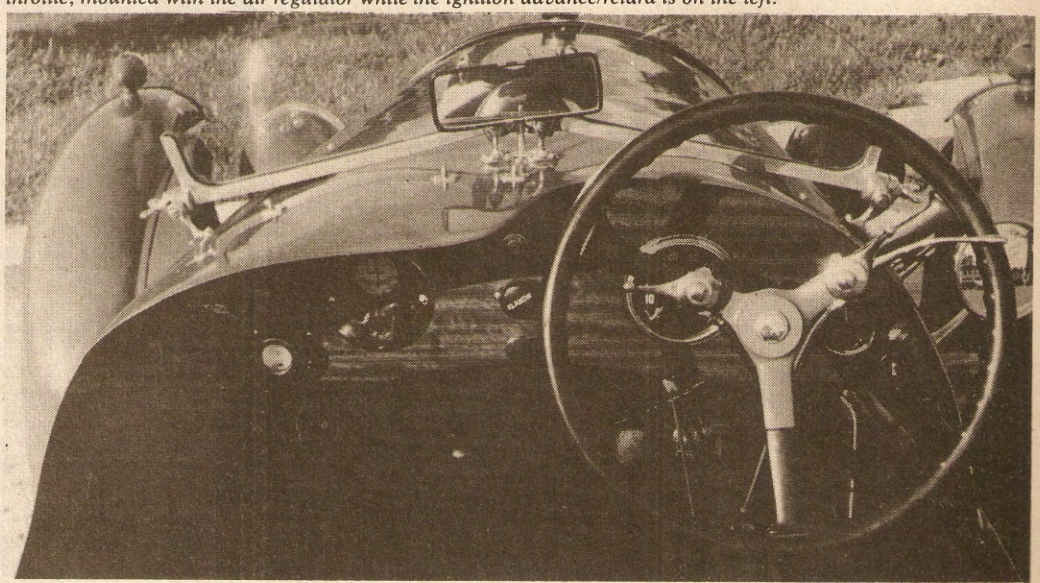
Fully equipped, a Super Sports should be capable of something in the region of 80 mph. With the mudguards and lamps removed, and using the racing JAP engine, many Morgans have lapped Brooklands at well over 100 mph, which means a good deal more than that down the Railway Straight. Having watched them racing there, I can bear witness to their extraordinary stability over the famous bumps. The fastest Moggie ever was Gwenda Hawkes's, and she averaged 115.66 mph both ways over the kilometre at Arpajon in 1930, brave girl!

The popularity of 3-wheeled cyclecars rested on their tax of only £4 *per annum*, their petrol economy, and their better weather protection than any motorcycle could offer. Most owners graduated from two wheels, hence the hand-throttle, but above all the Morgan was so much more attractive than that unsociable device, the sidecar. As a sports car, its enormous fun to drive, much of the attraction coming from the type of engine employed. To watch the big valves opening and closing as one drives, plus that deep throb from the exhausts, makes one feel absolutely a part of one's mount.

As for picking up a bargain, Peter Garnier has pointed out that the Mog he once bought for thirty bob—£1.50 to you, young man—would now fetch £2500 plus. Nevertheless, if somebody would make a few copies at a sensible price, I for one would be greatly tempted to join the queue. ■



Above: The rear wheel is enclosed in the tapered tail. Below: The cockpit—the long lever on the steering wheel is the throttle, mounted with the air regulator while the ignition advance/retard is on the left.



Specification and performance data

Car Tested: Morgan Super Sports Aero 2-seater, price £145.

Engine: V-twin JAP, water-cooled, 85.7 x 95mm (1098cc). Compression ratio 7.5 to 1. 42bp at 4000rpm. Pushrod-operated inclined valves. Amal twin-float carburettor.

Transmission: Cone clutch. Enclosed shaft drive to bevel gear, plus chains and sprockets to rear wheel, engaged by dogs with outside RH lever. Overall ratios 4.5 and 8.0 to 1.

Chassis: Steel tubular frame. Independent front suspension by sliding stub axles on vertical pillars with coil springs. Direct steering with epicyclic reduction gear in column, threequarter turn lock to lock. Rear wheel in pivoted fork with quarter elliptic leaf springs. Cable-operated drum brakes on front hubs, with central hand lever. Band brake on rear hub, with foot pedal. Non-detachable wire wheels, fitted 27 x 4in tyres.

Equipment: Electric lights and hooter. Speedometer. Adjustable oil drip feed. Starting handle.

Dimensions: Wheelbase 6ft 11in. Track 4ft 3in/zero. Weight 7cwt.

Performance: Maximum speed 80mph. Speeds in gears: first 45mph.

Fuel consumption: 45 to 50mpg.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

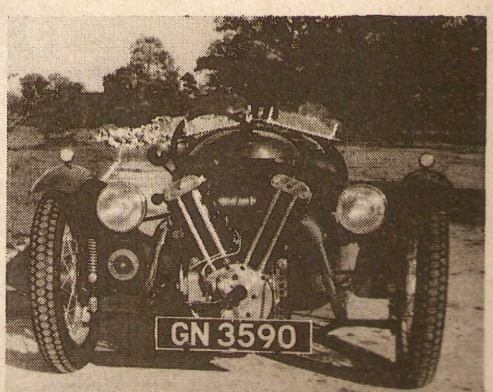
MORGAN SPORTS. An Autocar and Motor Cycle Special. £1.50

THE THREE WHEELER. By Brian Watts. The Morgan Three-Wheeler Club. £2.20.

MORGAN. By Gregory Houston Bowden. Gentry Books. £3.95.

MORGAN THREE-WHEELER CLUB

Hon Sec: N. H. Lear, Flat 2, The Grange, Cannington, Bridgwater, Somerset.



The purposeful JAP V-twin is the special, water-cooled, engine producing 42bhp and endows the Aero with a top speed of 80mph.

by John Bolster

Fiat the lion-heart

Most manufacturers spoil their cars when they try to improve them! Too often, styling changes and extra equipment mean a bulkier car that is harder to park, with greater weight that takes the edge off the acceleration. So, it was with some concern that I heard the announcement of an improved Fiat 126, a lion-hearted little car that I held in great esteem.

I need not have worried—for once, the makers have done the right thing. Leaving the external dimensions and the weight as before, they have replaced the 594cc engine with a huge 652cc unit, increasing the bores of the two cylinders by no less than 3.5mm. They have used the extra capacity to augment the torque in the middle ranges, the maximum power going up by only 1 bhp, though at 200 rpm less than before.

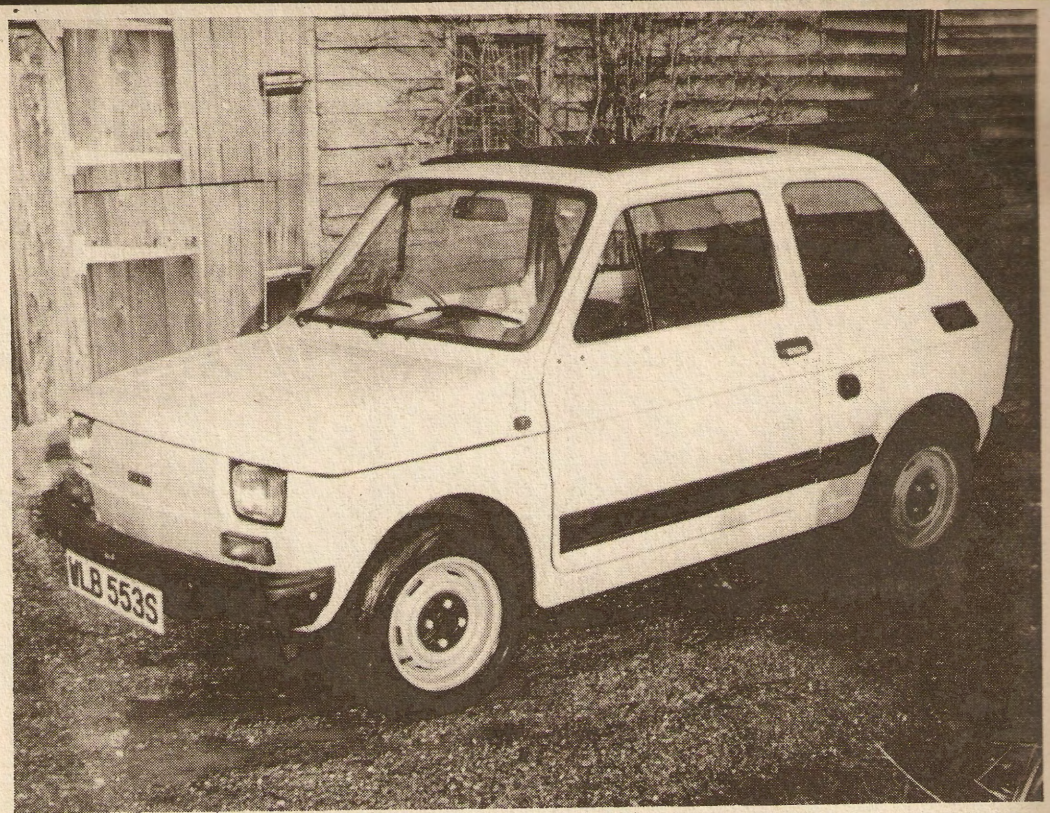
In addition to making the car livelier and less dependent on the gearbox, the object has been to reduce noise by keeping the revs down. In this connection, a redesigned air filter reduces the pulsations and a 2cm thick insulation panel has been insinuated between the engine and the passenger compartment.

For the rest, the little machine remains the same. It comes in two versions, identical mechanically, but the more costly De Ville has such things as a sunroof, which I don't need but some people love, fitted carpets, hinged rear windows, and moulded resin bumpers plus rubber side strips. For a car used principally as a town carriage, the latter are worth their weight in gold.

The 126 is a city car *par excellence*, but it must not be regarded as only that. When I tested the last model, I got up early one summer's morn in Kent, and lunched in the Highlands of Scotland with 500 miles under my belt. Nevertheless, it might have been made for London, and that extra torque gives it enough zip to exploit its small size and quick steering. I was able to go through the traffic almost like I do on a motorcycle, with taxi drivers casting doubts on the marital status of my parents. It's a long time since I have enjoyed driving in the metropolis, but it really was fun with the 126. Even parking was a pleasure—quoth the garage man, "we're full up, but we'll find room for you, guv'."

It is always difficult to obtain accurate performance figures for very small cars, because wind and gradient affect them disproportionately. Timed both ways, I would say that 69mph is a fair figure for maximum speed, though I recorded 73mph down wind and the speedometer alleged as much as 77mph on occasions. Acceleration is naturally fairly gradual above 50mph, but the car is quicker than most away from the traffic lights, aided by a sharp snatch into second. For normal starts, second gear suffices, and once on the move it's virtually never necessary to go down into first, which is unsynchronised.

People are apt to query the roadholding of rear-engined cars, largely because of the unsavoury reputation of certain examples that combined a lot of rear overhang with swing-axle suspension. The 126 has such a short, light engine that its weight distribution is similar to that of some mid-engined sports cars, while its rear suspension is by semi-trailing arms. It is stable in side winds and never feels tail-heavy, and on really sharp corners its small size is a great advantage.



The more costly De Ville has a sunroof, moulded resin bumpers plus rubber side strips.

Specification and performance data

Car Tested: Fiat 126 2-door saloon, price £1423, or De Ville £1594.

Engine: 2-cylinders, with thermostatically-controlled air-cooling, 77 x 70mm (652cc). Compression ratio 7.5 to 1. 24bhp at 4500 rpm. Pushrod-operated valves. Weber single-choke carburetter.

Transmission: Single dry plate clutch. 4-speed gearbox with synchromesh on upper 3-speeds, ratios 0.872, 1.300, 2.067, and 3.250 to 1. Spiral bevel final drive, ratio 4.87 to 1. Driveshafts to rearhubs.

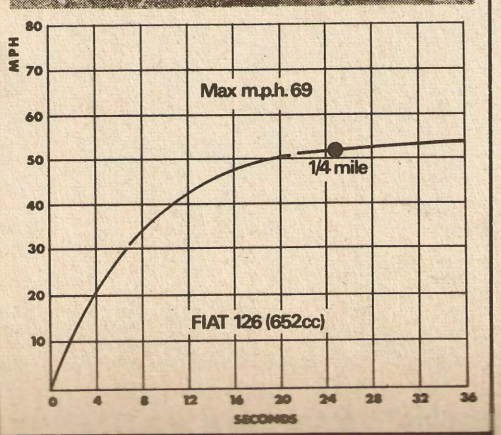
Chassis: Rust-proofed steel integral construction. Independent front suspension by transverse leaf spring with anti-roll mounting and upper wishbones. Worm and sector steering gear with 3-piece track rod. Independent rear suspension by semi-trailing arms and coil springs. Dual-circuit drum brakes. Bolt-on steel wheels, fitted 135-12 tyres.

