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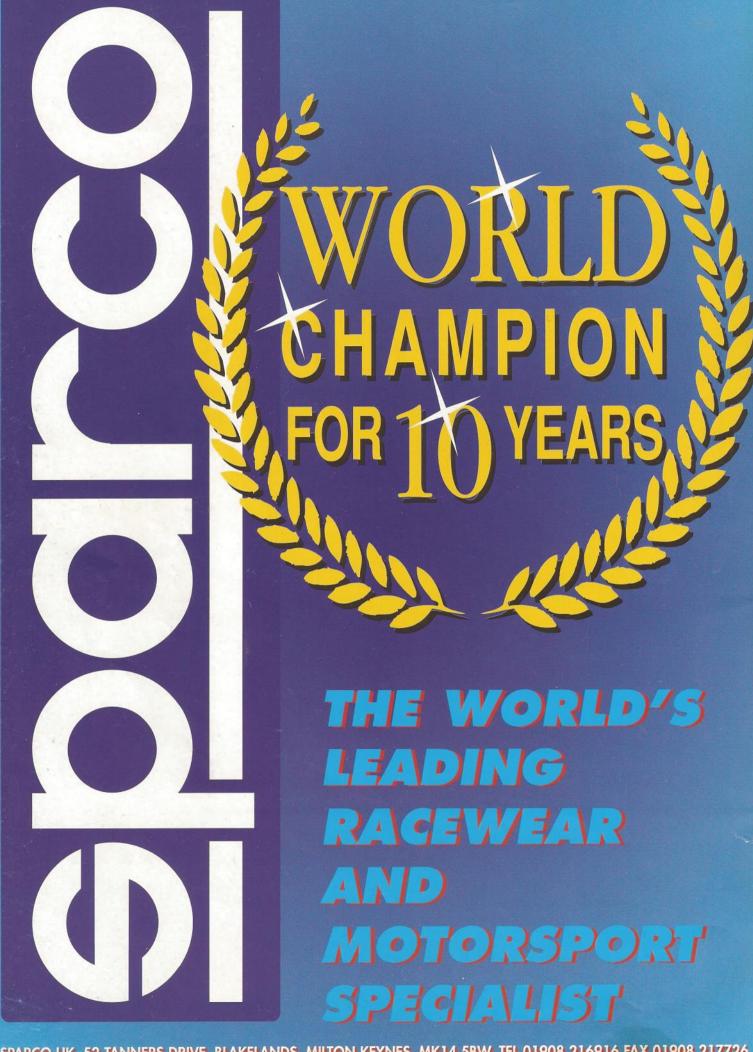
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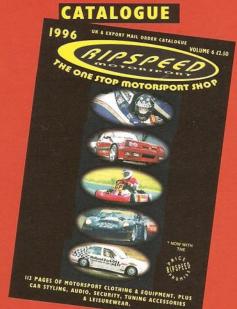
Stewart and Ford together again for Grand Prix assault







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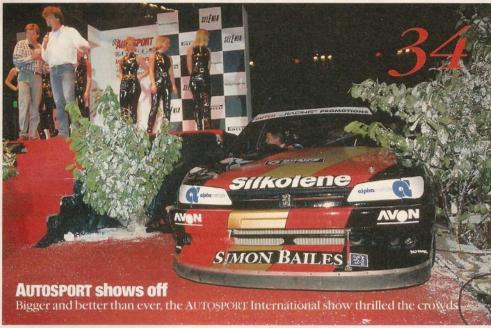
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# AUTOSPORT



# **Mister Motivated**

Tim Harvey looks ahead to better days with his new team



## **Herbert's new hot seat**

It took a while coming, but Johnny Herbert has landed a plum drive with Sauber. Can he make the most of it?





# Lister's footballing fast track

Newcastle United is moving from the turf of St James to the track at Le Mans with Lister. Can the Toon Army clinch the Premiership and the 24 Hours?

COVER Main cover photo: Press Association



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# Stewart back with £100m Ford push

THREE TIME WORLD CHAMPION JACKIE STEWART'S RETURN TO THE F1 ARENA SIGNALS THE BIGGEST EVER INVESTMENT IN FORMULA 1 FROM FORD. TONY DODGINS REPORTS

ord is to make the biggest push for Grand Prix success in its history in an alliance with a new team set up by Jackie Stewart. The outfit will launch the triple World Champion back into Formula 1 competition more than two decades after his retirement as a driver.

Stewart's return to Grand Prix racing was confirmed in a joint announcement at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit and at AUTOSPORT International at Birmingham's NEC.

Stewart Grand Prix will enter the fray in 1997 in an exclusive partnership with the Ford Motor Company which will see the company invest upwards of £100 million over five years.

The deal is a marked departure from Ford's F1 past, when its commitment to the sport was seen to be at arm's length. This was no better illustrated than when Michael Schumacher won the world championship with a Benetton-Ford in 1994 and Benetton switched to Renault the following season.

Ford's motorsport direction seemed to be in some doubt at that time. There was a big question mark over whether the blue oval would continue in F1 and the two-year agreement it signed with Sauber seemed a halfway house.

But Stewart was quick to emphasise the close involvement of Ford with his new team, one which he said will see a team and its engine supplier more closely tied than at any time in Grand Prix history.

'This announcement will put an end to speculation concerning Ford's commitment to F1,' Stewart said. 'Ford is committed to raising the level of its involvement in the sport, and that commitment will be for the long term.'

The new team will be a welcome high-profile, high-budget addition to the Formula 1 grid, and F1 boss Bernie Ecclestone has given it his approval. Tknow that Jackie Stewart will conduct his race team in the same professional way that he did as three times world champion and in his contacts with the numerous international companies that he is involved with on a worldwide basis.'

The identity of the team's technical

director has not been revealed, but it is expected to be Arrows designer Alan Jenkins, who is thought to have tendered his resignation to Jackie Oliver's company, which is based just a stone's throw from the Paul Stewart Racing facility in Milton Keynes, England. Stewart himself will be chairman of the new team, with son Paul as managing director.

Asked whether this was a means of securing 'a good job for the boy,' Stewart replied: 'This is not Jackie Stewart having a play, the Ford family is too big for that. This is probably the most challenging endeavour I have ever taken on. It has been planned for some time and has come together well with exclusive use of an engine.

This is not Jackie Stewart having a play... This is the most challenging endeavour I have ever taken on

'The car will be known as a Stewart-Ford, it will be Scottish blue and I think the way we go about our business will break new ground.

'The single most important element is the financial structure. The companies involved will be multinational and we will be "networking" – using large companies which need each other.'

Stewart, who nurtured and extended an impressive line-up of business contacts both during and since his driving career, estimated the 'start-up' cost in 1996 will be around £15 million, rising to £30 million per annum when racing begins, excluding engines.

The Scot, who won world championships in 1969, '71 and '73 with Ford power, said the driver line-up will probably not become a focus until July or August. But it is a

good bet that German Sauber driver Heinz-Harald Frentzen, who has strong links with Ford, will be high on the wanted list.

Paul Stewart indicated it would also be fitting if a driver who had come up through the PSR 'staircase of talent' in the junior formulae could also be included in the plans.

PSR's most successful discoveries include McLaren's new signing David Coulthard and test driver Jan Magnussen, Indycar ace Gil de Ferran, former Ford and now Volvo British touring car man Kelvin Burt, plus Mercedes touring car star Dario Franchitti.

Contrary to rumours that the team might use Bridgestone tyres, Jackie Stewart said he expected the cars to be fitted with Goodyears.

The Stewarts will use PSR's premises initially, sub-contracting most of the manufacturing process, before moving to a new purposebuilt factory in 1998.

Jackie Stewart was not slow to express how fortunate and privileged he felt to be able to come in as a manufacturer's works team, the first team to do so since Ligier with Matra in 1976.

'Few people realise how much Ford had to do with Benetton's championship in 1994,' he added. 'Tve been under contract for 31 years. I know Ford's corridors, its senior management, and how it does business. But there are no delusions of grandeur on either side. It will take time and that's why the involvement is for five years. We thank Ford for their confidence, but we cannot deliver in five minutes.'

In the meantime, Ford has reaffirmed its commitment to Sauber this year. The Stewarts have also visited Sauber's factory at Hinwil, Switzerland, and say the door is open for co-operation between the teams.

Ford's engine supply plans for 1997 beyond the Stewart team are unclear, and a spokesman said it is possible that Sauber could be supplied on a customer basis with reduced-specification V10s.

Ford's full-house V10 is already revving to 16,000rpm, despite being designed for just 15,500rpm, and will run for the first time in the new Sauber C15 next week.

See Fifth Column, page 21





# **Honda denies plans** for F1 return in '97

Honda has officially denied reports that it will return to Formula 1 in 1997 - but the Japanese company could enter the World Championship in 1998 to mark its 50th anniversary.

Honda has not yet decided what form any possible F1 comeback might take, but boss Nobuhiko Kawamoto has talked many times about his desire to return.

Honda has admitted to being in contact with some top F1 teams since its withdrawal at the end of 1992. It will not say which ones, but it is not difficult to imagine all leading Grand Prix teams being interested in the potential of a fully-funded Honda works engine. And some Japanese say they would not be surprised if Honda had leaked the latest information to gauge the public reaction.

Although Honda engineers have been working after-hours on an F1 chassis, sources in Japan suggest that the company - which won 69 Grands Prix with Williams and McLaren in the '80s and early '90s – is unlikely to base a return on a full Honda works effort, building both car and engine. It would be more

likely to supply engines to a team. This could be the Japanese Dome outfit, which will embark on a test programme this year with the Mugen Honda engine with a view to an F1 race debut in 1997, taking over the Mugen deal from Ligier.

But although Dome boss Minoru Hayashi wants to establish a 100% Japanese team, having criticised previous Japanese attempts like Footwork and Leyton House for their reliance on European technology, Kawamoto is thought to be less keen on the idea. Sources suggest that if Honda returns, it will be solely as an engine supplier.

Economic conditions also now appear to be in favour of a Honda return. When it quit F1 in '92, its road car sales had hit a slump. But now, with the help of its Minivan, they are on the up again.

However, even if a decision was

taken today to return as soon as possible, 1997 would be extremely difficult logistically, and '98 is seen as much more likely.

Meanwhile, Dome has almost finished its first monocoque, which is due to be tested for the first time at the end of February.



# **Jabouille axed as Peugeot boss**

Ukyo Katayama is almost certain of retaining his place in the Tyrrellregion of US\$6 million - and is in need of substantial funds. Yamaha team alongside Finn Mika

Katayama is thought to bring Salo this season. Sources suggest that the 31-yearwith him backing from Japanese old Japanese, who will be going cigarette brand Mild Seven worth into his fourth consecutive season around US\$5 million. at Tyrrell, is on the verge of signing Formula 3000

Katayama set to retain Tyrrell seat

confirmed in the next week or so. After a disappointing time in 1995, when he was overshadowed by debutant Salo, Katayama's place had been in doubt. But before Christmas Tyrrell lost its title Finnish sponsorship from communications company Nokia

and that his appointment will be

- which was believed to be in the

Champion Vincenzo Sospiri and runner-up Rosset were possibles for the drive. But Italian Sospiri is said to have less money than he initially expected, while sources say Brazilian Rosset was not prepared to pay Tyrrell's price. He is now close to joining Arrows (see News in Brief).

The 53-year-old Frenchman's contract has ended, according to a Peugeot statement, and the company has not chosen to renew it. He has been closely involved in the management

Peugeot Sport since 1990,

boss of Peugeot Sport.

and took over as boss when Jean Todt left to become sporting director at Ferrari in 1993.