Equipment: 12-volt lighting and starting. Speedometer. Fuel guage. Heating and demisting with heated rear window. Windscreen wipers and washers. Flashing direction indicators.

Dimensions: Wheelbase 6ft 0⅜in, Track 3ft 9in/3ft 11⅜in, Length 10ft 0¼in. Width 4ft 6½in. (De Ville 10ft 3¾in x 4ft 6½in). Weight 11.4 cwt.

Fuel Consumption: 44 to 54mpg.





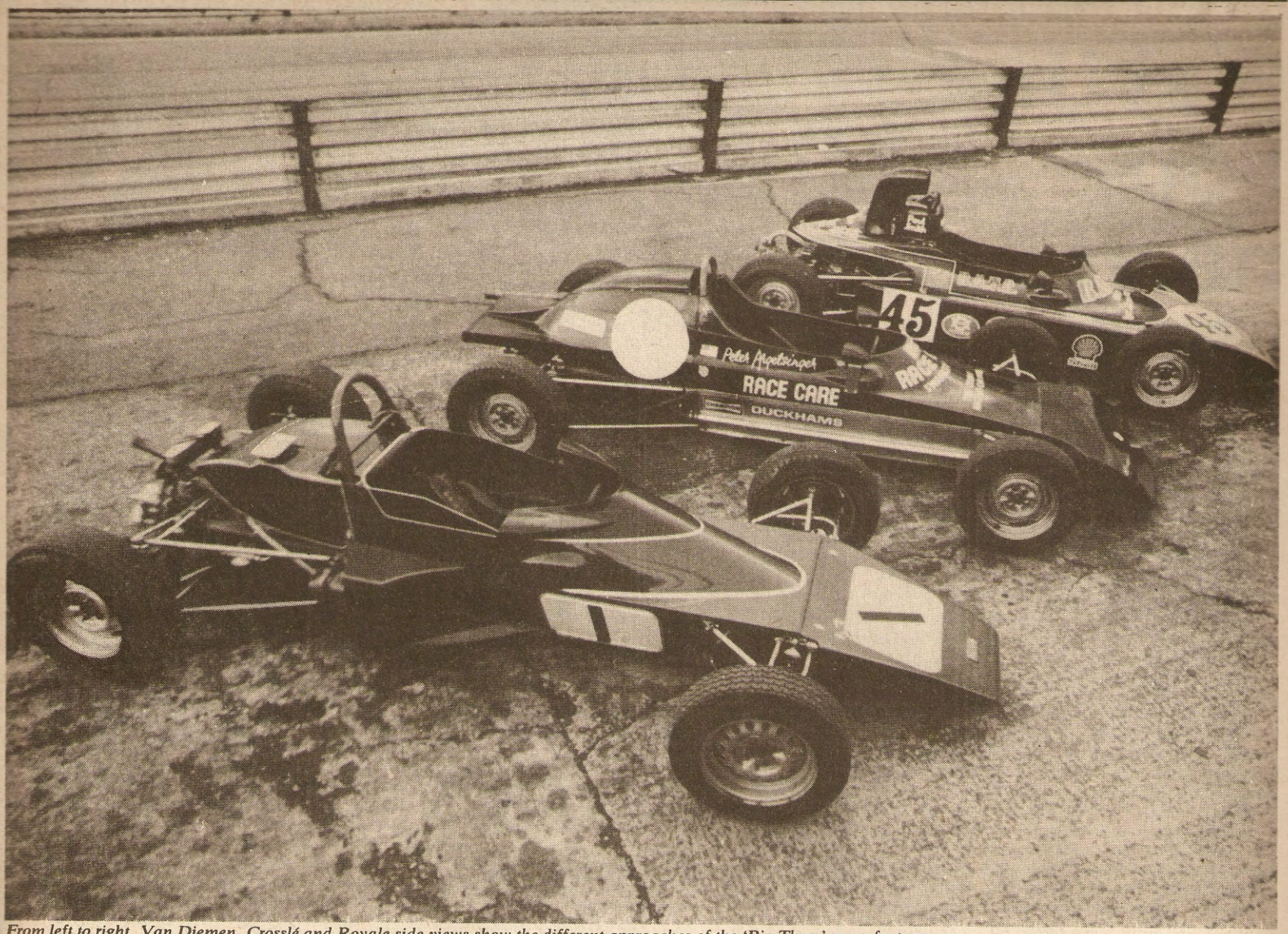
A narrow track precludes the use of long travel suspension but the ride is by no means uncomfortable. This is achieved by a skilful choice of seat springs, which complement the car's suspension ratings, a design refinement of which some manufacturers seem ignorant. There is plenty of ground clearance for country byways and the traction on mud is good.

One does not, of course, use the term silence in connection with small, air-cooled cars, but the relatively low-speed pulsations of the 126 are less tiring than the frenzied buzz of some little four-cylinder machines. At first, one does not realise how seldom gearchanging is really necessary, but with practice one can travel surprisingly quietly. Radio programmes can certainly be enjoyed, though some *pianissimo* passages are lost when pounding down the motorway.

If the 126 were not economical, it would lose most of its point. I averaged 44mpg overall, including the flat-out performance testing, but over 50mpg is the reward for more restrained handling. Driven competitively in traffic, the petrol saving over slightly larger cars is not very marked, because the Fiat is having to work harder. On the other hand, with short journeys and frequent cold starts, it shows a big advantage, because the engine warms up so quickly and there's far less metal to bring to working temperature. Though the heating system is of the utmost simplicity, it can flood the car with warm air very soon after a cold start, which can be a great comfort. On the debit side, though hot and cold air are separately controlled, they blend on entry and the old-fashioned quarter-lights must be used for ventilation when the heater is on, if cool breathing air is also required.

Most people will probably treat the 126 as a comfortable two-seater regarding the rear seat as a place for children, dogs, or luggage, for the front boot is naturally small. Actually, there's more room in the back than in many a so-called 2+2 coupé, the body being the modern equivalent of what we used to call a "chummy", in which four adults *can* travel with a certain amount of give-and-take. Above all, its *chic*, with a lot of style about it, and the girls love it.

The Fiat 126 is fun to drive anywhere, but in London traffic it's superb. If only more people would use cars of this size in town, congestion would almost cease to exist and commuting would no longer be a nightmare.



From left to right, Van Diemen, Crosslé and Royale side views show the different approaches of the 'Big Three' manufacturers.

Fords revisited

BP Formula 3 Champion DEREK DALY—a past master of Formula Ford—compares notes with JEREMY SHAW on the top three cars in the category.

It was a bitterly cold November morning on a typical winter Snetterton test day, and the track was damp and slippery. Derek Daly was alone out there, having a run in Paul Smith's Formula Ford Royale. A knot of people stood in the pits area, huddled around a stopwatch. Twice already Derek had been several seconds late, due to trying out the escape route at the braking area for the Esses—causing Paul's face to turn even paler. But each time he had come into view again as rapidly as ever around the long, sweeping Coram Curve, and then slid the car neatly through Russell before powering away past us and towards Riches. After about 15 laps, Derek came in (much to the relief of the car's owner), clambered out, and made a few comments before sauntering away to make himself comfortable in a Crosslé 32F. And then everyone was looking at me. . . !

The moment that some of the assembled persons had been waiting for was at hand—it was my turn to drive the Royale. All the nasty comments I had written about them in the past were suddenly remembered!



Derek Daly—a brief return to Fords.

Here was their chance to get some of their own back, while I attempted to gain a taste of single-seater driving and begin an appraisal of the top three marques in Formula Ford 1600 racing this year.

It has been an interesting season for Formula Ford and, although it may not have quite lived up to the ultra-competitiveness of the year before in terms of numbers, it has still brought up several new names. The year also highlighted the fact that there seems little to choose between the wares of the major manufacturers. Of the three most important national championship titles at stake, namely the Townsend Thoresen, the Brush Fusegear and the BARC series, all have been won by a different driver/car combination: Van Diemen (Chico Serra), Crosslé (Nigel Mansell) and Royale (David Leslie) respectively.

I had thought that it would be an interesting exercise to compare these three types of car with a top driver behind the wheel, and also to test their relative merits from the point of view of a complete novice.

As a former FF1600 'ace', Derek Daly was an obvious, and very willing, choice for the former category, while I decided that it was about time for me to attempt to put into practice what I had written about so many times.

We were reluctant to utilise the works cars of the various manufacturers for fear of having 'special' cars fitted with 'quick' engines, so we arranged for each *marque* to be represented by

a customer car of the kind you or I could buy either new or secondhand.

'Our' Crosslé 32F belonged to American driver Peter Argetsinger-from-Watkins-Glen and was brought up from its Kent base with the aid of David MacPherson, who helps to prepare the car under the auspices of Race Care. The Royale was Paul Smith's Birmingham Motors Tyres RP24, while the trio was completed by the locally based Van Diemen RF77, which Ralph Firman was kind enough to provide.

The Peter Harris engine in the Royale was the first to be fired up, and 1976 FF Festival winner Derek Daly soon ventured out onto the damp track of the old airfield circuit.

Derek had already remarked upon the immaculate black-and-green presentation of the car, and the Irishman was soon flicking it neatly through the tricky Russell ess-bend in front of us. Paul, however, with the car up for sale, was not happy: "He must have done about 50 laps by now", he said nervously (Derek had been out for about five minutes!). He needn't have worried. The car was in good hands (for the time being) and was soon returned in one piece, although Derek had indulged in a quick spin at the Esses. Derek had enjoyed his first experience of a Royale: "I found that it was very easy to have confidence in the faster corners, like Russell." He did, however, complain of a general lack of feel through the front end of the car, finding it very easy to lock up the brakes, and he said that this made the car rather unpredictable through the slow-speed corners. I was to remember his words. . . .

As Derek made himself at home in Peter Argetsinger-of-Watkins-Glen's Crosslé, I was being strapped tightly into the Royale with Paul drumming into me the importance of keeping one eye, at least, on the vital oil and water gauges. Having never driven a 'racer' before, I was somewhat apprehensive, but enough courage was eventually summoned and I slowly let the clutch out and eased the RP24 out of the pit lane. I must admit that the power was more than I had envisaged (after all, these engines are only out of a Cortina, aren't they?). The idea of changing gear with the right hand also took a little acclimatisation, and it was this that led to my first embarrassment. I entered the Esses at the end of the main straight at an optimistic pace and I couldn't find second gear. Don't panic! With the missing ratio finally selected, I accelerated out towards the bridge and promptly spun on the damp track. Lesson one: feed the power in gently in damp conditions.

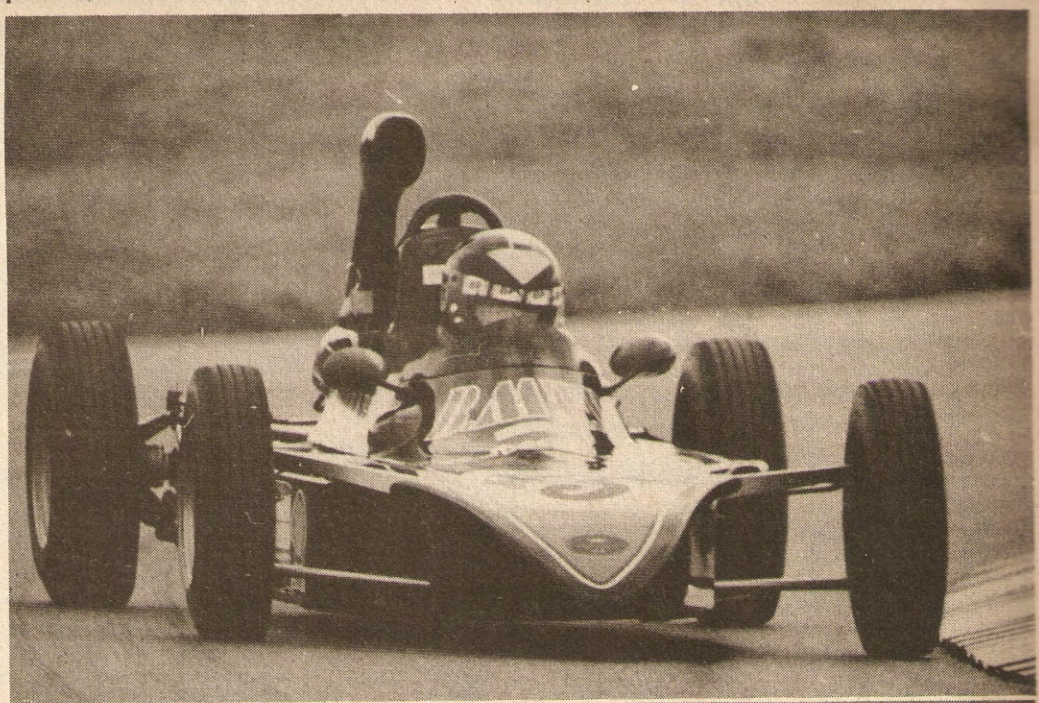
Several laps later, I reported sheepishly back to base, vacated the cockpit—and left Paul to clean off the excess mud. Yes, I'd gone off again at the same place.