Former Grand Prix driver Jean-

Pierre Jabouille has lost his job as

Jabouille's successor will be Pierre-Michel Fauconnier, who has run Velizy, where the F1 engines are built, since last year.

Peugeot is frustrated at its lack of success in F1 so far, and Fauconnier will doubtless be charged with improving its results with Jordan. The statement said: 'His job consist will strengthening the synergy between Peugeot Sport and the PSA Group in

promotional and technical. commercial fields, as well as tightening links between Peugeot Sport and its principal partners.



Jabouille: out

# New-look Silverstone gets delayed

Changes to Silverstone aimed at making the Grand Prix circuit faster have been delayed.

The track is awaiting approval from the sport's governing body, the FIA, before it goes ahead with the reprofiling of Copse and Stowe corners in an attempt to improve the flow of the circuit for drivers, after heavy criticism last year (see AUTOSPORT, November 2).
The FIA has revised its safety

demands for tracks this season, and a spokesman said: 'Silverstone was a little late in submitting the plans, so although the approval has been delayed a little. It's no big deal.'

Silverstone will return Copse and Stowe to more or less the same profile as before the '94 changes which it admits went too far. The corners will be about 50kph and 70kph quicker respectively.

Damon Hill and Martin Brundle, as well as former drivers John Watson and Howden Ganley have been involved in the redesign, which has the approval of Gerhard Berger and Michael Schumacher.

Plans to make the Luffield complex less stop-start have been delayed until 1997.



Ukyo Katayama appears to be close to re-signing for Tyrrell for a fourth year. Photo: Elford



**McLarenadviser** Alain Prost kicked off the pre-season testing build-up at Estoril this week in one of last year's McLaren-Mercedes MP4/10s. Wet weather rendered times meaningless. The four-time **World Champion** was scheduled to be joined by David Coulthard for the test, which ends on Saturday. Jan Magnussen may also drive. Photo: Glenn Campbell

# **Stewart picks** Hill for title win

Triple World Champion Jackie Stewart said last week that Williams star Damon Hill is 'oddson favourite' to win the Formula 1 World Championship this year.

Stewart said at the launch of his new Formula 1 team last week (see Top Story): 'Damon Hill has the best opportunity to win the World Championship. He has had three good years in F1 to establish the knowledge and experience and remove some of the hiccoughs that he has had from his mind. Williams is probably the best engineered team in Grand Prix racing. So he is absolutely in the best position to win the title.

'That's partly because Michael Schumacher has now won two consecutive championships. It would be a brave man who would put a lot of money on him winning three consecutive titles.

Stewart predicted that both Benetton and McLaren would be a little short of their best in 1996.

'Benetton have to try to keep the energy level up after two very successful years,' he said. 'McLaren is still finding its way,

and for David Coulthard to win the World Championship in his first season would be too much to ask.

### **NEWS IN BRIEF**

Brazilian Ricardo Rosset, the runner-up in the Formula 3000 International Championship, looks to be on the verge of signing for Arrows this season, according to sources.

Minardi is expecting to finalise its driver line-up within the next week. Brazilian Formula 3000 graduate Tarso Marques is said to be close to a drive, while Minardi is also interested in retaining Portuguese Pedro Lamy and promoting test driver Giancarlo Fisichella.

Tickets for this year's British Grand Prix are rapidly selling out. Silverstone has already sold 80,000 of its 90,000 tickets, and there are only 4,000 grandstand seats left.

Japanese Hideki Noda has moved into the frame as a possible at Forti. The wealthy former Larrousse driver raced for the team in Formula 3000 in 1994.

Atlanta in the USA is said to be pushing for a Grand Prix in 1997 to keep the Georgia city in the spotlight after this year's Olympic Games. But F1 boss Bernie Ecclestone said: 'Forget it, it isn't going to happen.'

Kenny Brack, a front-runner in Formula 3000 last year, is in demand. The 29-year-old Swede, who has substantial support from his home country, is considering offers to be a test driver for Benetton, McLaren and Ligier, It is thought likely he will accept the McLaren deal, about which details are unclear.

Sauber is putting a brave face on losing the works Ford engine deal to Jackie Stewart's new team in 1997. Its major sponsors, energy drink makers Red Bull and Malaysian oil company Petronas, have signed to support the team until the year 2000. Petronas becomes a technical partner.

Benetton and Sauber are at the head of the race for teams to run their 1996 cars. Both are intending to give their new models an airing early next week, Benetton at Silverstone and Sauber at Paul Ricard in France.

Jean-Christophe Boullion is expected to be retained as Williams test driver.

The debut of the new Ferrari 412T3 has been delayed. Michael Schumacher had been promised it would be out by January 15, but the car is now due to appear on February 1. Schumacher is testing at Paul Ricard, France this week.

Journalist Ken Ryan was killed in a car crash in Dublin last week. The 47-year-old Grand Prix correspondent for the Irish Independent, who was the Irish Republic's leading motor sport journalist, suffered a heart attack at the wheel.

Barry Griffin, Goodyear's long-serving public relations director, has retired.

# Ligier cash shortage leads to job cuts

Ligier has blamed a shortage of sponsorship for the shedding of 37 employees at its base in Magny-Cours, France last week.

The team, which now has 80 workers on its books in France, has signed both Olivier Panis and Brazilian Pedro Diniz - although it publicly admits only to the Frenchman. But with its French sponsors drastically reducing their input, Ligier is facing a budget shortfall of 35% compared to its '95 levels of around £33 million

despite Diniz bringing a reputed the end of the year the whole team

£7.5 million with him.

The job cuts have hit the drawing office, fabrication and composites particularly hard and it is thought team boss Tom Walkinshaw may want to move the entire design and manufacturing side to his new TWR headquarters in England, leaving only the race team and build process in France.

Some sources even suggest that at



Walkinshaw: cuts

may cross the Channel.

Rumours that manufacturer Castrol, a long-time associate of TWR, may sponsor the team while Panis was supported by French petrochemical giant Elf, can be discounted. The team's primary sponsors will remain Elf and French

tobacco company SEITA - which will market its Gauloises brand.

# **Benetton to boost** speed on straight

The Benetton B196, the car with which Benetton will defend its World Drivers and Constructors' titles will feature much lower sidepods than last year's B195.

The car will otherwise look similar to the B195, sticking with the raised-nose philosophy, but the Williams-style sidepods aim to improve straightline speed.

The car is also expected to feature a three-damper system front and back. It allows engineers to control the car's ride height much more closely than conventional system.



The Williams Grand Prix team this week all but completed its move to its massive new factory. The team's wind tunnel is the only major item left to be moved to the site near Wantage in Oxfordshire. Its move will require closing the A34. Photo: Kapadia/Sutton

# Peugeot pulls out all the stops with 406

Peugeot is stepping up its British Touring Car Championship assault to try to break into the winners' circle after four years of trying.

With the announcement of Tim Harvey confirming that the team

will have two front-line drivers for the first time, as well as a budget increased by at least 50%, Peugeot motorsport boss Mick Linford is predicting that the new-for-1996 406 model will be a winner by the end of the season.

'This is a much more serious commitment,' said

Linford. We need results and we intend to get them. I am confident that Tim and Patrick Watts will be regular podium finishers and we will have our first BTCC win.'

According to Linford, the 406 has all the elements to be a winning car. 'The track is 50mm wider, the engine and gearbox will be behind the drive-line and we have a proper multi-link rear suspension rather than the true trailing arms used on the 405,' explained Peugeot's boss.

For the first time, the BTCC

Peugeots are being developed in conjunction with Peugeot Sport in France, which is swapping from French Supertourisme to the German Super Touring Cup.

'The differing interpretations of

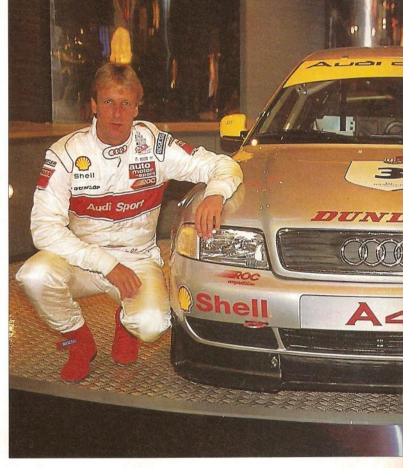
the regulations between Britain and France meant in the past that our cars were radically different. Now the cars are identical, so any demon tweak can be bolted straight on.'

New-signing Harvey mirrored Linford's enthusiasm. 'I think the

combination of a better car and a bigger budget means Peugeot is going to be competitive. I have won BTCC races for five manufacturers and I hope to do the same for Peugeot.'

• Peugeot will enter the German Super Touring Cup. Two new 406s will be entered by the PTS factory team, with Frenchman Laurent Aiello and German Altfrid Heger favourites for the drives.

Harvey profile, page 56





Toyota looks set to continue its participation in the British Touring Car Championship with a pair of Carinas run by the TOM'S team — despite the withdrawal of funding from Japan.

After learning that no support would be forthcoming from the Toyota parent company, and reduced backing from TOM'S head office in Japan, the Norfolk-based team has successfully pursued its own backing. In addition, it is talking to drivers capable of bringing backing to the team.

TOM'S marketing manager Nick Coleman, who confirmed that he is heading the search for commercial backing, said: 'It is true that Alastair McQueen (TOM'S touring car project manager) is talking to a couple of potential drivers for the programme. They are Tiff Needell and Lee Brookes.'

Renault Clio one-make champion Brookes tested a Carina at Snetterton last year, while *Top Gear* TV presenter Tiff Needell has a substantial budget from Old Spice.

TOM'S is building a second righthand-drive version of the Carina E model that Julian Bailey took to several impressive late-season performances last year.



The interim Peugeot 406, utilising parts from the existing 405, has already tested in France

# Rolling starts ditched for Class 1

The International Touring Car Championship will abandon Class 1 racing's traditional rolling starts in favour of more conventional standing getways

standing getaways.

The move, which comes in the wake of ex-Formula 1 safety delegate Roland Bruynseraede becoming the ITCC's permanent starter, comes as a major blow to Mercedes, whose two-wheel-drive C-Class racers will be disadvantaged in comparison with the four-wheel-drive competition from Alfa Romeo and Opel.

Mercedes junior driver Dario

Franchitti admitted that the new ruling could cause he and his team mates problems.

'To be honest, I'd only just got the hang of rolling starts,' he admitted, 'but it won't be easy for us now. Our car is hard enough to get going out of the garage, never mind getting off the grid so Opel and Alfa might prove to be very strong off the line now. But, by the end of the year, our traction was just as good as theirs.'

Mercedes motorsport manager Norbert Haug was unavailable for comment as we closed for press.

# Ford plans afresh for '96 Mondeo

Bennetts: new cars

Reynard is racing against time to design and build Ford's all-new

Mondeo Super Tourer in time for the first round of the British Touring Car Championship on April 8.

The design process started at the beginning of December as West Surrey Racing took over the running of the cars.

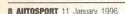
WSR team boss Dick Bennetts said: 'The

original plan was to race updated 1995 cars, but we could only hope to gain a couple of seconds with those machines. The new one will be late, but it is better for us to start with an untried car.'

Bennetts explained that the tall V6 unit will be moved backwards and towards the centre, to cure the car's appetite for front tyres.

Bennetts favours a single-seater trained driver as Paul Radisich's partner. Warren Hughes,

Michael Vergers, Kevin McGarrity, Sascha Maassen and Steve Robertson are all linked.





Audi launched its British **Touring Car** Championship bid at AUTOSPORT International when John **Bintcliffewas** confirmed as Frank Riela's team-mate. **Biela feels that** many of the British tracks, being tight and short, will favour Audi's four-wheel-drive system, but Audi boss Dr Wolfgang Ullrich played down its championship chances, 'The challenge is enormous, admitted Ullrich. Photo: Jeff

# **BMW champs** return to BTCC

Joachim Winkelhock and Peter Kox will lead BMW's 1996 British Touring Car Championship assault in cars run by 1993 BTCC champions Schnitzer, it will be confirmed this week.

A BMW spokesman said: 'We can't yet tell who will drive, but we can see a light at the end of the tunnel; it will be clear this week.'

Winkelhock and Schnitzer took the BTCC at their first attempt in 1993, floundered in '94, then returned to claim the German Super Touring crown last year. For much of '95, the German's team mate, Kox, who has extensive experience of British tracks, was BMW's main contender.

A third car may be entered in the BTCC on occasion for Roberto Ravaglia, as part of BMW's R&D programme with its new motorsport partner, McLaren Cars.

Steve Soper and Johnny Cecotto will lead BMW's German attack, supported by Alex Burgstaller and Jorg Muller. Ravaglia and Emanuele Naspetti head for Italy.

McLaren, meanwhile, has already begun testing a 1995 BTCC 320i, and the first McLaren-inspired modifications will find their way on to the car by the end of the month.

### **NEWS IN BRIEF**

# **TOURING CARS**

The BTCC looks set to have a more feminine touch next year with the arrival of Helen Bashford in the Total Cup for privateers. The historic Chevron racer has backing from courier company DHL and is negotiating to buy Matt Neal's 1995 Total Cup-winning Mondeo.

Jeff Allam, the vastly experienced former Vauxhall racer, has been appointed as TOCA's new driving standards advisor. He will assist race director Pierre Aumonier in post-race disputes.

New Peugeot signing Tim Harvey rolled a kart at the AUTOSPORT International show in Birmingham last week, breaking a finger.

New signing Jason Watt will partner Gabriele Tarquini in one half of the new JAS Alfa Romeo ITCC team. Stefano Modena and Giancarlo Fisichella will form the other half of the outfit.

Danny Sullivan, newly retired from Indycars, will drive a Ford Contour — a Mondeo on this side of the Pond — in the North American Touring Car Championship this year. Veteran Kiwi race and rally driver Rod Millen will handle a Toyota Camry, a re-badged TOM'S Carina.

Honda looks set to be well represented in the NATCC, with several Motor Sport Development Accords being sold to America. As many as six Accords could be out in the series that starts at Lime Rock in May.

The proposed HKS Opel test of Oliver Gavin, Chris Goodwin, Warren Hughes, Simon Harrison and Alain Ferte will now not take place until late January. Derek Warwick and Justin Bell, who are also in line for a drive in Japan, won't be testing the car.

# INTERNATIONA

### **Preparation wizard Dany Snobeck**

broke a wrist when competing in the Andros Trophy Ice Racing series at La Bresse last Sunday. Opel's team leader is not expected to race again until the Chamonix 24 Hours on February 11.

### Congratulations to AUTOSPORT's

publishing director, Tony Schulp, and his wife Ann, on the birth before Christmas of a second daughter, Constance.

Autosport is looking for an ambitious young journalist to join its staff. The successful applicant will be self-motivated, determined, resourceful, and work well under extreme pressure. Send applications, including a comprehensive CV, to The Editor, AUTOSPORT, 38-42 Hampton Road, Teddington, Middlesex, TW11 0JE.

# Opel seeks Stuck and young gun

Opel is wooing touring car and sportscar ace Hans Stuck for its International Touring Car Championship team — and at the same time is targeting Oliver Gavin as part of a youth initiative.

The 44-year-old German, who was recently stood down from racing by Audi, is being targeted by Keke Rosberg's team to satisfy its predominantly German sponsors.

But with Stuck being retained by Audi for PR duties, Opel is playing down its pursuit of him, although a spokesman confirmed: 'Stuck is certainly a name on our list'.

Plans for Rosberg to unveil the new driver line-up at his own motor show next week now seem in doubt. However, the '96-spec car will be shown in new livery.

Gavin, meanwhile, impressed the Russelsheim manufacturer in a pre-Christmas test at Nogaro, outpacing Opel number one Klaus Ludwig and German F3 runner Alexander Wurz.

Opel has admitted that it has 'an interest' in Gavin, and the driver himself is keen on an ITCC drive.

'I haven't signed yet, but people like Jan Magnussen and Dario Fisichella (both Mercedes junior drivers) have proved that the ITCC is a route to Formula 1.' he said.

is a route to Formula 1,' he said.

Opel will only confirm that
Klaus Ludwig will drive for
Zakspeed, probably partnered by
Uwe Alzen. Manuel Reuter and
Yannick Dalmas seem likely to be
confirmed with the Joest team.

However, F1 driver Pedro Lamy is no longer at the top of Opel's shopping list following a disappointing test at Nogaro.

# Kaye makes bid for family triple crown

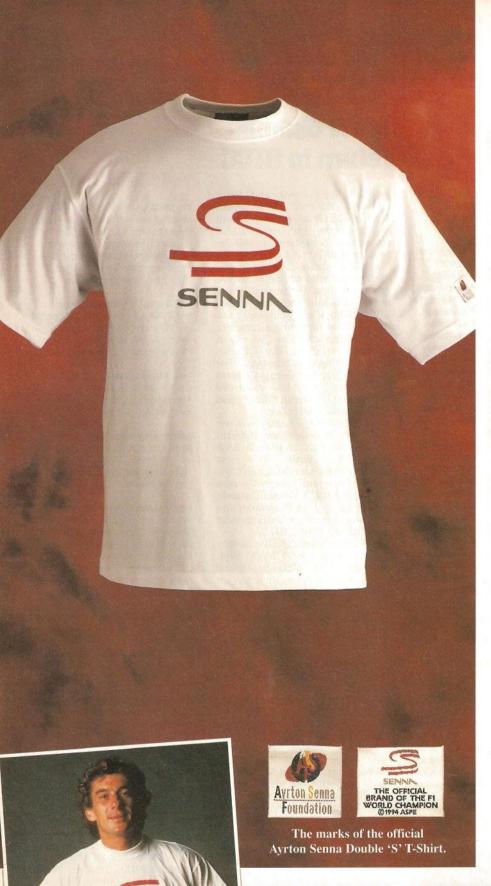
Richard Kaye, runner-up in the British Touring Car Championship's privateers' cup in 1995, is aiming to go one better this year to complete a hat-trick of titles for the Kaye family.

With increased backing, 28-yearold Kaye is going all out to win the Total Cup with a one-event old Vauxhall Cavalier used by Anthony Reid in last year's FIA Touring Car World Cup at Paul Ricard.

'Last year was a learning season,' said Kaye, who is hoping to add to the title brother James won in 1992 and '94. 'I've got the budget and the car, so there's no excuses.'



Richard Kaye will bid for the BTCC privateers title in this Cavalier. Photo: Jeff Bloxham



# THE OFFICIALLY **APPROVED** AYRTON SENNA T-SHIRT

In any generation, a handful of individuals stand tall above the crowd. Ayrton Senna was just such a person. Perhaps the greatest racing driver of all time.

This T-Shirt, as worn by Ayrton himself and bearing his distinctive Double 'S' logo, has now been launched to the public for the very first time.



Superbly made from the very highest quality 100% heavyweight cotton, with reinforced double stitching on all seams, each T-Shirt is presented in its own commemorative collector's box.

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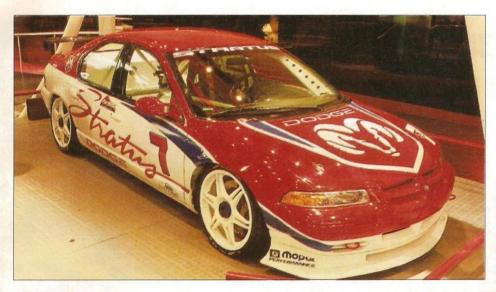
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Chrysler's new Super Tourer, the Dodge Stratus, was given its world debut at the Detroit Auto Show.

# **Chrysler unveils first US Tourer**

Chrysler unveiled its new Super Touring challenger at the Detroit Auto Show, confirming that two cars will be run in America by the PacWest Indvcar team.

The Dodge Stratus will be campaigned in the North American Touring Car Championship with former Indycar man Dominic Dobson at the wheel of one car. A second driver has yet to be signed for the inaugural series.

'The first two cars have been built here at our Technical Centre in Auburn Hills,' confirmed a Chrysler spokesman. 'We have used as much of our own advanced technology – such as Cray computers – as we can, but have relied heavily on the specialist knowledge of Reynard in the area of transmissions, for example.

Despite Reynard's impending involvement in Ford's BTCC entry,

it will maintain development links to Chrysler's programme.

Dobson will start testing the first car in February and has been in constant contact with the Chrysler factory. 'The craftsmanship on the car is superb and there's a great spirit about the whole programme' said Dobson. PacWest has created a new Touring Car Group to handle the project, which will be based at its Indianapolis factory.

# Ganassi claims Zanardi for Indycars

Prix Alessandro Zanardi will partner Jimmy Vasser in the Ganassi Reynard-Honda Indycar team this year.

Italian Zanardi has already completed three test sessions in one of last year's 95Is. 'At the end of 1994 I decided that Formula 1 wasn't what I wanted to do. I didn't have the possibility to

show my capability. I was waking up on Sundays hoping for a lucky race so that I could score a point. 'I looked for something else and

1995 Honda engine. The XD is

lighter, smaller and has a lower

centre of gravity than the 25 race-

winning XB, which it replaces.

driver Indvcars was very attractive to me. The team is very professional, very

organised and I think I will have a chance to be really competitive.

The 29-year-old was recommended to Ganassi Reynard's Adrian Reynard and Rick Gorne, and Peter Collins, for whom Zanardi drove an F1 Lotus in 1993 and '94.

Ganassi said he was impressed with Zanardi's technical knowledge. 'It's a small gamble. We liked his approach. He's smooth, versatile and competitive.



Zanardi: Indycars



Ford's new XD unit will lead its title defence

# **Aurora power for** IRL series in 1997

Oldsmobile is to develop a racing version of its four-litre, 32-valve Aurora V8 for the breakaway Indy Racing League in 1997.

The news is not a surprise, as the IRL engine rules were drawn up with the Aurora unit in mind.

The IRL hopes to generate a new cottage industry of suppliers and engine builders for its 1997 production-based engine formula. To that end, Oldsmobile will supply the major components for the Aurora V8's design, but teams will be free to choose other components and suppliers.

# Goodyear joins Gordon in Walker Reynards

Scott Goodyear will return to fulltime Indycar racing with the Walker team, it was to be announced after AUTOSPORT closed for press on Tuesday.

The 36-year-old Canadian, who came close to winning the Indianapolis 500 for Tasman Motorsports in a one-off drive last year, will run a Reynard-Ford alongside Robby Gordon.

League's Indianapolis 500.

### **NEWS IN BRIEF**

# **INDYCARS**

Mark Blundell and either Allan McNish or JJ Lehto look set to have a further test for PacWest before primary owner Bruce McCaw makes a decision on a partner for Mauricio Gugelmin this season. The three European refugees tested for PacWest last month on the Firebird road course in Arizona, but McCaw now wants to see what they can do on an oval. According to sources, Blundell and McNish were the most impressive at Firebird, but McCaw would not reveal the identity of the two he wanted to see, having missed the initial test before Christmas.

Hiro Matsushita has signed to drive for Payton-Coyne Racing in this year's IndyCar World Series. This will be the 34-year-old's sixth year in Indycars. He will drive a brand new Lola-Ford.