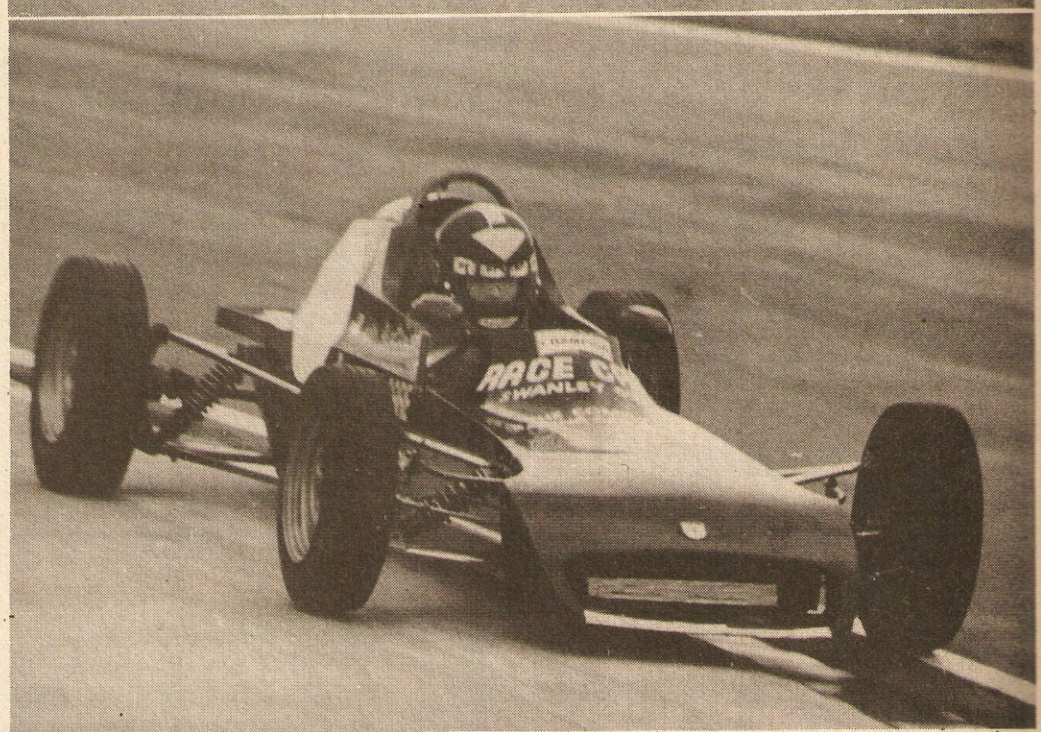
My first impressions were very probably unrealistic due to my inexperience, because I found that the car felt unpredictable in the slow corners (ie Sear and the Esses). I could get it to turn into the corners OK, but as soon as the power was applied I felt, and was, out of control. I was not sure whether it was me or the slippery track. It was probably a combination of both but, whatever, the thought of the car spinning, as it seemed wont to do, was most disconcerting, and hardly instilled me with confidence to try the other cars.

Morale was further lowered by the sight of Bruce Allison blasting round at a seemingly ridiculous speed in the Lola-Abarth F2 car. I wondered whether I'd ever see him coming. . . .

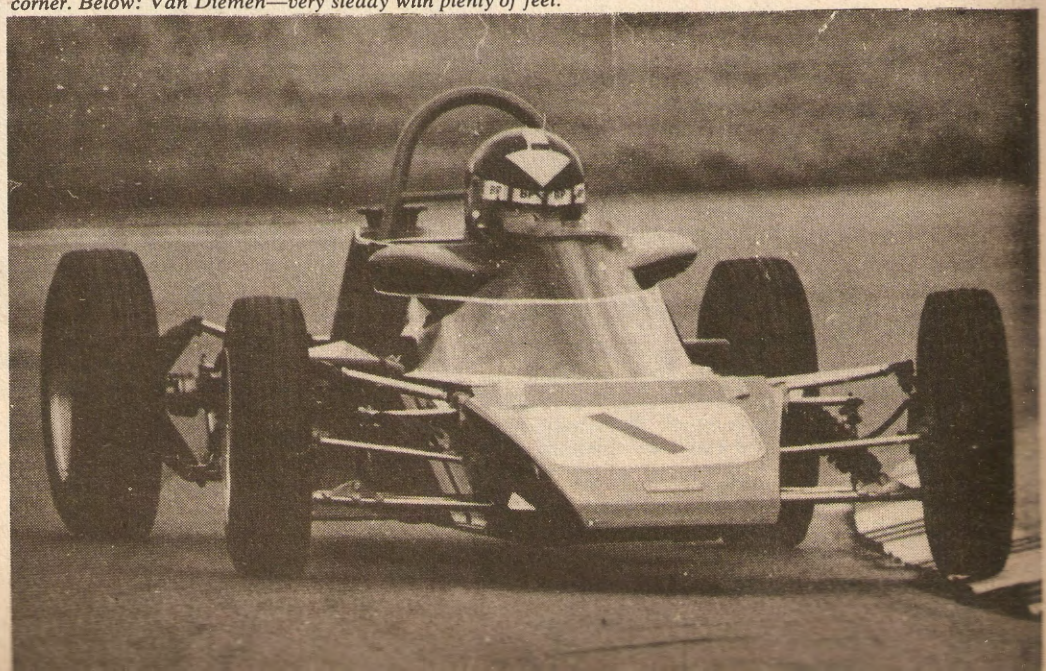
Fortunately, Bruce soon departed the scene and after a few well-chosen words of advice from Peter Argetsinger-of-Watkins-Glen, I moved hesitantly away in his Race Care Crosslé.

Having taken things very steadily for five or six trouble-free laps to get to know the car, I became far more relaxed and began to think more along the lines of Captain Kremmen: "OK men, let's tread boldly!" I felt the car to





Daly at work. Top: Royale—inspired confidence in the fast corners. Above: Crosslé—very easy to set up for a corner. Below: Van Diemen—very steady with plenty of feel.



Fords revisited

continued

be far easier to drive than the RP24. Any induced oversteer exiting corners was easily detected and corrected without undue worries, while the car felt equally steady and predictable through the fast Coram and Russell, too.

My only real problem was fitting in the car. The forward-facing bracing of the roll-over bar was unacceptably restrictive and, as I was harnessed in so (necessarily) tightly, the metal tubing was biting hard into my shoulders and making life, especially gear-changing, very difficult. On the whole, though, I found the car an absolute joy.

I was, therefore, in a far better frame of mind when my turn arrived to drive the Van Diemen, in which I soon felt completely at home. The driving position for my 6ft frame was eminently more comfortable than the Crosslé's, although it was immediately noticeable that the steering wheel was of a larger diameter than the others.

This factor, coupled with a lower-ratio steering rack, make the RF77 feel far more akin to a road car, and not at all as 'twitchy' as the others had been. I may not have been setting any new lap records, but I did find the car very steady in both fast and slow corners alike.

Before comparing notes with DD, I found time to have another swift go in the Royale, which had proved so difficult earlier in the day. This time I knew a little more about what I was doing, and felt much more at home in the car as a result.

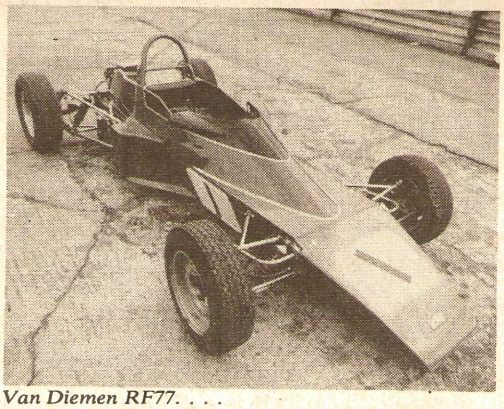
It was most interesting to hear then what Derek, as an experienced Fordster, had to say about the cars: "I found that the Royale was very easy to have confidence with in the fast corners", he said, "and the steering and gear linkage were probably the most positive of all the cars. But it lacked 'feel' through the front end, especially in the slower corners.

"The Crosslé had a very positive and light steering control, which made it very easy to set up for a corner, but it was a long time before I had enough confidence to drive fast through the quick corners." Derek said that the 32F tended to lurch its way through Russell, giving a feeling of insecurity; I must say that I didn't feel this (probably because I wasn't going quickly enough), but at the same time he drove the car when the track was still damp in places and the rear roll-bar had been left off.

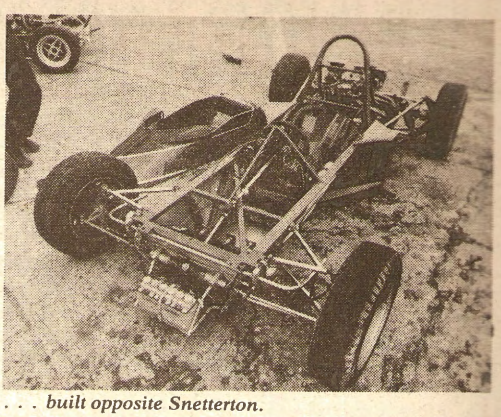
Even Derek found the cockpit of the Crosslé a bit on the cramped side, not nearly as roomy as the Van Diemen. Generally, he felt that these two cars possessed similar handling characteristics, but thought that the brakes were too positive on the RF77. They tended to lock up easily (excessively soft pads?) while, with regard to his earlier comments on the steering, Ralph stepped in to say that a high-ratio rack would be fitted as standard to the 1978 production cars. "Another good point", according to Derek, "was that there is a lot of 'dive' built into the front, which gave the Van Diemen plenty of 'feel'."

Both Derek and I thoroughly enjoyed the chance to sample the three cars and must, therefore, thank the three parties, for being brave enough to put their precious cars at risk. The day was both enjoyable and, I think, constructive. We found that the cars differed not only visually but also from behind the wheel, and each showed off a character of its own. They possessed different mannerisms but these largely cancelled themselves out over the course of a lap so that the cars were, not unexpectedly, very evenly matched.

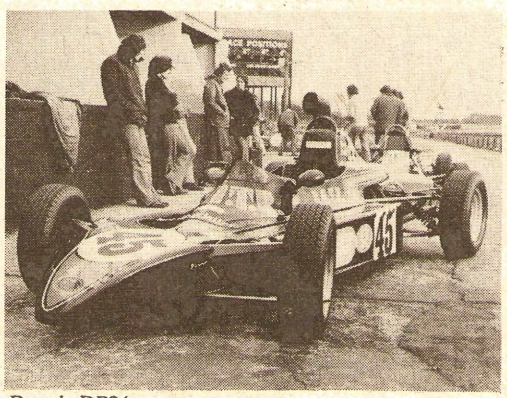
It was, perhaps, interesting to note that the Crosslé was the only car not to be spun by both of us all day, although Derek felt on the whole that the Royale was very marginally better through the faster corners and the Van Diemen equally superior through the slower ones. Take your pick—but spare a thought for the myriad of other manufacturers who push the 'Big Three' so hard and make Formula Ford 1600 the success it is.



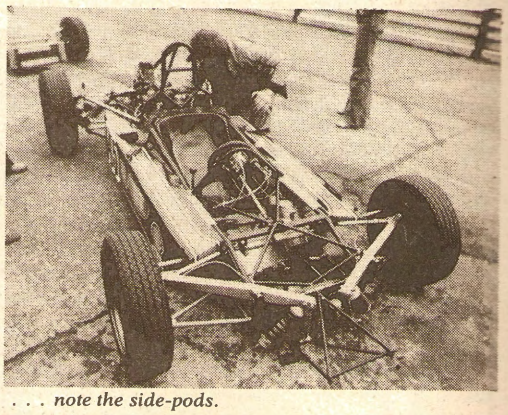
Van Diemen RF77. . . .



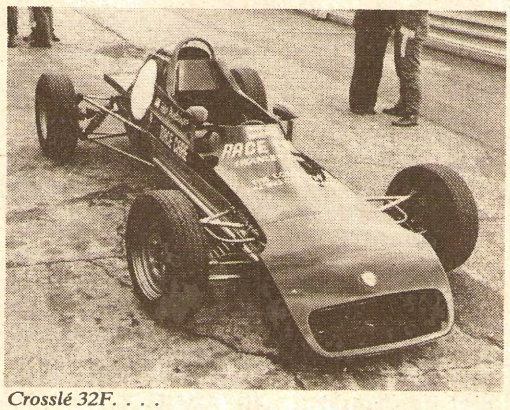
. . . built opposite Snetterton.



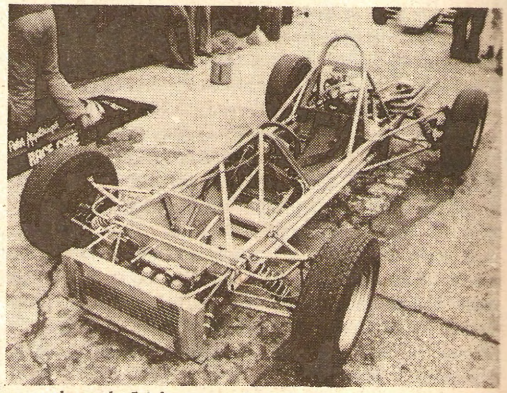
Royale RP24. . . .



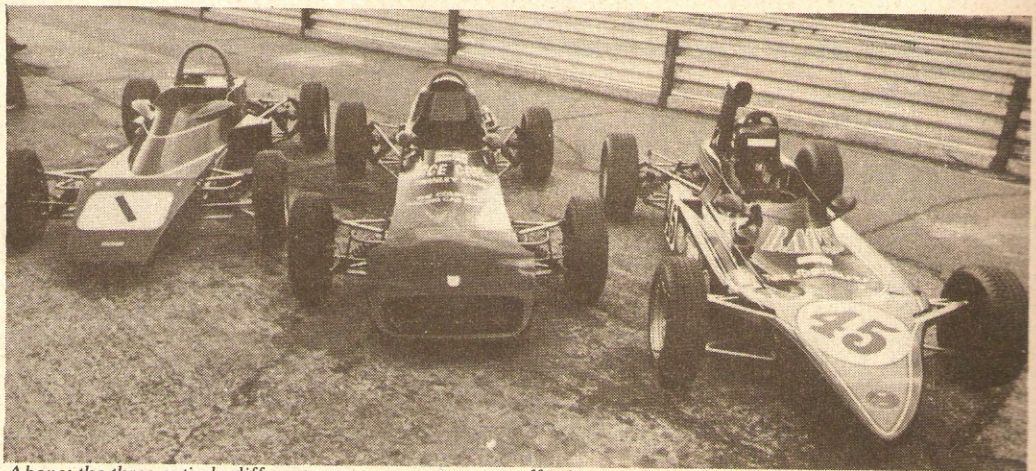
. . . note the side-pods.



Crosslé 32F. . . .



. . . the only Irish contender.



Above: the three entirely different nose treatments are as effective as one another. Below: Jeremy Shaw in action.



Quotes of the Year

"The target Niki Lauda has set himself is to win three or four World Championships. Should he finish with us for any reason, it would mean this target could not be reached." Enzo Ferrari.

"If you want my honest opinion, I think he'll stay with Ferrari." Bernie Ecclestone, two days before Niki Lauda announced that he was leaving.

"The F1CA is very democratic—but flexible." Max Mosley.

"I must have done something terrible in the past—like running over a nun or something." John Watson, after the British Grand Prix.

"I think he may be ready for Ferrari—but I'm not so sure that Ferrari are ready for him!" Chris Amon on Gilles Villeneuve.

"That would have been a 49.2. . . ." Mario Andretti's first words, stepping from his JPS after his fire extinguisher went off in the middle of a fast lap at the end of Interlagos qualifying.

"We are in the middle of a period of development." Louis Stanley early this year (or any time during the past five!).

"I just sat down in the aeroplane and thought, 'Well, that's it, the war's over'." Chris Amon, after finally deciding to retire.

"Niki says. . . ."Hans Binder, anywhere, any time.

"Mauro Forghieri is a genius—but mad!" Niki Lauda.

"James? Well, I don't really know him." Jochen Mass.

"They say I am a crazy man, so now a crazy man all the life!" Clay Regazzoni on the problems of acquiring a reputation.

"I can't say I was that impressed. . . ." John Watson, after a visit to the Indianapolis 500.

"I tell ya, man, there was so much wheat in that car we should have exported it to Russia!" Mario Andretti, after being shoved by Vittorio Brambilla into the Siverstone undergrowth.

"I'd much rather race at the Nürburgring—but I'd rather survive at Hockenheim." John Watson.

"Next time anyone writes somethin' like that about me, I'm comin' after him with a 45. . . ." A. J. Foyt.

"Next time that happens, Rutherford, you're goin' over the wall!" USAC ace Gordie Johncock to Johnny Rutherford, at Phoenix last March.

"If you can't stand the heat, little man, get out of the kitchen!" Rutherford's reply—from an original idea by Harry S. Truman.

"When the wop's like that, you *know* he's been tryin' like a sonofabitch!" Al Unser, after seeing Andretti's face after Mario's Indy qualifying bid.

"He's the champion of the world, right? Problem is, he thinks he's the king of the goddam world as well!" Mario Andretti on James Hunt after the Zandvoort *fracas*.

"I feel I can give more than the car will take." Brett Lunger on his March 761 at Jarama.

"At this precise point in time, I cannot comment. . . ." Sundry British Leyland persons.

"The front wing is only bent a little. . . ." Vittorio Brambilla.

"How can I be expected to compete against all these young bantams strutting round all over the place?" Divina Galica at the Donington F2 race.

"Have you heard about the well-balanced Australian racing driver? He has chips on both shoulders!" Pete Briggs of Team Surtees.

"I spun off on a 140mph, fifth gear corner, simply through loss of concentration because of the heat." Jody Scheckter, after practice for the Argentine Grand Prix.

"The only true justification for being in Formula 1 is that you firmly believe that you are capable of becoming World Champion." Brian Redman.

"He was driving bloody hard for someone 19 years old. I'm beginning to think it's time I ought to retire . . ." Jochen Mass on Eddie Cheever, after winning the May F2 race at the Nürburgring.

"Circuit was no problem—turn left, turn left . . . Is easy drive, no?" Clay Regazzoni after his first tests at Indianapolis.

"As soon as Derek Daly calms down, I'm sure he'll be a very good driver." Stephen South.

"Like I've always said, when my eyes start failing me is the time I'll quit. Right now they're 20-15, just as good as they were 20 years ago." A. J. Foyt, after winning an unprecedented fourth Indy 500 at the age of 42.

"Hey—this place is really *neat*." James King, before winning the Formula 3 race at Cadwell Park.

"It was nice to break the ice." Derek Bell, after bringing the Leyland Jaguar Group 2 car home in second place at the Nürburgring.

"My favourite corner in the world—I used to love scrabbling round there." Jack Brabham bemoaning the loss of Woodcote at Silverstone, after competing in the Historic race at the British GP meeting.

"I tell you, any chicane is acceptable provided it has some character—and this one hasn't. You can't see it either. . . ." Stirling Moss, on the same occasion.

"A disaster all round." Roy Salvadori, likewise.

"He is completely crazy. He jump the start, and then at the end of the straight he spin in front of me. Suddenly my car is spinning off 200kmh into the catchfencing. I have to bring a lawyer with me if he keep trying to kill me like this. He should have a certificate from a doctor before he go racing again." Arturo Merzario, on Alfa Romeo Group 6 team-mate Vittorio Brambilla, at Paul Ricard.

"The suggestion that an independent driver should not be allowed to compete in a Grand Prix is puerile." Peter Gaydon, who campaigned against the F1CA on behalf of several of the 'privateers'.

"Is very small—it only fit me!" Arturo Merzario on his new Formula 1 car.

"After all, if we wanted to come first, we could probably lay our hands on a pair of V12 Jaguar engines to put under the bonnet. It wouldn't prove much, but it would scare the hell out of the opposition." Leyland advertisement for the Triumph Dolomite.

"Unfortunately, the race was televised." Marc Surer, deciding *not* to appeal against the suspension of his competition licence following an incident in a German national Group 5 event.

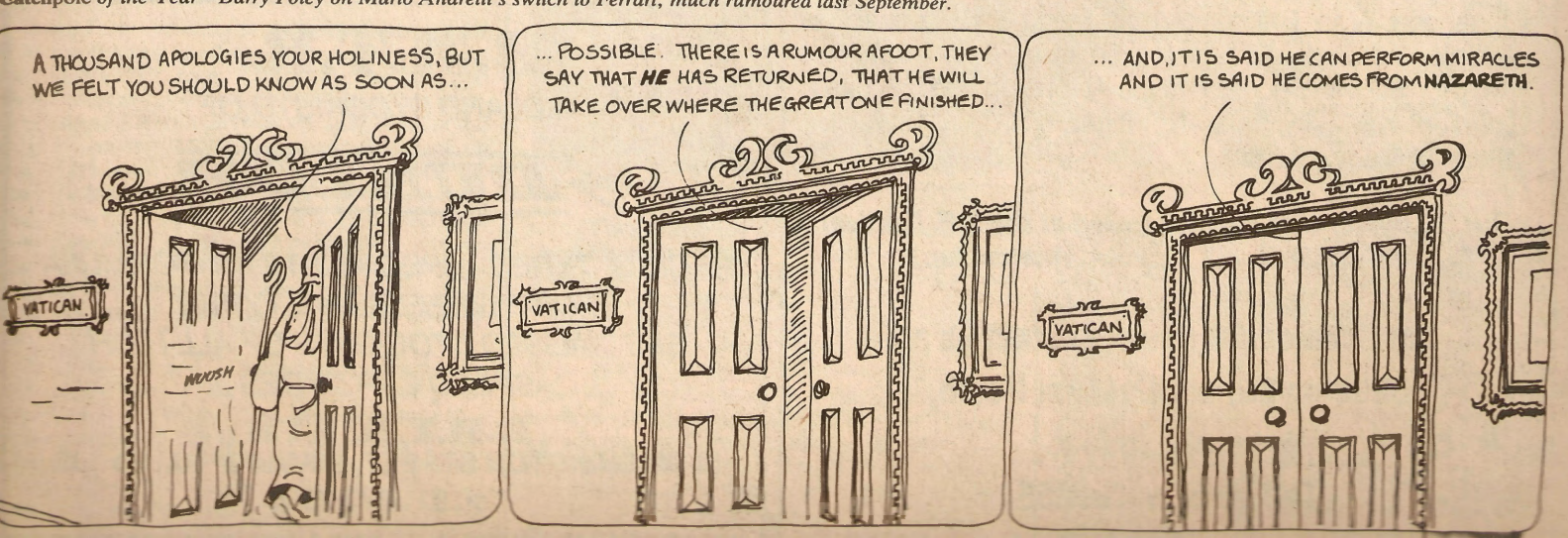
"At this moment, 53 networks televise Formula 1 regularly, and 650 million people watch each race. The BBC's position is just one out of 54." Elf competitions executive François Guiter.

"It is now time to say farewell to the BRM. The harm that has been done to British prestige by this unhappy venture is incalculable, and must never be allowed to happen again." John Bolster speaking in 1952, quoted in our *Then as Now?* column which looks back to the issue AUTOSPORT twenty-five years previously.

"I'll be more than happy just to qualify and be able to last the pace." Derek Daly, before making his sensational Formula 2 debut at Estoril.

"That really was the best possible way for Group 8 to come to an end." Tony Trimmer, after being beaten by Guy Edwards in the final ShellSport International race.