Al Unser Jr and Paul Tracy tested the latest Penske-Mercedes PC25 on the one-mile Phoenix oval and Firebird road course during the last two weeks. The Penske team was scheduled to test for six days in Arizona.

Tasman Motorsports was due to test the first Lola T96/00 to hit the USA this week at Phoenix's oval and Firebird road course. Andre Ribeiro and Adrian Fernandez were due to drive.

Sportscar team boss Andy Evans has become the sole owner of the Scandia-Simon Racing outfit after buying team founder Dick Simon's remaining shares. Former racer Simon will stay on board as chief engineer for the team's twin assaults on the Indycar World Cup and the Indy Racing League.

# **FORMULA 3000**

Three-car teams in the International Championship have been given the thumbs down by the sport's governing body. No reason has been given, but it is thought that it may be a way of preventing leading teams from monopolising the most talented drivers, at the expense of smaller teams.

The clever money is still on Christophe Bouchut to take the lead Super Nova seat. No announcement is expected until team boss David Sear returns from holiday next week.

Vortex Motorsport boss Bob Salisbury has denied rumours, fuelled by the fact that it has yet to order a car, that the team is on the verge of pulling out of the Formula 3000 International Championship. Vortex is also creating a team in Formula Vauxhall (see page 87). But Salisbury said: 'We've no intention of not running in International F3000." The team's future will be clear next week - a liaison with Draco is possible.

# **Toon Army Lister all** set for Daytona race

The Lister sportscar marque and Newcastle United Football Club kicked off their joint attack on the world's top endurance races last week.

The Newcastle United Lister Racing Team's campaign, centred on the Daytona and Le Mans 24hour races, started with the unveiling of a new version of the Storm GT1 racer that made its race debut last year. The launch at Newcastle's St James's Park ground coincided with the announcement that 1995 Lister driver Geoff Lees and racer-cum-TV personality Tiff Needell will join sportscar specialist Kenny Acheson in the car.

Following the launch, the Storm. liveried in black-and-white stripes and carrying the logos of club sponsors Adidas and Newcastle Brown Ale, was given a brief shakedown test by former Grand Prix driver Lees at Donington Park.

Although an electrical problem prevented the car's seven-litre Jaguar V12 from running at full power, 44-year-old Lees was full of enthusiasm for the revised Storm.

'If you hadn't told me it was a Lister, I wouldn't have believed it

Oldsmobile, one of the favourites

for honours in next month's

Daytona 24 Hours, is eyeing up an

But GM Sport programme anager Dwight Woodbridge

'The first step is to see if the car

explained that the plans were still

manager Dwight

at 'the preliminary stage'

was the same car as I drove at Le Mans,' said Lees, who is confident that the inherent understeer of the '95 car has been eradicated, thanks in part to the adoption of 14-inch 'rear' tyres for the front wheels to help counteract the effects of the heavy front-mounted V12.

Testing continues at Chobham in Surrey this week, before moving back to Donington and then to Road Atlanta for final preparations in the run-up to Daytona on February 2-3.

Lister Cars boss Laurence Pearce is confident that the new Storm can post a good result on its debut at Daytona. 'We can qualify in the top 10,' said Pearce, 'and if our new Hewland gearbox lasts, we can finish in the top five.

Lister is also examining the possibility of running a second car at Le Mans for young drivers from the Newcastle area while, in the longer term, a World Sports Car prototype is under consideration.

'Our ambition is to win Le Mans,' said Pearce, 'and a purpose-built racing car has to be the way to go.

The Storm trooper, page 64



# DAMS launches F3000 return

**Belloc: DAMS man** 

is suitable,' said Woodbridge. 'After that, the next hurdle is to see if we can find the necessary money.

attack on the world's other big Although adapting the 32-valve enduro - the Le Mans 24 Hours. .5-litre Aurora engine to run with the mandatory Le Mans air-restrictor would be relatively The General Motors brand, which claimed the top four positions in last year's American simple, a change to the narrower IMSA GT Series, is considering taking a pair of its new Aurora tyres demanded for the 24 Hours could prove more problematical. GTS-1 silhouette racers to the Should the plan get the go-ahead, Circuit de la Sarthe in June.

Oldsmobile eyes Le Mans attack

the effort would be masterminded by Brix Racing, which begins its defence of Oldsmobile's crown with a two-car assault on Daytona with team regulars Irv Hoerr and Darin Brassfield heading the driving.

DAMS, the most successful team in the history of Formula 3000, is to return to the series after its

abortive attempt graduate to Formula 1.

French outfit The postponed its F1 plans before Christmas when boss Jean-Paul Driot could not raise sufficient backing, but he remains committed to F1 in 1997. Driot said: 'We will

be back in F3000 while

we develop the F1 car. We need to have a challenge for a year to motivate the troops.

'I want to keep everyone's hand in, but we are not just going back for the sake of it. We are there to

win and we will battle hard for the title."

Driot has signed former French Formula 3 Champion Jean-Philippe Belloc for the team. Belloc had a disappointing

debut year with Apomatox in 1995, but Driot is confident he will perform well this season.

may sign another Frenchman, or 1995 race-winner Tarso Marques.

Ralf Schumacher, brother of World Champion Michael, will race in

Macau Formula 3 Grand Prix, will drive a Reynard-Mugen for Team Le Mans after an encouraging test at Suzuka before Christmas.

According to a spokesman for Willy Weber, manager of both brothers, the new F3000 offers 'too little testing for drivers new to the formula' and Formula Nippon



Formula Nippon, Japan's equivalent to Formula 3000, in 1996.

The 20-year-old winner of the

'better training for Formula 1'



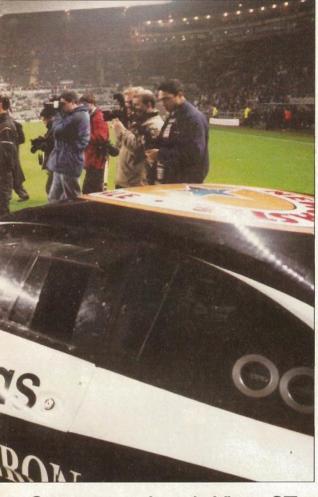
Oldsmobile is looking at entering its Aurora in Daytona and Le Mans. Photo: Daytona

# Brazilian F3 champ Zonta signs for Draco

The Italian Draco Formula 3000 team has signed Brazilian Formula 3 Champion Ricardo Zonta for '96.

Draco boss Adriano Morini was considering withdrawing from F3000 after the death of Brazilian Marco Campos at the wheel of one of his cars last season. But Campos's father Roberto, a close friend of Zonta's family, persuaded him to carry on. He has joined the team to liaise with Brazilian drivers.

Draco is talking to Brazilians Marcos Gueiros, Alexandre de Andrade and Marcello Ventre.



Lister's new Storm GT racer was unveiled at sponsor Newcastle United's St James's Park last week, prior to testing at Donington Park Photo: Eric Strange

# Oreca spearheads Viper GT entry

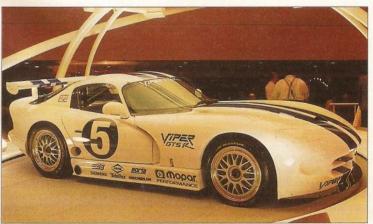
Oreca, the French Supertourisme champion team, is switching to GT racing this season to mastermind Chrysler's Global Endurance GT Series campaign with the Dodge Viper muscle-car.

As Chrysler's works-supported European team, Oreca will enter two factory-built Viper GTS-R racers at Le Mans and in a full programme of Global races, starting at Jarama in April.

But Oreca boss Ĥugues de Chaunac, who ran Mazda's Sportscar World Championship campaigns in 1991-'92, warned that the team will not be giving McLaren, Ferrari and Porsche a run for their money this year. 'With a front engine, the Viper is not perfect, but our goal is develop a car that can win races in 1997.'

But on the GTS-R's public debut at last weekend's Daytona test, TransAm veteran Tommy Archer easily outpaced several examples of Porsche's 911 GT2 Evolution.

For the GTS-R's racing debut in next month's Daytona 24 Hours, Chrysler's North American team, Canaska/Southwind Racing, has signed up 1990 Le Mans winner Price Cobb, and former Indycar driver Mark Dismore.



The new Viper GTS-R outpaced the Porsches in recent testing for Daytona. Photo: Daytona



# **Top teams sign up for British F2 series**

The moribund British Formula 2 Championship has sprung into life with news that two top teams from International Formula 3000 are entering the series in 1996.

Super Nova Racing, which took Vincenzo Sospiri to the FIA International title last year, and the French Apomatox team, runner-up with Franck Lagorce in 1994, have confirmed that they will run cars in the all-Reynard British series alongside their campaigns in the new one-make FIA F3000.

with the Italian Durango Formula 3000 team, as well as Edenbridge and Omegaland from Britain, also close to finalising F2 plans, the series promoted by the Venson management group looks set to boast grids healthy in both quantity and quality.

A spokeswomen for Venson said: 'Things are looking good. Hopefully these teams will act as a pied piper for teams currently sitting on the fence.'

With a secondary division for older Reynards fitted with Cosworth DFVs, Venson is confident of grids of 15 cars in the early stages of the championship, which kicks off at Oulton Park on April 7.

Super Nova boss David Sears said: 'We had the equipment sitting there and drivers knocking on our door. I believe the new F3000 will spawn national series around Europe, so I want to be involved.

Sears confirmed that Sweden's Peter Olsson, an F2 regular in 1991-'92, and Brazilian Luis Garcia Jr are possibles for the British series.

# Rookie takes Ferrari to top of Daytona test times

Ferrari pipped the Riley & Scott marque in the preliminary skirmishes for the forthcoming Daytona 24 Hours battle when the World Sports Car rookie Bill Auberlen topped the times in the traditional January test days.

Driving Giampiero Moretti's Momo Ferrari 333SP, the 1995 IMSA GT2 front-runner pipped pre-season testing sensation Wayne Taylor in the R&S-Oldsmobile Mk3 by less than 0.02s.

Californian Auberlen lapped the 3.56-mile circuit, which combines Daytona's banking with an infield road course section in 1m41.634s, nearly two seconds clear of Mauro Baldi's 1995 qualifying record.

But the pace of development in the WSC category, now entering its third year, is such that five drivers eclipsed the old record.

Behind Taylor's factory R&S came Andy Wallace in the Dyson team's similar Ford-powered car. Wallace, who was sharing the car with fellow Briton James Weaver, headed the times on the second day of the test, prior to engine failure.

Sportscar veteran Moretti made good use of his team's exclusive deal with Yokohama to set fourth best time in his team's second Ferrari.

Former Grand Prix driver Eric van de Poele also impressed in the works-backed Courage-Chevrolet, lapping in 1m44.055s on day two.

Ferrari's reigning WSC champion Fermin Velez set the pace early in the test and was confident enough to predict that the previously-fragile 333SP will win the race on February 2/3.



Dario Franchitti leads Jonny Kane in the celebrity kart race at AUTOSPORT International. The Scot, partnered by star drivers Allan McNish and Jos Verstappen in the F1 Racing team held off AUTOSPORT's line-up of Kane, Jan Magnussen and Jason Watt to win. Photo: Jeff Bloxham



# **Davies joins Ligier Junior Team**

TWR Motorsport's Ligier Junior Team has won the race to secure the services of Jamie Davies for this year's British Formula 3 Championship, it was announced at last week's AUTOSPORT International show.

Twenty-year-old Davies signed for LJT in preference to staying at Fortec Motorsport with which he finished sixth in the British series.

Davies said: 'I'm out to win the championship this year, and TWR can give me that chance.'

LJT team manager Andy Morrison confirmed that his search for a lead driver started and finished with Davies, who tested for the team in early November.