Catchpole *of the Year—Barry Foley on Mario Andretti's switch to Ferrari, much rumoured last September.*



PRIVATE CAR

by Nick Brittan

Christmas is here

Safely returned to the seclusion and sanity of San Serriffe, my Indian Ocean island haven, after a week in London doing the rounds of the glittering and tarnished annual functions. A word of thanks to British Airways, who were kind enough to divert Concorde on its inaugural run to Singapore to bring me home. How the locals were impressed by the droop-snooted giant as she touched down on the island's 1200ft runway!

The Graham Hill Appeal Fund dinner at London's Guildhall was one of the more glittering affairs, professionally organised and with a galaxy of after-dinner speakers that did wonders for the digestion. Lord Redcliffe-Maud was witty, Frank Bough was amusing, Stuart Turner was hilarious and Peter Ustinov rehashed some secondhand material and was a sad disappointment.

The Golden Jubilee of the BRDC was, by comparison, a singularly tarnished affair. Over 800 people gathered to dine, dance and celebrate Britain's most distinguished motor racing club's 50th year.

What a let down. A cobbled together prize-giving of some 15 awards in no particular order, each recipient looking more embarrassed than the previous by the casual and dismissive manner in which the so-called ceremony was mishandled. The club's rule of no speeches was broken to allow the President the opportunity to abuse the English language while saying nothing in particular, and for Sir Clive Bossom to reply.

The hastily put together three-act cabaret would have been a complete washout had it not been for the last-minute intervention of an emotional, kilted person, who attempted to tell a rather lewd story about sheep and wellington boots in Gaelic. Since he appeared unannounced, few people knew who he was. However, by the time he had completed his act no one was in any doubt of what he was.

On to the unfortunate Mr John Webb's Grovewood Awards celebration, motor racing's most presumptious, most expensive and least meaningful annual event. This young Australian who had magically failed to win any races as the winner of the principal award, and the recipient of a £1000 cheque. Then the hapless Mr Webb amazed us all by appearing to do an impersonation of an equally unacceptable person in polite society, Eric "Mecca" Morley.

Well wined as we were, there was no way we were about to believe that Grovewood's £1000 was the single most important financial contribution to the *comingmen* of British motor racing. Or that the mere receipt of this award was about to ensure the winner of a career that would net him glory and the opportunity to earn "hundreds of thousands of pounds."

Private driving schools give away more valuable prizes, and Elf, to whom Grovewood was mistakenly likened, spend more than that each year on overalls for the drivers for whom they provide genuine scholarships.

I leave early.

GP lady

A quaint little cavern in the shadow of Tower Bridge was the venue of the most curious press announcement of the year. Over an extremely economic luncheon consisting of a couple of glasses of rather aggressive white wine and a piece of Spam surrounded by a small collection of rather tired little *vol au vents*, we were treated to three of the tiniest and shortest speeches of the year.

An unnamed Englishman from Olympus Cameras asked us to be quiet while he introduced an unnamed German man from Olympus. This gentleman explained that these days everything was very international, and he was the German distributor for a Japanese camera and they were sponsoring an English-made car, owned by a Scotsman and driven by a Polish lady.

We were then asked to be more quiet for Alexandra (*sic*) Hesketh. He said he was pleased. And sat down.

Not so much a press call. More a course in investigative journalism. Depending on your source, you could get various stories. Divina will drive an Olympus-sponsored Hesketh. For all the 17 events. Or for only some of them. The budget is really very big and we will have two cars and do the job properly. Or, certainly enough to get us through the first five events of the year.

Either way, it's nice to see that Divina is getting a chance to do things reasonably properly in the company of gentlemen now that she has escaped the clutches of the Brands Hatch Charm School (props Mr and Mrs J. Webb), and is being managed by the ejaculatory Peter Hunt.

Rude badge

I am indebted to Ken Dennis of Press Association for the following gem.

Some years ago Johnnie Walker manufactured Formula 4 racing cars. The circular badge on the front of them was a steering wheel motif around which was written the name Johnnie Walker in Pitmans shorthand. Quite neat, really. Until you looked at it the other way up and realised that, upside down, the shorthand outline for Johnnie Walker reads *F**k You Madge.*

The cars are no longer made, but the badges fetch a high price among collectors of rude trivia.

Alexander—"pleased" with Divi's Olympus Hesketh.



Welcome home

In the same week, two long-forgotten motor racing faces return to the scene. The portly Tim Parnell, one time manager of the now defunct BRM operation, and more recently retired pig farmer, returned to manage Mallory Park. Nick Syrett, the ambling and amiable former amateur cricketer, Green Line bus driver and BRSCC secretary, returned to become PR man and bus driver for the little known Rivet Supply Company. Welcome back, all is forgiven.

Hero worship

A searing indictment of motor racing journalists from Niki Lauda in an excellent interview with Alan Henry in the new copy of *Autocourse.* Which proves what I have suspected for all too long: that the average journalist given the Grand Prix beat to cover believes that once a man puts on Nomex he becomes beyond criticism, and worthy only of the most sycophantic and toadying praise.

Lauda explains how he crashed a car and walked away from it knowing that the crash was his own fault. In his own words he "messed it up". A journalist appears and asks what happened. Niki explains that he "messed it up".

"A puncture?" asks the journalist.

"No, I messed it up," says Lauda.

"Oil on the track?" asks the journalist, unable to believe that his hero is capable of making a human error.

"Look," says Lauda. "No oil. I just messed it up."

He goes on, imploringly, to ask why the hell won't journalists believe that he (and presumably other lesser drivers) is entitled to make mistakes.

Remember this when you read your next report of a Grand Prix. And remember that your average driver-worshipping journalist is unable to distinguish between human and mechanical failure.

To be wed

Motor racing's travelling man Rod Sawyer, shipper around the world of the Grand Prix teams and their hangers-on, is faced with an odd problem. Two return tickets to New Zealand to be made out. One in his own name and the other for a person who will have one name on the outward portion of the ticket and a different one on the homeward portion.

The person is the lovely Miss Jenny James, who goes out under that name and comes home as Mrs Jenny Sawyer. They are to be married on Christmas Eve at Mike Hailwood's splendid new home just outside Auckland. My congratulations to them both.

● And in this season of peace, goodwill and truth—I wish a Happy Christmas and a prosperous

edited by Marcus Pye

Preparation offer from Davron

Manager Alex Ferrada has been in touch with us recently outlining Davron Racing Components plans for 1978. Apart from supplying race engines to the clubmans formula, they have a highly successful preparation business. As a previous Clubmans champion (he still holds four lap records) and ex-Production Manager at Mallock Racing, his experience has attracted a number of Clubmen to the Buckingham factory.

Dud Moseley, Bob Glass and Kenny Allen have been particularly successful with their engines, while the preparation side has looked after the cars of champion Moseley (who will be using a Davron unit in Sports 2000 in 1978), Bob Morey, Philip Matchwick, Malcolm Isaacs, Charlie Kirby, etc. Kirby will be receiving development assistance on his car from Davron during the season. Particularly popular among competitors has been Davron's unique setting up/brake test facility, where a driver brings in his car and has it set up and brake tested on one of the company's dynamometers.

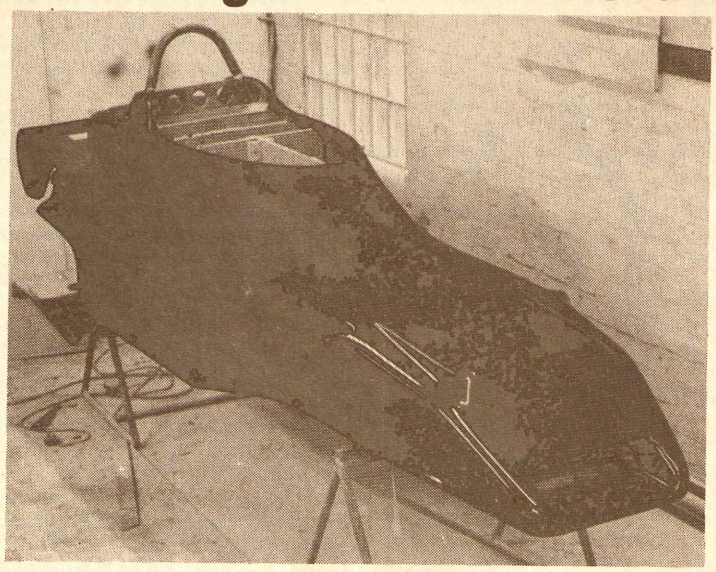
Interest has been very high in the new 1700 engines for Class 'A' Clubmans. Ferrada hopes that this will renew interest in the class, after a comparatively quiet year in 1977. Orders are already being taken for the new 1700 unit and the popular Formula Ford 1600. While in Belgium for the recent Racing Car Show, where they displayed the Stuart Glass/Peter Deal Pink Panther, they took an order for a 1700 for use in Dutch saloon car racing.

Davron's pilot scheme of race hire in Formula Ford Clubmans has proved so successful, that plans are going ahead for a similar scheme in 1978. They are the first to offer this service in the formula. Their most regular driver, Roger Cowman, an ex-karter from Derbyshire, drove their race hire Mallock Mk18B in 1977, always being placed in Oceanair rounds. Cowman himself plans to race regularly in 1978 with his own car.

Croxton's new Escort

Len Croxton, the well-known autocross exponent from Crowthorne, having sold his successful 1300cc Escort last year is returning to the sport with a new MkII shell currently being built by Mike Musson Racing. Len intends to contest a rallycross series as well as the BTRDA autocross championship with the new car which will be powered by a 1.8-litre BDA unit. Sponsorship will come from RTC Building Supplies of Herstmonceux, Sussex, in whose colours Croxton will run. Owing to a serious illness in the family Mike has had to give up competing himself although he will continue to build as many cars as possible 'to keep his hand in'.

New Tiga Formula Ford



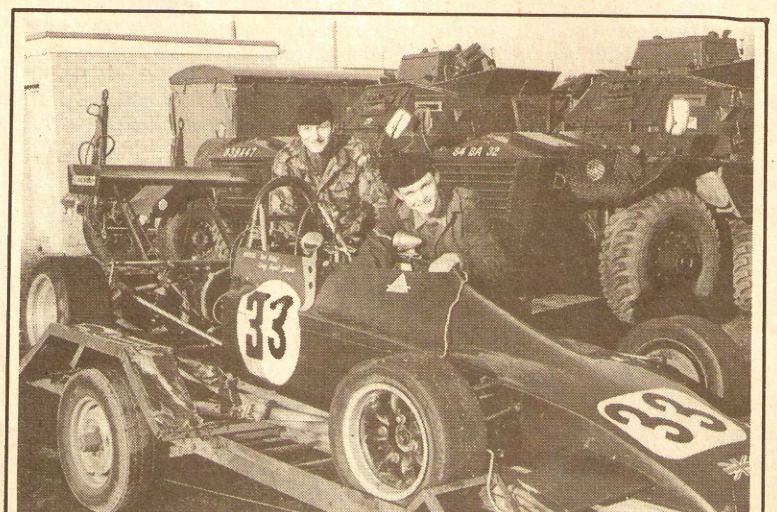
Work on the new Tiga FF1600 car for 1978 is progressing well. As can be seen in the picture the glass-fibre bodywork pattern is complete and the FF78 model will look quite different from the previous FF1600 cars from Caversham.

Datsun-ice idea from Istead

Cheam driver John Istead, having graduated from Minis through Capris to a modified Datsun 240Z, has some ambitious plans for next season. The red, white and blue machine has already been campaigned in a sprint at Lydden and the Eelmoor regularity rally with great success but, over the winter, John, an enthusiastic member of the Datsun 'Z' Club, hopes to tweak it still further for an attack on a hill-climb championship and a sprint series. The Samuri tuning firm have helped out with parts and signwriting, while flared arches, wider wheels/tyres and triple Webers have also been added for increased performance. Finance is now the deciding factor as far as choice of championships go.

Popular rallycross series

With six weeks to go before the first round of the 1978 Castrol/BTRDA rallycross championship, registrations are only ten short of the maximum of 175. Most of Britain's leading drivers are planning to contest the ten round series including reigning champion Trevor Reeves, RAC winner Trevor Hopkins, George Warren, John Button, Barry Lee, Dick Griffiths, John Welch, Ron Douglas and the Hathaways. Two further trade prizes have been added to the impressive list of goodies to be won, these being the Burton Performance Centre award of £50 to the overall champion while Jaguar Jackets of Bath will present a rally jacket to one class winner at each meeting.