'Last year, Jamie was the only true racer in the field; he proved it time and time again,' said Morrison. 'He was one of the few guys out there with the ability to overtake.'

Scot Mark Shaw, a 'talent that needs to be nurtured', according to Morrison, moves over from Vincini Motorsport to TWR for his second season in F3. The team was unable to identify which General Motors brand would feature on the team's self-prepared engines.

**NEWS IN BRIEF** 

TWR's Ligier **Junior Team** revealed its 1996 F3 line-up at AUTOSPORT International last week. F3 front-runner Jamie Davies (left) will be partnered by

# Record crowds for AUTOSPORT show

Attendance records were broken at the AUTOSPORT International show at Birmingham's NEC last week, with more than 59,000 coming through the turnstiles, with the Live Action indoor racing watched by 27,000, up from 18,000.

Peter Osborne, managing director of show organisers Haymarket Exhibitions, said: 'AUTOSPORT International has come of age. With more quality exhibitors and a raft of famous drivers, it gave enthusiasts an exclusive opportunity to get right inside motorsport.

# Firman stays with PSR for title bid

Ralph Firman will spearhead Paul Stewart Racing's attempt to win back the British Formula

Championship title it held from 1992-'94, it was confirmed last week.

Twenty-year-old Firman stays on board at PSR for a second year of F3 and is ready to 'finish the job' of winning the title he narrowly lost to Oliver Gavin at the final hurdle, despite leading the points

race for the majority of the season. 'F3 again is the right way for me,' he said at the AUTOSPORT International show. 'I learnt a lot last year, but now I have to get on with winning the title.'

PSR technical director Andy Miller was upbeat on Firman's chances. 'I wouldn't have signed him if I didn't think he could win the title,' he said.

Miller confirmed that Formula Vauxhall Champion Jonny Kane, 22, is clear favourite for

the second seat. 'I think it will be Jonny - that's the plan.



Firman: 'job to do'

# **Big F3 assault** for TOM'S team

The Anglo-Japanese TOM'S team looks certain to enter four of its new Formula 3 chassis in this season's British Championship.

With the team's driver in the second half of 1995, Christian Horner, signing to run alongside Argentinian Brian Smith and Japanese driver Takashi Yokoyama, TOM'S is now talking to Cristiano da Matta, eighth in last year's British series, and Formula Renault Sport champion Guy Smith about leading the multi-car assault.

TOM'S boss Hiroshi Fushida said: 'I don't mind who we end up with; either can win races for us.

But Smith has expressed concern about a four-car team, saying, 'The TOM'S looks good, but I am a bit concerned about running with such a big team.'

However, Fushida claims that TOM'S, which is based in a facility set-up for the company's still-born Formula 1 assault, would have no problem running four cars. 'We have the resources and we have the facilities,' he said.

Former West Surrey Racing F3 engineer Roly Vincini is expected to be part of the TOM'S plans.

Fortec Motorsport has clinched the battle for the coveted HKS Mitsubishi deal - and both team and engine supplier are promising a concerted attack on the British

Fortec takes over the exclusive supply of the Japanese-tuned engines from Alan Docking Racing after a successful season in which its drivers finished sixth and seventh in the British points.

that Fortec had been chosen because 'they did a good job last year. We should have won the championship with ADR,' he said. 'But we're out to put that right.'

said: 'Our aim is to win the championship and an exclusive engine deal is of obvious benefit in

Sport champion Guy Smith.

# Fortec lands prize Mitsubishi deal

Formula 3 Championship.

John Kirby of HKS explained

Fortec team boss Trevor Foster a highly competitive series.'

Drivers for the Fortec team, will be announced in the next 10 days, but the four on its list are Cristiano da Matta, who has expressed a desire to work with the team, sometime Fortec driver Jamie Spence, Paula Cook, who impressed in F3 last year and Formula Renault

# **GRAND PRIX** SILVERSTONE CIRCUIT Length: 3.154 miles INTERNATIONAL CIRCUIT Length approx: 2.1 miles CHAPEL CURVE NATIONAL CIRCUIT Length: 1.645 miles CLUB STRAIGH

This is the lay-out of Silverstone's new International circuit, which will take over from the old National Circuit in hosting leading domestic championships. The new track turns right at the Becketts complex and rejoins the Grand Prix track at Abbey. Graphic: Neil Randon

# **SPORTSCARS**

Sportscar veteran Bob Wollek is going after Hurley Haywood's record of four Daytona 24 Hours victories at the wheel of a Ferrari 333SP World Sports Car. Wollek gets the opportunity following the expansion of Giampiero Moretti's Momo Corse IMSA attack to two cars, the 52-year-old Frenchman lining up with the team boss and Didier Theys for the 24 Hours and Sebring in March

Courage Competition is lining up with the Wheel Works team for Daytona. Sebring and, finance permitting, the remainder of the IMSA WSC series. Richard Sutherland's team will run a C41-Chevrolet in the 24 Hours, while Courage is negotiating with another team to run its second car.

Mike Hezemans, son of '70s European Touring Car Championship star Toine, will drive a Lotus Esprit GT1 in the Global Endurance GT Series. The 25-year-old Dutchman will race for the Dutch Racing Promotions team.

The Lotus GT Team, which will run two Esprits in the Global series, has moved from Lotus Cars to Ketteringham Hall, home of the now-defunct Team Lotus Formula 1 outfit.

Former Grand Prix driver Alex Caffi, who plied his trade in the Spanish Super Touring series last year, makes his Daytona debut driving a Ford Mustang in the Grand Sports class.

John Derek Hill, son of 1961 World Champion Phil Hill, will race Guido Pastor's Bugatti EB110SS at Daytona.

David Sears Motorsport will continue in British Formula 3 this year, claims its team boss. 'I've spoken to six drivers about F3.' he said. 'I will be running a team.' Near the top of Sears's list are British F3 sophomores Owen McAuley and Cristiano da Matta.

DSM, however, won't be running Alfa Romeo engines, according to their builder, Gianni Pedrazzani, 'There isn't enough production capacity to supply engines to Britain,' said the boss of the Novamotor tuning company.

Nicolas Minassian, runner-up in last year's French Championship, will partner James Matthews in Promatecme's British series assault. The Frenchman got the nod over Formula Renault Sport EuroCup winner Tommy Rustad.

American Brian Cunningham looks set to return for a third year of British F3. driving again for Alan Docking's Silverstone-based equipe.

# **Liatti named for full World series attack**

Above: Liatti on show, Right: McRae

takes a break during the Kenya test

Piero Liatti will tackle a full programme of FIA World Rally Championship events this season, with next month's Swedish opener.

The Italian ace, who spent three days last week thrilling the crowds at AUTOSPORT International's Live Action Arena, was originally thought to be concentrating on the Asia-Pacific series, but this week in

Japan Subaru will confirm promotion to the premier contest.

Liatti is highly regarded Subaru for his selfless team vividly play, demonstrated in Corsica and Catalunya last season.

while Yet.

David Richards admitted last week that he had been tempted to take up an offer from another driver to contest the Swedish Rally – where Liatti has no experience – it seems that the Italian's value as a steady number three to Colin McRae and

Kenneth Eriksson is worth more to the team as it bids to retain both the Makes and Drivers titles.

McRae spent a day at the show before heading for a 10-day promotional tour of the Far East. He has already been testing in Kenya, where he admitted the prospect of tackling the Safari in a competitive car excited him. 'I did the rally once before, in a little Vivio, but only

managed the opening day. This will be completely new for all of us. It won't be the fastest driver that wins the rally, it'll be the most careful and the one with a little bit of luck.

'I'm really enjoying it so far. I think we have a

good chance, especially without Toyota, but Mitsubishi will make it hard for us with its experience.

Till probably only be driving at 80% because it will be important to finish and gain points as this is only the second event in the series





One of Citroen's support drivers was killed last Wednesday when his Mercedes truck appeared to run over an anti-tank mine in southern Morocco.

killed by mine

Laurent Gueguen was burned to death while trapped in the truck's cab, his co-drivers Pascal Loudenot and Vincent Baudin unable to do

anything to help.

Event organiser Hubert Auriol himself a former competitor with Citroen's Dakar squad - had warned crews to stay on the marked route for the 747km stage from Foum El Hassan to Smara. But, instead of diverting around a pool, Gueguen carried straight on effectively 500m off the mineswept route.

United Nations troops had cleared the route for the event and the organisers had received the necessary authorisation for the rally to follow the marked track.

After discussions with the Citroen team, it was decided that the event should continue as planned as a mark of respect for Gueguen and the truck fleet run by Dakar veteran, Georges Groine.

Interim report, page 68



Francois Delecour testing the Peugeot 306 Maxi just after Christmas. Photo: Pascal Huit

# **Delecour 50-50 for Ford deal**

Francois Delecour takes the number one slot for this month's Monte Carlo Rally in a Peugeot 306 Maxi but his next outing could be with the official Ford team in Sweden.

Ford says he is 50-50 for the drive but is scheduled to fly to Sweden tomorrow to test with the team. He is not, we understand, the only driver in with a chance of the drive.

In Monte Carlo Delecour is reunited with Peugeot for the first time since 1990 and, while he tops the entry, it is Armin Schwarz, Patrick Bernardini or Bernard Beguin who should step up to claim the prizes when the event finishes in Monaco on January 25.

LEADING ENTRIES

1	Delecour/Sauvage Peugeot 306 Maxi
2	Schwarz/WichaToyota Celica GT-Four
3	Bernardini/Occelli Ford Escort Cosworth
4	Beguin/'Tilber' Subaru Impreza 555
5	Chatriot/Andrie Peugeot 306 Maxi
6	Puras/del BarrioSeat Ibiza
7	Vasin/Shchoukin Opel Astra Sport
8	Weber/HiemerSeat Ibiza
9	Gassner/Schrankl Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 3 (N)
10	Pianezzola/RoggiaToyota Celica GT-Four
11	Baroni/Giraudet Subaru Impreza 555
12	De Mevius/Fortin Ford Escort Cosworth
11	Cibora /Cross Skoda Folicia

# **Burns** confirmed at Mitsubishi

Richard Burns will contest this Asia-Pacific season's Championship for Mitsubishi.

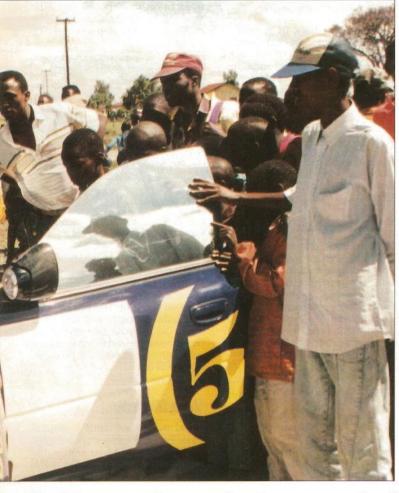
The confirmation of the long expected deal was made on Monday and Burns pronounced himself delighted with programme.

'I had options with both Ford and Subaru,' he said, 'but I chose Mitsubishi because I felt it gave me the best chance of the title. At Subaru I would always have been in the shadow of Colin and Kenneth, while at Ford it would have been Carlos in the way.

Burns automatically gets two World Championship events in the Asia-Pacific title bid but, while not officially confirmed by Japan this week, he also hopes to add two more. 'I could do well in Greece and Argentina,' he says, 'but if I'm looking ahead to next season I should try tougher events for the experience.

Burns confirmed that he has a one-year contract, but that there is an option for 1997. programme begins in Thailand at the beginning of March.

He is currently testing his new car at Chateau Lastours near Perpignan in southern France.