Two members of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, Craftsman Mark Grundon (left) from Southampton and Lance Corporal Roger Hopwood (right) from Stockport, have been using their leisure time to advantage recently. Both have just begun a four-month tour of Northern Ireland and have started what they describe as an enjoyable task—stripping and rebuilding a Formula Super Vee car. The car, a Brian Hampsheir-designed Supernova chassis built originally in Billingshurst, is owned and raced by Captain Bob Birrell (second-in-command of the 60 Squadron, Royal Corps of Transport) and Captain Tony Taylor-Roberts, at present serving with the 652 Squadron Army Air Corps. The Supernova is currently based at Moscow Camp where it shares a garage with the Saracen armoured personnel carriers pictured here.

Priority licences at RAC

During the Christmas period, when the RAC Motor Sport Association Ltd's Belgrave Square offices will be closed, a skeleton staff *will* be available to process priority licence applications. Forms were due to be mailed on Tuesday and anyone who needs an international licence urgently is asked to mark the outside of their envelope with a large 'P' to save the RAC staff searching through all applications. For less important applications, it will be sufficient to attend your first competition of the year with your application form completed and the relevant cheque. You can then hand it to the Secretary of the Meeting and will be allowed to compete.

Paul into Europa for prodsports

Having been involved in both karting and sprinting for a number of years, leading Hayes & Harlington Kart Club member Malcolm Paul is stepping up into circuit racing in 1978 with the ex-John Kent Europa. The Lotus will be campaigned primarily in the BRSCC prodsports series and should go well, being perhaps the quickest racing Europa in the country besides Chris Meek's machine. The 28-year-old Camberley driver has been very successful in European Enduro kart racing and, in the past couple of seasons, has scored several top three placings including a second (1976) and third (1977) in the 24-hours event at St Tropez.

Briefly . . .

● Following his successful return to Clubmans in 1977, former Tricentrol Clubmans champion Bob Glass, will be continuing in the Formula Ford engined class in 1978 with his current Mallock and new Davron engine. Glass finished second in the Oceanair championship last season on his first attempt and will be concentrating on this series. When his Sports 2000 commitments do not clash, Dud Moseley will be driving the Solar Engineering-sponsored car in selected other races, including Tricentrol events.

● Edinburgh racing driver Derek McDonald has opened the McDonald School of Motoring in the city recently. McDonald has raced a Diva GT, Ginetta G4 and a Mallock Mk16 in the past few years. Helping him to run the family business are son Gary, himself a budding racer, and daughter Karen who will run the office.

● Bill Gwynne is the first Welsh driver (native of Sarnau, Nr Cardigan) to win the *Motoring News* Championship since the late Malcolm Gibbs of Tredegar in

Brush Fusegear FF1600

Brush Fusegear retain their involvement with the BRDC and Silverstone in 1978 by sponsoring their new Special Saloon Car Championship. A Hawker Siddeley company whose products comprise a comprehensive range of low-voltage fuse links and associated equipment, Brush have sponsored the circuit's Formula Ford Championship for three years. Their new series is for 1-litre special saloons.

The Championship will be a single-class series catering for the most competitive and well-supported part of national modified saloon racing. The cars, although retaining their exterior shape, are considerably modified in engine, chassis and suspension specifications. Nine qualifying rounds comprise the new 1000cc Championship, with five races at Silvestone, two at Donington Park and one each at Mallory Park and Oulton Park.

Prize money of £120 will be offered in each qualifying round, on a £40, £30, £20, £15, £10, £5 basis to the first six finishers, and the final awards offer £100, £50 and £35 to the first three in the championship. Points will be awarded on a 20-15-12-10-8-6-4-3-2-1 basis to the first ten finishers in each race with 2 points awarded to the driver(s) setting fastest lap.

March 5	Silverstone
March 27	Silverstone
May 1	Silverstone
May 7	Donington
May 20	Oulton Park
August 13	Mallory Park
August 26	Donington
August 28	Silverstone
September 23	Silverstone

BRSCC Libre

The BRSCC *Formule Libre* Championship, run by its Midland Centre in 1977, will go national in 1978 with an eight-round series at Mallory Park, Croft, Silverstone, Castle Combe and Donington. The series is open to all single seater racing cars and open sports cars over 1600cc. It is expected that this series will gain considerable support in 1978 now that the Aurora AFX Formula 1 Championship will be restricted to Formula 1 and 2 cars. Prize money will be £500 per round as follows: 1st—£175, 2nd—£135, 3rd—£70, 4th—£50, 5th—£40, 6th—£30. End of season awards will be 1st—£200, 2nd—£60, 3rd—£40. Points scoring will be 10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1 plus 2 points for fastest lap.

March 12	Mallory Park
March 27	Croft
April 16	Silverstone
May 1	Castle Combe
May 29	Castle Combe
July 7	Donington
October 1	Donington
October 22	Mallory Park

● The Sutton & Cheam MC are holding another of their popular social evenings at the Cheam Sporting Club, Peaches Close, Cheam, Surrey, on Wednesday, December 28 at 8.30pm. The guest personality this time is Martin Holmes who will host a 'picture quiz' competition using part of his large slide collection. There is a nominal fee at the door and everyone is welcome.

Briefly . . .

● Valerie Moores is the new Championship Secretary for the BARC sprint and hillclimb series, administrated by the London & Home Counties Centre. Registrations are free this year so apply now to Val at 5 Tredenham Close, Farnborough, Hants. Tel: Farnborough 45112.

● Birmingham University MC will again run their Welsh Mermaid Rally on the night of February 18/19. It will be the second round of the BTRDA Silver Star series and is also a counter in the WAMC championship. The event starts at Knighton and finishes at Newtown and covers a 190-mile route. Entries are available now from John Burkill, 22 Richmond Court, Tugford Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham B29 4PN.

● Alive and well and circulating in partyland at the weekend was Jeremy Turner, who is recovering well from his very unpleasant FF2000 shunt at Thruxton. Turner has already laid plans for a further season in the category and hopes to be testing his new mount—if his leg and arm are out of plaster—by the middle of January.

● Midland Manor MC's Severn Stages Rally will be on February 12 with sponsorship provided by Alcan Transport Services. Based on Llandrindod Wells the event offers 60 miles of competition in 10 stages for a £40 entry fee. Regs are available from Keith Udy, Rosebank, Crossway Green, Stourport-on-Severn, Worcs.

● Dennis Pollington and Dave Thomas in their Bowman's of Bebington RS2000 are the 1977 Welsh Road Rally Champions, their club—North Wales CC—also taking the Welsh Club competition. Thomas chalks up the stage/road double, having been first co-driver in 1975 a feat last achieved by Colin Mack . . . of North Wales CC!



Juliette Slaughter has won the British Women Racing Drivers Club's Embassy Trophy, awarded for the best performance in the season's racing. Londoner Juliette scored her 96 points in the Renault Elf 5TS Challenge, prodsaloon and special saloon events (in her Richmond Motor Centre 5TS) and in one Sports 2000 event and not on the Chiswick High Road as some wag suggested! This is only her second full year of racing and she plans a comprehensive programme for next season. The Goodwin Trophy, for the best ten performances in one championship was won by Divina Galica, who finished second in the Soda-Stream Sports 2000 series; Juliette was runner-up.

Goodwin Trophy: 1, Divina Galica, 61½; 2, Juliette Slaughter, 55½; 3, Judy Andreason, 48; 4, Sue Tucker-Peake, 16; 5, Wendy Markey, 9; 6, Viv West, 8.

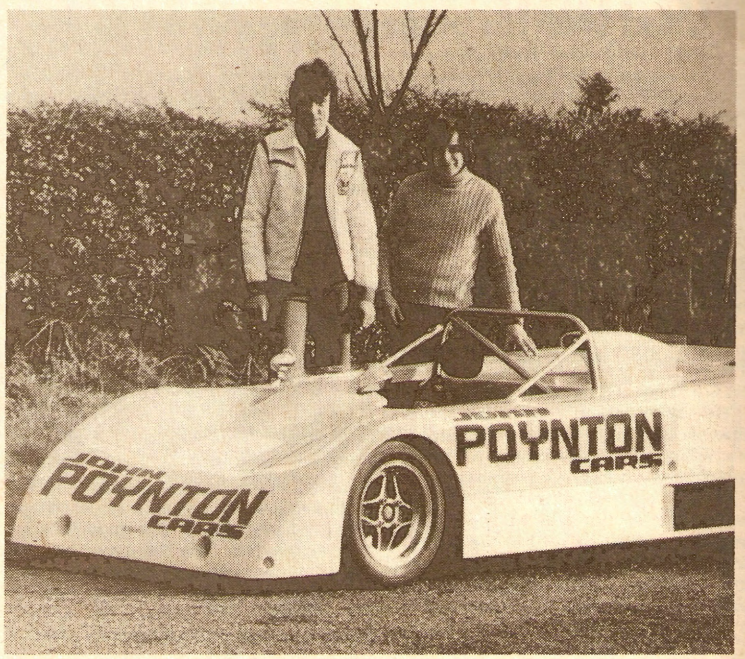
Embassy Trophy: 1, Slaughter, 95; 2, Andreason, 87½; 3, Galica, 86½; 4, West, 66; 5, Lorina Boughton, 38½; 6, Margaret McEwen-King, 25½.

Newcomers Trophy: 1, McEwen-King, 25½.

Helen Spence Trophy: 1, McEwen-King, 25½; 2, Jenny Vowden, 10; 3, Linda Elmes, 4½.

Kart championship: 1, Margaret Dell, 49½; 2, Susan Cox, 26½; 3, Judy Sharrock, 11.

Moseley to Sports 2000



Dud Moseley, the Leicestershire-based greetings card designer who has reigned supreme in clubmans racing this year, is graduating to Sports 2000 for 1978. Having won both the Oceanair and Tricentrol championships this season with the A. H. Wilson-supported Mallock U2 Mk18BX, he has gained backing from John Poynton Cars of Thringstone for next year. Moseley has already taken delivery of a new Lola T492 which will be powered by a Davron engine once again. Although the successful Mallock is still for sale Poynton (left) has financed the Lola which will carry his colours throughout the season. Moseley (right) is determined to continue his phenomenal success and to make John Poynton Cars' first foray into motor racing a memorable one.

● The WAMC are running an entirely new autotest event in 1978 which should attract both experts and novices. Sponsored by the Auto Palace Group of Rhyl, Llandrindod Wells and Oswestry, the North v South Autotests will be run in three parts—one in North Wales, one in the South and the final in Oswestry. This is a team event only and is open to all member clubs of the Welsh Association. All interested teams should contact Jack Romain by February 1978 so that regs may be sent. Jack can be reached at Torrisholme, 17 The Avenue, Woodland Park, Prestatyn, Clwyd. Tel: 074-56 4265.

● John Brown Wheels, the fast-expanding motor accessory chain whose headquarters are in Warwick, have recently been appointed distributors for Momo steering wheels. The impressive range from Italy are of excellent quality although, naturally, this tends to reflect in the price. Momo wheels are even specified for the Ferrari F1 team so they must be good!

● A reminder to readers that the RAC Motor Sport Division will be closed for the Christmas holidays from Friday, December 23 until 9.30am on Tuesday, January 3, 1978.

● Following his first full season of motor racing in 1977, 23-year-old Londoner Charlie Kirby will be continuing in Clubmans Formula Ford in 1978, with his Davron-prepared Mallock. His car, which was originally owned by Ralt F3 driver Don Farthing, is currently being prepared for the Oceanair championship. A consortium of local businesses will continue to sponsor Kirby, including Vauxhall dealers Penfold Limited, R. Richards and Son and Kirby Auto Services of Lewisham.

● Following a recommendation from the recent Open Days, the RAC Race Committee has re-affirmed its decision to allow limited-slip differentials on all production saloon cars racing in 1978.

● The final round of the Ford-sponsored British FF1600 championship will not now be held at Brands Hatch. The qualifying event has now been moved to Donington although both the organisers (the BRSCC) and the date (October 1) remain the same.

● This year's F1300 champion, Graham Kay, is likely to be seen in clubmans 'B' sports next season, as the move up requires simply an engine change for his Mallock Mk18.