Jeremy Clarkson introduces Gwyndaf Evans and Ford's RS2000 kit-car to the NEC crowd

# Ford's kit car steals NEC show

Ford showed its Escort RS2000 kitcar project in action to the public for the first time last week at AUTOSPORT International.

Gwyndaf Evans gave the striking machine a series of demonstration runs during the Live Action show, but no times were recorded against Ford's regular opposition as the car came to the NEC with no testing under its belt at all.

'It felt pretty good out of the box,' enthused Evans. 'It was a real handful at first but we fiddled with ride heights and suspension angles and it responded positively to everything we tried. Of course you can't compare the NEC with anything the car will see on a real rally, but it was a good start.'

Evans admits that the engine gives out 'plenty of grunt' and when he got back into his usual F2 RS2000 at Boreham on Monday he thought there was something wrong with the engine!

'There's some suspension work to do and we have to sort out a hole in the power band,' concluded the Welshman. 'But I never thought I'd find anything with this much potential in front-wheel drive.'

# Kankkunen gets Castrol support

Juha Kankkunen is to contest the Swedish Rally in a Castrol-backed Celica GT-Four run by Toyota Sweden. He will be part of a three-car team, the Finn partnered in the team by Thomas Radstrom and Tomas Jansson.

Castrol's Olaf Schwaier suggested at AUTOSPORT International that there is a budget for Kankkunen to enter six rounds of the World Championship in importer teams using cars initially prepared in Cologne by Toyota Motorsport who cannot compete directly until the end of the season.

# Higgins set to defend Nissan's British crown

Mark Higgins is 99% sure to contest this year's Mobil 1/Top Gear British Rally Championship, initially with the factory Nissan Sunny GTI and then the Almera.

Higgins, now based at the Forest Experience Rally School in mid-Wales, will have a new co-driver for the season as Cliff Simmonds is unavailable this year.

The news, confirmed at AUTOSPORT International, silenced a rumour over Christmas that Nissan Motorsports Europe had scrapped its rally operation.

# Jordan ousts Oreille from UK Renault

Serge Jordan is to replace Alain Oreille in the Renault team for this year's British Rally Championship.

The 37-year-old (he was born on Christmas Day) has driven Renaults ever since he started rallying in 1986, predominantly in Group N.

However, his switch to Group A in 1994 netted a best result of ninth in Corsica, beaten in F2 only by Jean Ragnotti.

Jordan's position will be confirmed at the end of next week when Renault will also announce officially that Terry Harryman steps from co-driving Robbie Head to be the on-event manager for the

team in Britain this season. A replacement has yet to be named, although Campbell Roy is believed to be among the possibles.

Renault plans to send two of the new Megane kit cars to the series, even though they are ineligible to score points. The team is not prepared to build an

F2 version just for Britain and hopes that the RAC MSA will allow kit cars in 1997.



Jordan: UK Megane



Mark Lawn (right) received the AUTOSPORT F2 Amateur Award at Friday night's Mobil 1/Top Gear British Rally Championship awards. The prize was presented by Publisher Peter Foublister, Lawn intends to defend his title, but hopes to change from his Vauxhall Astra

### **NEWS IN BRIEF**

Stig Blomqvist won the Bergslagsrallyt at the weekend, the first round of the Swedish Championship. His Ford team mate, Per Svan, crashed twice on the opening stage and retired.

Sebastian Lindholm opened the defence of his Finnish title with victory over his cousin, Marcus Gronholm, on the Riihimaki Rally at the weekend. Tapio Laukkanen took the new seven-speed Golf GTI to an F2 win in the absence of Harri Rovanpera who is concentrating on British Group N.

Mark Higgins will combine his British Rally programme with driving a Martin Spurrell-prepared Subaru Impreza on the Thailand Championship.

The Vauxhall Rally of Wales will incorporate a superspecial on Wallasey Promenade. Although not 'head-to-head', two cars will be on the stage together.

This year's Perth Scottish Rally will be cut to two days (May 31 and June 1) at the request of competitors.

We are sad to record the sudden death of Professor Tim de Dombal on New Year's Eve. He was a guiding light in rally medical safety for 20 years, blending extensive knowledge with a common sense approach.

# AUTOSPORT

# What a way to start the year



he AUTOSPORT International show was a roaring success, better than ever before. The stands were brighter than ever before, the Live Action was excellent, the AUTOSPORT Engineering hall was a great success and the crowds broke all records. But best of all was the announcement

that Stewart Grand Prix will be entering the Formula 1 World Championship in 1997. This is just the sort of boost in the arm that the FIA's premier category needs.

At a time when grids are flagging, there are teams looking to graduate to F1 at the start of every season, all of which would be welcome. Yet Stewart Grand Prix is a team that will not only last the distance in F1, but we've every optimism that it will develop to be able to pressure the frontrunning teams. It will be well financed and thoroughly professional, and Jackie Stewart's standards of excellence in all he does will ensure that the top teams have to raise their game to match his lead in marketing and presentation.

However, it is for making Ford to commit fully to F1 that Stewart should be congratulated. For too long Ford has failed to capitalise on its involvement in F1. Stewart is also talking of utilising Ford's engineering talents in addition to those of its engine builders. And that, too, is excellent news if F1 is to become the stamping ground of manufacturers rather than an arena in which they simply provide engines.

It was also excellent to hear Stewart state that he hopes to run one of the drivers who has ascended Paul Stewart Racing's 'staircase of talent.' With drivers such as David Coulthard, Jan Magnussen, Gil de Ferran, Kelvin Burt and Dario Franchitti fitting into this category, talent truly will be rewarded.

Hopefully, we will see the car and its two drivers being unveiled at next year's AUTOSPORT International.

# **NEC extravaganza**

I've just come back from Friday's AUTOSPORT International show. It was terrific. My boyfriend and I thoroughly enjoyed ourselves, bumping into people like Tim Harvey, John Cleland, Murray Walker, Derek Warwick and, best of all, Martin Brundle - not to mention getting book signed by Jim Bamber.

I'd just like to thank everybody at AUTOSPORT and the NEC who made it such a special day.

See you next year! **Samantha Page** Kings Lynn, Norfolk

### **Stewart Grand Prix**

I am very excited by the prospect of Jackie Stewart becoming directly involved in Formula 1 again. I saw him race Ken Tyrrell's F1 cars and I've seen his son's team, Paul Stewart Racing, effectively blitz the opposition in the junior formulae.

As Jackie said at AUTOSPORT International, his name is on the block with this project, but no one becomes a triple world champion without holding a special desire to succeed, so hold confident that he will succeed.

I can see it now, Damon Hill for 1996 World Champion, then number one driver at Stewart Grand Prix in '97, giving the team its first victory late in the season.

**Tony Angel** Borehamwood, Hertfordshire

# Get well soon, Mika

I was very moved by 'Raising a Glass', Nigel Roebuck's *Fifth Column* article about Mika Hakkinen (AUTOSPORT, January 4).

Having been a fan of Mika's for several years, I was shocked and upset by his accident and feared the worst. Who would blame him if he never wanted to step into a racing car again?



We want to see the Hakkinen of old in '96

I have avidly been snapping up any information as to his progress and to read that 'the spark is still there' is wonderful news.

Good luck for 1996 Mika. May you gain strength and feel fitter every day. All your fans await your return to racing and thank everyone who helped to make this possible. **Pauline Brook** 

Godshill, Isle of Wight

## **Viva Murray**

Good news race fans! I suspect most Formula 1 followers assumed that the loss of F1 to ITV would bring about the usual disaster that is ITV sport, ie. hapless presenters with vacuous smiles and scant knowledge, cutting to adverts every time something exciting threatens to happen, having 'this programme sponsored by ....., and captions shoved down your throat every five minutes or so, but it's alright! We can relax! Mike Smith assures us that F1 coverage will be run along lines of quality



Jackie Stewart (in car), his son Paul and Ford's Albert Caspers (right) break the news

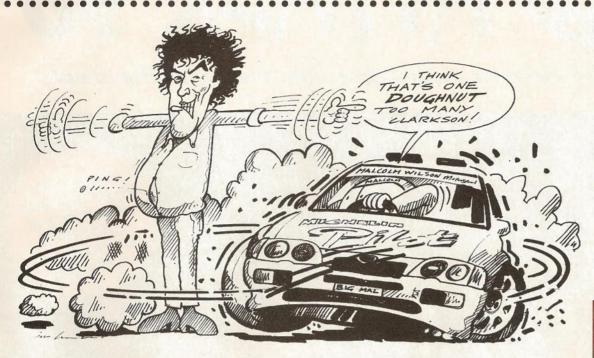
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programmes such as Body Heat! God save us, and Viva Murray! **Paul Martin** 

Eton, Berkshire

# F1 relays

There can be only one reason for Formula 1 to want to be broadcast on a commercial channel.

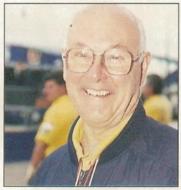
In order that the races become more closely fought, Grands Prix will be run as two hour-long sprints, with commercial breaks in between, thus removing the need for fuel stops and tyre changes; and because the cars are so much closer together, the front-runners lap the back markers rather less, resulting in the Fortis not getting such a disproportionate amount of TV coverage.

**Jason Caplin** e-mail

# **Commercial killjoy**

Your European readers are debating if Formula 1 would be better or worse with TV commercials. Well. here in Australia we see F1 on the

commercial Channel 9 network. In just about every F1 race, this station goes to an ad break only to return with a voice over saying 'while we were in the ad break race leaders Hill and Schumacher had a big coming together...



Murray's comments will be missed in '97

They then show you a poxy slow motion replay of the coming together, not the vital 30 seconds or so leading up to the incident, nor the comments by Murray Walker

during the incident.(Slow-motions give you no idea of the real speed or impact of a crash).

Take it from me, TV adverts destroy the drama of racing.

Simon White Sydney, Australia

# **Ever-improving breed**

I don't know whether other AUTOSPORT readers agree, but I feel that the level of depth, spread and of editorial coverage. presentation and the creation of new initiatives like special supplements, calendars, reader offers etc in the magazine over the vear has improved immeasurably, making this the best racing magazine in the country. Even Jim Bamber has raised a grin or two!

I just wanted to register that for this particular reader, the fresh thinking and imaginative innovations have been appreciated. It's easy to be critical and equally easy to neglect to communicate the positive stuff. For me and thousands

For Stewart is dyslexic

and that means he has had

to work harder than most to

world. His natural humour and

style covers the problem when

speaking but putting anything

on paper was a nightmare that

make his corporate image

succeed in the business

of other racers and enthusiasts AUTOSPORT has always been Number One. It was that brand loyalty that made me write to you in the first place.

I can only say that if you continue to attain the standards of your January 4 issue then your team will have some very happy readers. Congratulations!

Frank Barnard e-mail

## **Home James**

Welcome home James Weaver!

May I congratulate Gulf Racing in enticing home such a fine driver. Always the bridesmaid, but never the bride!

James has finished second in the Formula Ford Festival, second in the



Weaver (right) confirms his GT drive

BTCC, second at Le Mans and, yes, second in America in IMSA!

Let's hope that this year he will receive the important win he so richly deserves.

Good luck in the Global Endurance GT Series and also at the Le Mans 24 Hours.

Welcome home!

Roger Pedrick Tunbridge Wells, Kent

You can write to us at AUTOSPORT Letters, 38-42 Hampton Road, Teddington, Middlesex, TW11 OJE, fax us on 0181 9435922, or e-mail us at either autosport@atlas.co.uk or Compuserve on 100634, 1072

## WHAT THE PAPERS SAY WITH KEITH OSWIN

The launch of Stewart Grand Prix at AUTOSPORT International netted quite a splash in the papers this week, as one should have expected.

Predictably the Telegraph did the job better than most, getting under the skin of the announcement and those who made it, rather than simply churning out the bare facts.

There was humour in the aftermath as well, Kate Battersby reflecting on Tuesday that at last week's launch 'a new record has been set for the jolly game of guessing a team's driver line-up.' In simple terms, she means that the 1997 silly season starts right here.

She spent quite some time with JYS during his transatlantic team launch and

Time to turn another corner world-beating driving abilities. Stewart clan return to the global battlefield discovered that those who left the NEC with the former triple World Champion and master businessman's autograph

held something as finely crafted as his

Overcome it he did and, as a former teacher, I would love to be a fly on the wall when he goes back to the school in Dumbarton that labelled him stupid having failed to spot the problem ..

needed to be overcome.

Already the papers are talking about

the driver line-up, as Kate predicted, but whereas most new teams shop in the bargain basement, Stewart Grand Prix is peppering names such as Hill and Coulthard. Pie in the sky? Probably not for someone of Stewart's pedigree in the world of commerce and sport.

Stewart flew to Britain from Detroit, leaving behind him a land where the biggest story at present is the clash between Tony George's Indy Racing League and IndyCar. The two run separate championships and they clash head on when the US 500 runs on the same day as George's Indianapolis 500. USA Today compares the clash as a football game trying to take on the Superbowl, No contest...



You've seen it indoors, now come and see it on the track!



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE EUROCAR TEAM ON PRODUCING YET ANOTHER WINNING FORMULA















# **EUROCAR 1996 FIXTURES**

MARCH	17 SUNDAY	BRANDS HATCH - SEASON PREVIEW RACE		15 SATURDAY 16 SUNDAY	MONDELLO PARK - ROUND 8 MONDELLO PARK - ROUND 9
APRIL	8 MONDAY 20 SATURDAY	MALLORY PARK - ROUND 1 PEMBREY - ROUND 2	JULY	27 SATURDAY 28 SUNDAY	LYDDEN HILL - ROUND 10- LYDDEN HILL - ROUND 11
	21 SUNDAY	PEMBREY - ROUND 3	AUGUST	11 SUNDAY	MALLORY PARK - ROUND 12
MAY	4/5 SAT/SUN	KNOCKHILL - ROUND 4		26 MONDAY	MALLORY PARK - ROUND 13
	12 SUNDAY	BRANDS HATCH - ROUND 5	SEPTEMBER	22 SUNDAY	BAARLO, HOLLAND - ROUND 14
	27 MONDAY	MALLORY PARK - ROUND 6	OCTOBER	6 SUNDAY	LYDDEN HILL - ROUND 15
JUNE	9 SUNDAY	BRANDS HATCH - ROUND 7		19/20 SAT/SUN	BRANDS HATCH - ROUND 16

ALL FIXTURES SUBJECT TO CONFIRMATION

# A major new player



t was not, in truth, the best-kept secret motor racing has known. By mid-December rumours were rife that Ford were on the point of announcing something spectacular, and that Jackie Stewart was involved. I spent Christmas and the New Year in New York, and various racing friends over there could speak of nothing else.

Finally, it became clear that the announcement would be made in Detroit, on January 4, and then again at the AUTOSPORT International show in Birmingham. In terms of pure news, there was thus little to be gained from attending Stewart's press conference at the NEC, for the story – by journalists who had schlepped over to Michigan – was already splashed over the papers. But it says much for the affection and admiration in which JYS is held that we wouldn't have thought of missing his announcement.

It sobered me the other day to realise that I first interviewed Jackie a full 25 years ago, at Paul Ricard in 1971. He was fresh off an aeroplane at the time, and it struck me last Friday that nothing changes. One of the Stewart books is called *Faster!*, but the original working title had been *Where Am I Going Today?* Should Jackie ever write a further volume of autobiography, that title would hold good. His travel schedule remains ferocious.

After the Detroit conference, he and Paul

caught the 'red eye' flight to
London, then flew up to
Birmingham, but as he arrived at
the AUTOSPORT stand his step was
as bouncy as ever. Endlessly,
tirelessly he answered questions
about Stewart Grand Prix.

Bernie Ecclestone is much pleased by the arrival, in 1997, of this new team. Last year he told me he had no worries about the size of the grids in F1, that he preferred a smaller field of really good cars to a huge one padded out by no-hopers. 'This is Formula 1,' he said, 'and I don't want teams in it that don't really belong here.' Amen to that, I agreed, and I now keenly await the day when a similar policy applies to drivers.

The Stewart team is quite obviously the kind of outfit Bernie wants to see aboard. Anything connected with JYS brings with it instant credibility, a guarantee that nothing will be half-hearted, and Ford's long-term involvement with the project adds further weight.

I am heartened to see Henry take this step, for it has long been my impression, rightly or wrongly, that the company's commitment to F1 has been lacking, in the sense of 'A day late, a dollar light.' Ford has been involved in Grand Prix racing, one way and another, since 1967, but in the recent era, certainly, I never felt that its commitment was on the level of Renault or Honda.

It was for this reason, more than any other, that Eddie Jordan chose to go with Peugeot rather than Ford at the end of 1994 – a year in which Ford won the World Championship, with Schumacher and Benetton, yet somehow found itself, at season's end, unable to tie up with another team at the top level.

For years my colleagues and I debated Ford's apparent unwillingness to go the whole nine yards in F1, and many a time someone would suggest that eventually, given his long association with the company, there had to be an involvement with Stewart. When I asked him about it last week though, Jackie said that the question had come up only recently.

'The first serious discussion I had with Ford was almost casual, on the Sunday evening of the Canadian Grand Prix last June. We were flying back in the corporate jet, and I said, "You know, unless we – 'we' as in 'Ford' – put together something totally different, we're not going anywhere in F1 as a company." I told them I thought they should start with a clean sheet.

'Ford saw the logic of that, and they asked for a presentation, which we made in October. We got a decision at the beginning of December. As a matter of fact, we very nearly – as a team, as Paul Stewart Racing – came into F1 a year ago. We had the offer to purchase other racing teams, but we felt we didn't want to carry anyone else's baggage – we wanted to go in with a clean sheet.'

Quite clearly, Stewart's 31-year association

with the Ford Motor Company has opened a great many doors previously out of bounds. He spoke at length, for example, about 'technical integration' between team and engine manufacturer.

'I think you're going to see Ford providing us with more technology than they've ever provided before in F1 – and that, I have no doubt whatsoever, is also going to have an effect on the other engine manufacturers currently involved.

Right now, if you look how things are in an F1 pit, a team's mechanics never touch an engine, and the engine people never touch a chassis. There's a very clear demarcation line, and while that will probably remain in some respects, I think there's an enormous wealth of knowledge out there to be drawn on. I see that as one of the main ingredients in our association with Ford.'

Not surprisingly, Jackie said it was way too early to start speculating about drivers for the new team, although he allowed that he would seek a blend of experience and youth, a team leader thoroughly versed in the ways of Grand Prix racing, backed by a young charger.

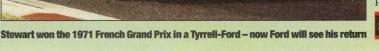
'We need someone hungry, someone who's going to drive us, as well, and influence us. I know that Jim Clark had a lot to do with Colin Chapman's success, I hope I had something to do with Ken Tyrrell's success, I know that Niki Lauda had a lot to do with Ferrari's success. In the same way, Schumacher is going to a team that hasn't won the World Championship for 16 years – 250 Grands Prix and I'm sure he's going to push that team into doing things in a different way.

'You need two good drivers, because otherwise one of them falls asleep. The best racing I ever had was when I had a good team mate, because I had to deliver more than him, and that's what you need. Perhaps we can't expect a star to come in at the start, but perhaps there's a talented driver out there, convinced – as I was when I went to Tyrrell – that there's enough here to make it happen, and wanting to be in on the ground floor.'

If anything mildly surprised me about the press conference, it was perhaps that Stewart seemed cautious in his early expectations of the team, speaking in terms of

a point or two in the first season, and regular podium finishes only after some five years.

Further reflection reveals that Jackie is surely right to keep his hopes in check at this stage, for there is nothing more dreary, nor more self-deluding, than folk who go on about blowing people's doors off. Rightly, he wishes to keep the pressure on Stewart Grand Prix within bounds, but anyone who knows the man knows that, ultimately, he has the very highest expectations of his F1 team. His reputation precedes him.



See Stewart feature, page 24

### ARMCHAIR ENTHUSIAST



## **ALFA ROMEO 155 V6 DTM.** BY MINICHAMPS, £49.99

Alfisti everywhere will approve of this 1/18 scale replica of the wonderfully chunky bewinged 155 V6 which carried Nicola Larini to the German Touring Car Championship in 1993. Minichamps has created a superbly finished companion to its splendid DTM Mercedes-Benzs with full cockpit detail. Team mate Alessandro Nannini's version is one of three to follow. And better news for lovers of the Torinese marque is that the 1995 Alfa is in build for release in all versions – our favourite is Michael Bartels's stunning orange Jagermeister car. Next up for DTM theme collectors, at the same price, is Klaus Ludwig's rakish Opel Calibra. Call UK importer Amerang on 01903 765496 for the address of your local stockist

### WHAT'S ON THE BOX

Thu Jan 11 2030-2100 Jeremy Clarkson's Motorworld, Clarkson reports back from Cuba, and among those he interviews is Arnold Rodriguez - the man who kidnapped Juan-Manuel Fangio. Fri Jan 12 2000-2030 Top Gear Motorsport, a report on the AUTOSPORT International show, and, most specifically, the stunning indoor Live Action.

Thu Jan 11 1430-1500 Cars on Ice, Andros Trophy racing from La Bresse. Fri Jan 12 0800-0900 Motors; 1700-1800 International Motorsports Report; 2000-2030 Cars on Ice

Mon Jan 15 2300-0030 Speedworld, featuring NASCAR Winston Cup review and Andros Trophy from Isola

Wed Jan 17 0730-0800 Speedworld; 1800-1900 Motors, features Granada-Dakar trucks, Andros Trophy, British Formula 2000 and the Spanish Touring Car Championship reviews.

Sat Jan 13 1600-1700 American Sports Cavalcade; 1700-1900 Opposite Lock -International Motorsports

Mon Jan 15 0800-0830 World of Speed

and Beauty
Tues Jan 16 0800-0900 American Sports
Cavalcade; 1830-1900 British Rally Championship season review; 2330-0000 British Rally Championship; 1130-0030 Golden age of motor racing, SS2

See page 360 for all the latest motorsport news as it breaks, plus reports and results from the major races and rallies.



# Things are getting better a

t's looking very good this year with Arrows. We did excellent times at Estoril last month, and I think we can be very competitive this year. Alan Jenkins is a very good designer, as he's shown over the years. If you look at the car, it's very nicely built and is a very good package. I think Alan is very, very clever. The Hart engine is better than I ever expected. It has lots of torque and horsepower, and this year it will be even quicker.

Of course, money is always the problem. The more money you can find, the better job you can do, and the more testing you can have. The team, my manager and I are trying to get as much support as we can.

I don't have any regrets about going to Benetton in 1994. I don't think starting too soon in Formula 1 was the problem. If you remember, the first time I ever tested an F1 car at Estoril, in 15 laps I was already very quick.

In the sixth race I got on to the odium and I must say I was very happy with it. But I think I could have done a lot more if I had felt better in that car. If the car suits me, and I feel confident in the car, then I can go to the limit with it



and do a good job.