● Bookings for the FF2000 dinner/dance at the Centre Hotel, Heathrow, on January 14 are going very well. Such is the demand that, if you don't get in touch with organiser Jane Hartop by January 7, she will charge you an extra 50p on top of the £8.50 single or £16 double price. You can find Jane on 01-405 7841 (day) or 05827 3032 (evenings).

● SKF, sponsors of one of the clubmans championships this year, have pulled out of all their motorsport involvements. This leaves the MCD clubmans series unsupported.

● The Technical Committee of the RAC has decided that for 1978 modsports, clubmans and special saloon cars must retain head restraints if they are part of the original seat. Applications to other groups may be phased in gradually.

● Rumour hath it that Dave Lee Travis will be a guest of honour at the Special Saloon Register's dinner at the Rugby Post House on February 11.

● Chris Elmes and Chris Elmes (no, that's not a misprint—they're married you see) appear to be leaving the 750 Formula that they have so enthusiastically supported in recent years. Husband Elmes is currently investigating the possibilities of emigration for the couple, so their unique, left-hand drive Silver Y is likely to be for sale.

Evans is the man

The 1977 Isle of Man Rally championship remained in doubt right to the end and, by finishing second in Manx Autosport's Winter Rally, the final round, on December 10/11, Bill Evans/David Jones (Escort RS1600) won both drivers' and navigators' divisions of the championship for the first time ever.

The rally was won by Tony Higgins/Mike Castle (Escort RS2000) by 2min 24secs, and in third place, the only driver/navigator combination who could have taken the title, reigning Manx champion driver Glenn Leece and Bill Peters (Mexico). They finished 37secs in arrears of the second place crew and new Manx champions.

Before this final round, the drivers' title was between Evans and Leece. 38 and 37 points respectively with navigators Jones and Peters on similar points.

A further four behind on 33 in the navigators' section was Martin Wasley, and in an effort to get his name on the trophy for the fifth time he had teamed up with Dave Luton. The last time this pair teamed up they won, but it wasn't to be on this occasion.

First they were baulked by a police vehicle which pottered along at a mere 10mph, losing them 240 points at the next control, and finally the gearbox on their Mexico cried enough.

Navigation was none-too-hard, the rally basically being a drivers' rally, with eight selectives contributing most of the penalty marks. However, the organisers hadn't forgotten the navigators and the sting-in-the-tail for them at the end of the eighth selective (Eairy Kelly to St. Runis) was the crossover point of four references at either corners of the island, several crews being heavily penalised at the Baldwin control, including the new champions, Evans/Jones who dropped over two minutes.

A good, well-organised rally, and despite the police having the route beforehand, one wonders, in view of police activity at this and previous rallies, just how secure Manx night rallying is (the Manx Trophy Rally excepted). Only time will tell!

1. T. Higgins/M. H. Castle (Ford Escort RS2000), 1287 marks lost; 2, W. Evans/D. Jones (Ford Escort RS1600), 1431; 3, G. Leece/B. Peters (1.6 Ford Escort Mexico), 1468; 4, W. K. Leece/R. Sweetman (Datsun), 1634; 5, G. Leece/M. Quine (Ford Escort RS1.6), 1744; 6, I. Bradshaw/N. Quayle (Vauxhall Chevette), 2170. **Best novice:** G. Ellison/G. Clague (1.6 Ford Escort Mexico), 2508.

Last ditch effort

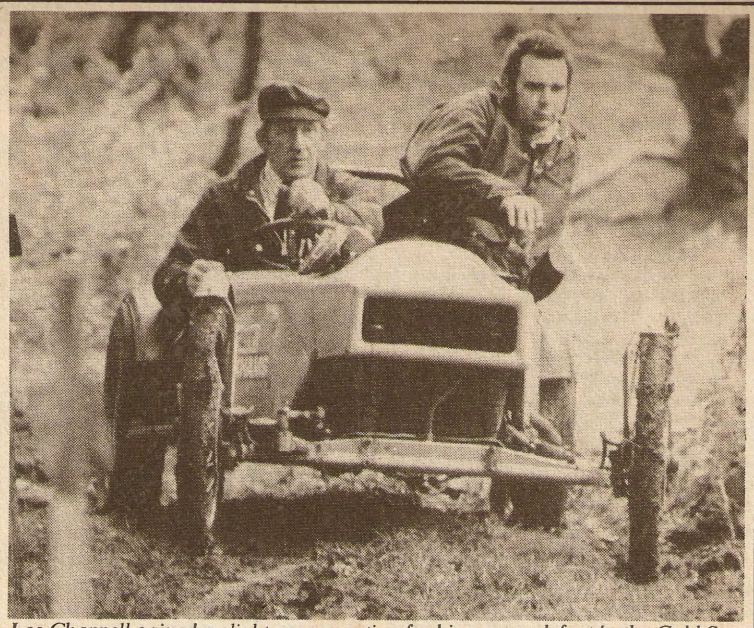
Eleven minutes spent in a ditch proved very costly for Roger Powley and Brian Goff on the Keymor MC's Snowplough Rally last Saturday night. Instead of finishing well ahead of the field they had to settle for third in their Capri.

Winners of the event, the first run by the club at closed co-promoted level, were Peter O'Neill and Andrew Kay (Viva GT) who dropped 30m 38s on the 130 mile route in Cheshire. They won by 35secs from Tony Walker and David Reid (Escort).

On the two selectives Powley and Goff were quickest on the first by 37secs with Walker and Reid fastest on the second by one second from Powley.

1, Peter O'Neill/Andrew Kay (Viva GT), 30m 38s; 2, Tony Walker/David Reid (Escort), 31m 13s; 3, Roger Powley/Brian Goff (Capri), 31m 34s; 4, Geoff Whittaker/John Edginton (Escort), 36m 24s; 5, John Ledger/Alan Howells (Escort), 37m 2s; 6, Elwyn Vaughan/Kevin Jones (Escort TC), 37m 56s.

Semi-experts: Philip Long/Geoff Edwards (Escort), 45m 20s. **Novices:** Arthur Fletcher/Jeff Bale (Mini), 48m 45s.



Lee Chappell gained a slight compensation for his narrow defeat in the Gold Star Trial when he beat a good field to win the J. B. Taylor Trial at the old Boxley Warren site last Sunday. Organised by the Kentish Border Club the Trial comprised two morning rounds of eight hills with a further seven after the break.

Unfortunately the hills had been laid out in dry weather the previous day but overnight rain meant that all had to be modified before the start which was amazingly only 15 minutes late. Chappell took advantage of a good starting position and by lunchtime had a lead of ten points over fellow Ibex driver Chris Highwood, being followed at a distance by John Hopkins and Gordon Jackson (above).

While Highwood narrowed the gap by three points in the afternoon the leading positions were maintained and the top four were well ahead of Cyril Gamblen by the finish. Farther down the field Mike Waite carried off the novice award while Paul Liddiard won the combined 1300cc and 950/750 classes with a creditable score of 110. He finished ahead of many of the 23 starters.

In fact the conditions proved so slippery that the main trouble many of the drivers had was entering and leaving the car-park. But with the festive season almost upon them it all made for a little added merriment. One of the few sad competitors was Tony Mitchem whose flywheel exploded.

1, Lee Chappell/Lindsay Chappell (Ibex), 48pts; 2, Chris Highwood/Gavin McHale (Ibex), 55; 3, John Hopkins/Peter Mitchem (Ibex), 64; 4, Gordon Jackson/Tony le Gras (Ibex), 68; 5, Cyril Gamblen/Celia Gamblen (Pilgrim), 90.

Rods ahead after first round

In the first round of the Rallycross versus Hot Rods challenge at Wimbledon on December 10, the Rods took the lead with 155 points to 113. It was rallycrosser Trevor Reeves, however, who stole the show as he won all of his four races and completely dominated the meeting with his 1500cc Mini.

In the first heat John Greasley's Porsche led away, but after two laps he was gently nudged off into the safety posts leaving Trevor Reeves to win. In the second heat George Polley raced to a good win after overtaking Colin Richards's spectacular sideways Chevette.

In heat three, Bryan Wright led from the flag to the finish although Mick Collard overtook Peter Vaughan (Mini) just before the chequered flag. Heat four was another Trevor Reeves benefit with another superb drive, his Mini leaving all the red-top Hot Rods behind and all the other Rallycrossers to bring up the rear. The Hot Rod of Chris Gautrey won heat five.

The next race was between Reeves, Polley, Collard and Vaughan complete with a rolling start and it was again Reeves who beat the star men at their own game, the Mini cornering as if on rails.

The final round saw Colin Facey closing in on Reeves as they both tried to find a way past the Saab of Will Gollop. This they did and, with George Polley retiring, the finishing order was Reeves, Facey, Nigel, Murphy and Joe Tandy fourth.

Close fight despite bad weather

Despite thick fog on all the roads in North Yorkshire used by competitors on the De Lacy MC Seven Dales Rally last Saturday night, less than a minute separated the first two crews.

Resurrected after a break of six years, the 150-mile event attracted 60 crews and, seeded at No 1 following two recent wins and a couple of other good places, the Driffield crew of Peter Smith and Jeremy Matthew more than justified their seeding by leading all night in their Kadett.

Their main rival all night was John Gill, navigated by Nigel Harris in an Avenger. Although this crew had to play second fiddle on the five selectives of which Smith was fastest on the first two, they managed to stay ahead of Bob Bean who had brought along Adrian Dixon who knew the area. Bean (RS 1600) set best time on the fourth and fifth selectives, the third being cleaned by several of the front runners.

In the conditions it was local knowledge that counted and the two leaders had the edge over Bean. The only ford on the event, at Caydale, was as usual dammed up by spectators and was very deep but despite this only one crew drowned out.

1, Peter Smith/Jeremy Matthew (Kadett), 4532 penalties; 2, John Gill/Nigel Harris (Avenger), 4582 pens; 3, Bob Bean/Adrian Dixon (RS 1600), 4650 pens; 4, C Haykin/A. Banks (Firenza), 4934 pens; 5, John Lane/J. Burton (Viva), 4961 pens; 6, G. Burton/A Hill (Firenza), 5028 pens.

Novices: K. Allenby/A. Chandler (RS 2000), 5195 pens; **Best De Lacy:** N. Little/R. Lodge (Imp), 6F 8366 pens.

Consistent run brings success

Seven selectives, five in the first half and two in the second were the meat of last Saturday night's Hall Trophy Rally run by Clitheroe & District MC in Lancashire and North Yorkshire. Seventy-seven crews tackled the 180-mile journey and winners Ian Harrison/Peter Ainsworth, (Ascona) owed their success to consistency. They were quickest over the first selective and this set the seal on their effort for they finished 1min 9secs ahead of second placed Bernard Griffin/Andy Milner (Mini).

Sponsored by Mini Sport of Padiham, the event's course car, a Mini in Group 1 form, was piloted round part of the course by Cyril Bolton and only missed one loop when it had brake troubles.

Harrison and Ainsworth, in their Speed Spares of Burnley car, expected to have strong competition from Malcolm Byrom and Jeff Hignett but they had a slow start and although they motored to some purpose in the second half they still finished over 4mins down in third place. They did not manage fastest time on any of the selectives the honours going, in order, to Steve and Eric Binns, Ben Figg/Mike Schofield, Griffin and Milner (2), and Martin Oglesby.

1, Ian Harrison/Pete Ainsworth (Ascona), 103m 13s; 2, Bernard Griffin/Andy Milner (Mini), 104m 32s; 3, Malcolm Byrom/Jeff Hignett (RS 2000), 107m 16s; 4, Clive Sisson/Ken Savage (Kadett), 109m 24s; 5, Derek Ormerod/Brian Crowder (Escort TC), 110m 20s; 6, Steve and Eric Binns (Mexico), 111m 13s.

Semi-experts: Geoff Ainsworth/John Meadows (Mexico), 115m 39s. **Novices:** Roger Lightfoot/Pete Wilde (RS1600), 129m 49s.

Briefly . . .

● Jim Loveday (Midget) has become the first man to win the BTRDA Production Car Trial Championship in a sports car for about 20 years. He won the title after a tie break with Lancashire's Barrie Parker (Mini). With Minis and Imps having dominated the scene for too long it's a welcome thought that next year an Opel may be driven by one of the leading contenders in recent years who will be hammering his way round!

● The 1977 ACSMC sprint championship has been won overall by Colin Spence in his RS2000. The Oxford-based Scot has had another superb season due not only to his considerable skill behind the wheel but also to his excellent preparation. Class winners are as follows: Clive Smith (Capri); Robin Funnell (Escort); Bob Linwood (TVR); Lawrence Cutler (Sprite); Tim Moores (Gryphon); while Linda Elmes (Lotus 41C) and Alan Humphries (Dulon) shared the single-seaters' class.

● Only a matter of hours after effecting repairs to the damage caused in their accident on the Britvic Rally, Croydon & DMC members Ian Monro/Tony Clark had another major 'off' on the Witsend! Their Green & Stone of Chelsea-backed Viva was written off in a spectacular high speed spin and roll and due to lack of finance this will cause their temporary withdrawal from rallying unless another HB Viva shell can be located cheaply.

● Allrounders Champion for the second year in the BTRDA is Phil Darbyshire from Bromsgrove who retains the Peter Cooper Trophy. Malcolm Oxborrow, with whom Darbyshire competes regularly in rallies, finished second and takes the Darbyshire Trophy back to Halesowen while the Harrow CC expert Peter Cox wins the Margot Young Trophy for third spot.

BRANDS HATCH

Christmas Car Races

Once again the BARC move into Brands Hatch to organise the traditional 'Christmas Car Races' meeting, although this year it will be staged on Tuesday, December 27, with practice starting at 9.30am and racing proper from 12.30pm. Perhaps the most interesting event on the six-race programme is the ShellSport Escort Sport race which features a dozen of the highest-scoring drivers in the ShellSport Gold Star Award scheme. These include local men Paul Sleeman, John Homewood and Nick Whiting, mod-sports drivers Jonathan Palmer and John Kirk and Mini-expert Peter Baldwin. Between them they have carried off 32 major British championships so close racing is assured.

Kent Messenger FF1600 champion, Tony Halliwell, makes his FF2000 debut in the Jack Brabham Trophy race which also boasts Mike Thompson, Ian Taylor and many others in the ranks competing for the coveted prize—a helmet worn by the former World Champion. David McClelland heads the FF1600 entries where his main opposition should come from Sleeman while Holland's Kees van der Grint will be coming over for an outing in a Wimhurst.

The immaculate Park Avenue Motors Escort-BDG of Eddie Punt will have to contend with the ubiquitous Homewood/Imp combination in the special saloon thrash although Ginger Marshall should appear in his Imp-engined Mini Countryman if testing problems have been overcome successfully. Production saloons are catered for too, with Mike Smith's spectacular Capri almost certain to be a contender for a win if he can fend off the BMW of Graham Miles.

The final race on the programme is for *Formule Libre* and, for the third time in the afternoon, Gillingham-based Paul Sleeman will take to the grid in a predominantly Formula Ford entry, competing for the 'Jack Frost' Trophy. This is your last chance to go racing at Brands in 1977 and, as the meeting finishes relatively early, you can still be home in time for a full evening's entertainment.

New Year Rallycross

Rallycross returns to Brands Hatch—where it all began in 1963—for its 1978 season opener. Not only does it feature a rallycross event, though, but also the return match between the rallycross boys and the Spedeworth Hot Rodders.

For rallycross drivers, the meeting will be a vital practice session for the Castrol/BTRDA qualifier to be held later in the month at Brands while the Spedeworth men will be going all out for a double—they narrowly defeated their rivals at Wimbledon a couple of weeks back despite the absence of World Champions Barry Lee.

Most of Britain's top rallycross stars will be competing in both events and they are headed by the current RAC Champion Trevor Hopkins and the top Castrol/BTRDA runner of 1977, Trevor Reeves who, incidentally, won the Wimbledon challenge meeting outright in one of his Minis. Graham Hathaway and Bruce Rushton also field their Escorts while the Hot Rod team, in addition to Lee, features Mick Collard, Bryan Wright and Mickey Hall, all Ford-mounted.

The usual fairground and refreshment facilities will be available and the BRSCC-promoted meeting gets under way with practice from 9am and racing starting at 11.30am. The Rallycross v Hot Rod challenge commences at 3pm.

Briefly . . .

● The Haldon MC will promote a restricted permit road rally on January 21/22 which is a qualifying round of the ASWMC championship. Any members of affiliated clubs may enter and regs are available now from Nick Borst-Smith, The Nobody Inn, Doddiscombsleigh, near Exeter. Tel: Christow 52394. The rally has attracted generous sponsorship from Tyreservices GB (with discounts to participants) and will be known as the Monte Rally.

● Targa timing will be used by Torbay MC for their Olympia Rally on Jan 7/8 which will be a 150 miler in South Devon and South Hams. Organisers say only one mile will be unmetalled and the start and finish will be in Torbay. Mrs A. Hilton, 40 Corsham Road, Paignton, can accept 70 entries at £7.50.

● Crews contesting the Redditch & District CC Brooklyn Valkyrie Rally on January 21/22 will have an hour to plot before the start of the 150 mile route. Selectives will be included and the entry is £9 for the first 100. Regs from Chris Handy, 7 Pegasus Walk, Selly Oak, Birmingham, telephone 021-472 8752.

● First round of the BTRDA Silver Star Rally Championship next year is the West Essex CC Karebrand Rally on January 7/8. The club is offering a 150 mile event and the start will be at Downham Market. The event is also a round of the AEMC and LCMC series. There are still a few vacancies in the 90 limit entry list and Chris Towers of 3 Millars Close, South Woodham Ferrers, Chelmsford has the details. Tel: 0245-321255.

● Some of the best known roads over Romney Marshes and Wallend will be included in the 125 mile route planned by SWL MC for their Marsh Mist Rally on Jan 21/22 in Kent and plot and bash will be used some of the time. Madaleen Jenner, of Senlac House, 32 Duke Road, St Leonards on Sea, Sussex (Tel: 0424 439954) has the regs.

● Vale of Cothi MC get the Welsh Road Rally Championship under way on January 14/15 with their Llandello Service Station Snowball Rally. It will be a 170 miler and there will be two tie deciding selectives. Huw Beynon of 3 Fairoak, Wernoleu, Ammanford, Dyfed, has the regs, telephone Ammanford 3936.

RAC

Motor Sport Division Official announcement

No. 5 — 1977

1. This form of Official Announcement is used to formally advise of rule changes and amendments to RAC Motor Sporting publications for 1978.
2. Rule changes published in Official Announcements 1, 2, 3 and 4 are valid.
3. **Judicial:** There will be a number of changes in judicial rules that will appear in the Supplement to RAC Motor Sport Regulations.

4. **RAC Helmet Stickers**
Competitors and scrutineers are reminded that as from January 1st, 1978, all crash helmets used in motor sport must bear an RAC helmet sticker. Code A stickers cover BS 2495:1960 and Snell 1970, and because testing to these standards was discontinued earlier this year, these will always be '1978' irrespective of the year of inspection and attachment of the sticker. BS 2495:1977 and Snell 1975 helmets will have Code B stickers and those applied by scrutineers (25p each) will bear the current year date while those purchased in bulk by manufacturers or importers will have a date one year in advance of purchase. Competitors should contact their nearest listed RAC Scrutineer, or club Secretary, who will advise him of local arrangements for certification of helmets prior to January 1st. Clubs running events in the early part of January could arrange with an RAC Scrutineer to be available with helmet stickers at scrutineering of their event.

5. **British Championships:**
a) The British Sprint Championship will be contested at National status events.
b) The awarding of points in the British Autocross Championship goes to 15th place in General Classification.
c) The Hillclimb Leaders Championship is sponsored by Haynes Publishing under the title "British Haynes Leaders Championship".
d) Competitors in all British Championships, with the exception of the Sedan Products Open Rally Championship and the Castrol/Autosport British Rally Championship, must complete registration 7 days prior to the first event in which they expect to score points. Registration forms for all championships are now available.

6. **Technical Regulations or Variations:** In addition to those regulations already advised in previous Official Announcements, the following is a summary of technical changes included in the new RAC Technical Manual:

Clubmans Sports
New 1700cc engine regulations for Class A.

Production Saloons
All now to comply with Production Car Specification Sheets.

Ford Escort
High Rate Front Springs withdrawn.

Special Saloons
New requirements for fireproof bulkhead.

Ford 1600/2000
Replacement Distributors allowed. New method of Controlling Compression Ratio.

Hill Climbs & Sprints
Regulations removed from Motor Sport Regulations R38(ii) and reproduced in Technical Manual, classes modified as per Committee requirements.

Production Car Trials
Regulations removed from Motor Sport Regulations T41 and reproduced in Technical Manual, classes modified as per Committee requirements.

Autocross
Regulations removed from Motor Sport Regulations R38(i) and reproduced in Technical Manual.

Rallycross
The following is the proposed list of 'stock block' engines to be mandatory for Rallycross from **1st January 1979.** Comments in respect of the list must be made to the Division not later than **31st January 1978.**

ENGINES
The cylinder block must be derived or evolved from the original model as homologated (lapsed or otherwise) and mounted in the position as homologated. Crankshaft rotation must be as original. Engine/Chassis combinations from different sources of manufacture are prohibited. The following are accepted as Cylinder block/Chassis combinations:

Vehicle	Engine
Minis (Mk 1, 2, 3 and Clubman)	Cooper 'S' 970, 1071, 1275, Mini 850, 998, 1275GT, Allegro 1275.
Escorts (Mk 1 and 2)	Twin Cam 1558, SOHC 1600/2000, BDA (Iron or Alloy), Cosworth FVA/FVC/BDG, cross flow and non cross flow 1100/1300/1600, Mexico. (Not Hart 420R etc.)
VW Beetle	1200/1300/1500/1600 etc, Proprietary cylinder barrels if supplied for and fitted to homologated crankcase. (Not type 411, 412 or Porsche.)
Saab 99	Dolomite Sprint block, as basis for the original Saab unit, is acceptable.
Chevette	1256 and slant 4 cyls including 1800 and 2300 (not Jensen-Healey).
Porsche 911	Capacity up to 2700cc (dual ignition prohibited).

Entrants of non listed vehicles/engines may be required to produce proof of homologation as Stock Block.
All other engine modifications are unrestricted.

Cross Country & 4WD
Safety Roll-over bars become mandatory in timed events with effect from 1st June 1978.

Production Saloon Cars & Production Sports Cars
New and more detailed lists of tyres approved by RAC and Tyre Manufacturers Committee.

7. **RAC Motor Sport Technical Manual**
The new RAC Motor Sport Technical Manual will include the following 1978 regulations:
Extracts from Appendix 'J'; Tyre Lists; Formula and Register Directory; RAC Vehicle Regulations and the following formulae: Monoposto Formula; Formula 4; Reliant 750; Formula 1300; Clubmans Sports; Production Saloon Cars; Renault 5; Ford Escort; BL Mini 850, 1000, 1275GT; Production Sports Cars; Touring Cars; Modified Sports Cars; Classic Saloon Cars; Special Saloon Cars; Sports 2000; Hill Climb and Sprint Cars; National Trials Cars Formula; 750 Motor Club Trials Formula; Production Car Trials; Autocross, Rallycross Cars; Classic Reliability Trials; Cross Country and 4WD; Formulae: Ford 1600; Ford 2000; Group 8; Atlantic; Super Vee. Also: Definitions, Dimensions and Safety Requirements.

British events

Date	Venue	Event	Status	Club	Start	Details
Dec 26	Brunel University, (MR176/058825)	Autotest	CP	Harrow CC	11.00	Christmas Autotests
Dec 27	Brands Hatch, nr Fawkham, Kent	Race Meeting	R	BARC	12.30	Special saloons, FF1600, Formule Libre, FF2000, ShellSport Escorts, production saloons
Dec 27	Stanton	Autocross	R	Cramlington & DMC	13.00	—
Jan 2	Mynydd Eppynt	Rally	R	Port Talbot MC	09.00	Virgo Galaxy Eppynt Rally
Jan 2	Brands Hatch, nr Fawkham, Kent	Rallycross	R	BRSCC	11.30	—

Secretaries of the Meeting are requested to send details of all forthcoming events to Miss Linda McRae, Autosport Editorial, Haymarket Publishing, 76 Dean Street, London W1A 1BU



It's not very often you see a Renault off the road.

Renault's reputation for reliability is becoming as strong on the track as it is on the road.

For the second year running the Renault Elf V6 powered Martini has won the European Formula 2 Championship.

And for good measure we also took third place.

So take a good look, not only is it one of the few times you'll see a Renault off the road.

It's also one of the few times you'll be seeing a Renault that's uncomfortable, cramped and expensive to run.

RENAULT

elf