Benetton was a very good team and they supported me very well, but they were fixed on Michael (Schumacher). I understood that, because Michael could win the World Championhship. But in '94 there were a lot of changes on the car, and there wasn't time for me to feel confident in it. When we went to a test, we'd always put everything in to get the best

results with the changes made under the new rules. And Michael was winning races with the car, so for Benetton it was fine, but for me it wasn't fine. And I was never sure if I'd be doing the next race, which is never very good.

Simtek was a very small team, but I felt very good in that car. I showed that there was a lot of potential, but there was no money. With the new gearbox and no testing we expected problems, but we couldn't solve them because we didn't have the money or the people to do it.

However, it was good for me. I was running in sixth and seventh positions in Argentina and Imola, so that was very good. We expected a lot from Monaco especially, because the car was good, and I had confidence in it. But then everything turned very,

very bad. It was very frustrating. We couldn't find the money, we couldn't find the sponsors, so after missing Canada we said, 'okay, stop and let's both go our own ways.' Nick Wirth went to Benetton, and I was looking for a new team.

I had a lot of talks with different teams, but really I was waiting until the end of the year, because all the teams had drivers, and it



Verstappen impressed hugely when he tested for Arrows at Estoril last month

# nd better

was very difficult to replace another at that time.

I did a little testing for Benetton, at Jerez. Flavio Briatore had an option on me, but I knew he wouldn't take the option because he had a lot of new drivers. And if he took the option, I had to race with Benetton. He couldn't, because he had signed Alesi and he was talking with Berger, so he let me go.

That was actually a good thing for me, because it let me talk to the other teams for '96. I don't want to be a test driver, especially as this season will be my third year in F1. I want to race; being a test driver is

I want to race, being a test driver is nice but you have to race to learn the circuits

very nice, but you have to race to learn the circuits plus how to race and so on. If he's racing, a driver knows he has to test to make the car better, but I don't want to test for somebody else and then let them get the benefit out of it!

I went to almost every race after Simtek stopped, though. I saw Jackie Oliver a lot, I spoke to Sauber, I spoke to Ligier. I must say they were very interested as well, but Jackie offered me a test at Silverstone in October. It went well, but everything was in a rush and it was just before the Japanese GP. Then at Estoril in December it was very, very good.

I think the team is very happy,

I think the team is very happy, because at the Portuguese GP the best qualifying time they had was a 1m24.9s, and I did a 1m21.9s. Conditions were better, but if you look at Williams-Renault, they only gained 0.6s.

Just in the first corner I was 20mph quicker. When I did the time I had 20kg of fuel, and the tyre pressures were up too high, so I lost a bit in the chicane with wheelspin. I could have been maybe 0.2s quicker.

In the high-speed corners we're looking very good; it's just the slow speed corners where we have to find the time. But the important thing is that I feel confident in the car. For sure we're not at the end yet, we're just starting, and it's going to get better

### **10 YEARS AGO**

Racing car constructor Jean Rondeau was killed in his Porsche road car soon after Christmas (AUTOSPORT, January 9, 1986). He scored his greatest triumph when he won the 1980 Le Mans 24 Hours in one of his own cars along with Jean-Pierre Jaussaud.

Also in the news Rene Arnoux had moved firmly into contention for the Ligier-Renault drive. Philippe Streiff was looking to Tyrrell, while Philippe Alliot was set to move back to F3000.



Rondeau and Jaussaud celebrate victory

### 20 YEARS AGO

Frank Williams unveiled the Wolf Williams with which Jacky Ickx was to contest the 1976 Formula 1 World Championship (Autosport, January 9, 1976). Meanwhile American driver Al Unser looked likely to make his Grand Prix debut alongside countryman Mario Andretti at the Long Beach Grand Prix in the Vel's Parnelli Racing Team. Harald Ertl was rumoured to have closed a deal to take over the running of the stumbling Hesketh team.



Frank Williams (far left) and Jacky Ickx (in car) prepare for the Grand Prix season



Jack Brabham's F3 car proved quick

### **30 YEARS AGO**

Jack Brabham managed to dip 0.4s below the Formula 3 lap record at Brands Hatch while testing his new car fitted with a revolutionary Daf Variomatic transmission (AUTOSPORT, January 14, 1966).

Firestone's influence in European motorsport continued to grow, having already secured deals with Lotus and McLaren Grand Prix teams, the Anderson and Parnell and a Ecurie Suisse (Formula 2) squads also signed up. Ferrari announced that it would enter three prototypes and a Dino in the Sebring 12 Hours.

Meanwhile, Technical Editor John Bolster continued his literal assault on the introduction of the 70mph speed limit.

### **40 YEARS AGO**

Stirling Moss visited Auckland for the New Zealand Grand Prix and came away with two victories (Autosport, January 13, 1956). Driving his own 2.5-litre Maserati, he won the 100 lap Grand Prix ahead of Tony Gaze and Peter Whitehead in 3-litre Ferraris. Moss also won the Ardmore Handicap for sports cars driving a Porsche 550. The Englishman had also just signed to race for Aston Martin in the World Sports Car Championship.

### **ANNIVERSARIES**

Jan 11 Nick Baird (born 1955), Brett Bodine (b 1959), Carroll Shelby (b 1923), Thierry Tassin (b 1959) Jan 12 Olivier Gendebien (b 1924),

Emanuele Pirro (b 1962), Lloyd Ruby (b 1928), Piero Taruffi (died 1988)

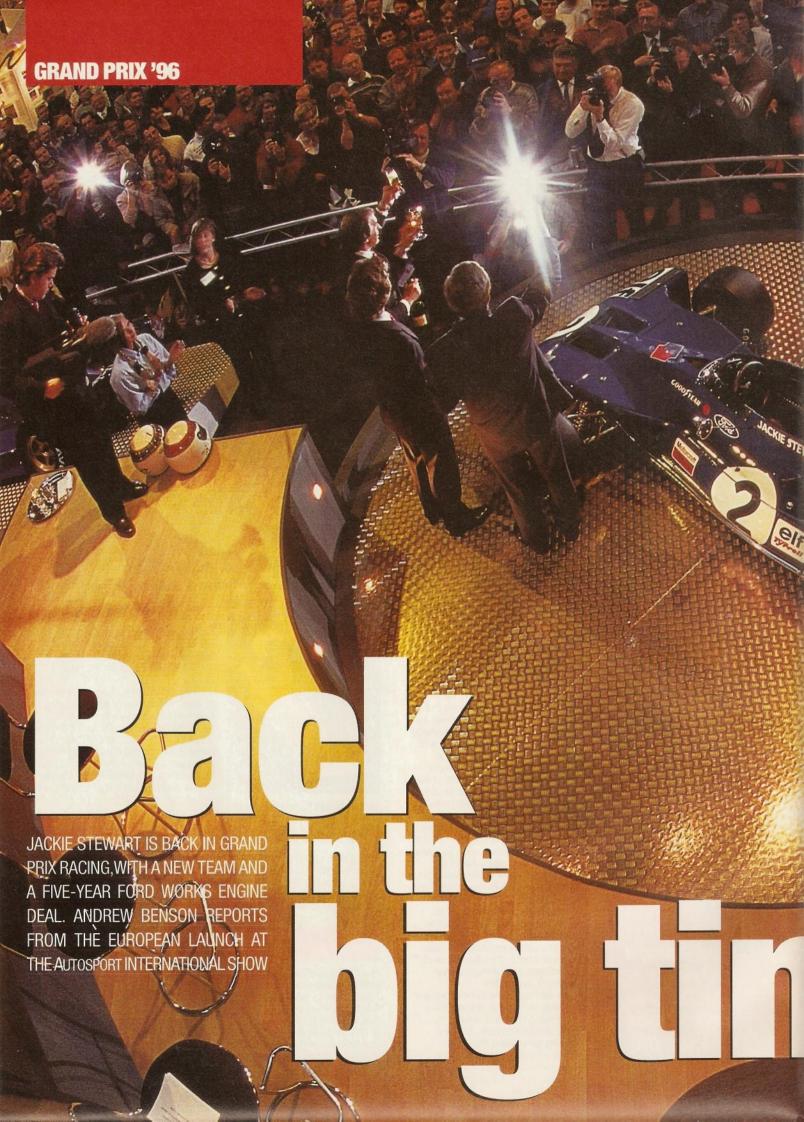
Jan 13 Mauro Forghieri (b 1935), Ernie Irvan (b 1959), Gianni Morbidelli (b 1968), Ron Tauranac (b 1925), John Bolster

(d 1984)

Jan 14 Ian Harrower (b 1947), Stuart Turner (b 1933), Jason Pollock (b 1971), Alberto Rodriguez Larreta (b 1934, d March 11, 1977)

Jan 15 Antonio Albacete (b 1965), Jacques Coulon (b 1942), Max Harvey (b 1941), David Kennedy (b 1953) Jan 16 AJ Foyt (b 1935), Piercarlo Ghinzani (b 1952)

Jan 17 Richard Burns (b 1971)



# STEWART'S F1 RETURN

t's realistic that, at the end of five years, we should be able to get on a podium and be a regular points collector. And if we could collect one or two points in 1997, it would be a great achievement. That is Jackie Stewart's excessively cautious and somewhat disingenuous assessment of the aims of Stewart Grand Prix the new alliance between Ford, the triple World Champion and his son's Paul Stewart Racing team, which marks a new chapter and an unheard-of effort in Ford's long history in Formula 1.

I'm really being very modest in our expectations, he continues. I don't think we should be overoptimistic. That is a curse, and it's unfair on our staff. There is nothing worse than disappointment in life.

The announcement of the new five-year deal, which will this year see the Stewarts building up a team for a debut in the 1997 F1 World Championship, kicked off the new Grand Prix year with a bang. It also introduces the welcome prospect of a well-funded, ambitious new team in F1 - one that will bring a refreshingly open, publicity-led new approach into the paddock

Ford has been criticised in the past for a lack of commitment to F1 but it is promising a closer link with Stewart Grand Prix than any engine manufacturer has ever had with an F1 team. Accordingly, it will be expecting a little more than a few podium places for its £100 million-plus investment over the next five years, but Stewart steadfastly plays down expectations public, at least.

If we were able to reach the midfield positions in the early race that would be pretty impressive said Stewart. 'I don't think we can expect any more than that. We will do everything in our power to do it right, but everybody in F1 is so professional. And we've got to serve our apprenticeship.

been surprised by it. The media

interest has been quite beyond my expectations, and in a way that's negative for us. We do not have aspirations beyond reality. Paul and I are of that mentality, and so is Ford, and that is why Ford has been thinking long-term. We can't do a global job on F1 even in five years.

Perhaps not, but it will be difficult to persuade the outside world not to compare Stewart Grand Prix's first season with Jordan's in 1991. when the Irish team – itself a graduate from Formula 3000 with a successful record - finished fifth in the Constructors' Championship Paul explains his father's extreme

caution like this: Jordan's was a hell of a performance - although they dropped off a lot the following year and if we can do that in our first season it would be fantastic. But to aim at being fifth given the current positioning and abilities of the top teams would be unrealistic. It's more difficult now, I would say. 'Getting in and being a midfield

runner is not going to be easy, but it's not going to be insurmountable. But when you start trying to break into the top four, it takes a serious amount of money. They've got vast resources and - let's not kid ourselves - right now we're just a handful of people in Milton Keynes. So that's why he wants to be cautious about it.

'We're very fortunate in having a very good engine, and I know that some of the top teams were after it right up until the eve of the announcement. They didn't know it was such a big programme.

'PSR has been a successful team. We enjoy success and we want into the top four, it takes a serious

We enjoy success and we want success, so we're going to work as hard as possible to deliver it. My father's cautious because he never promised success when he was

racing. He worked as hard as possible to get it and it came.

We would probably be disappointed if we were just getting podium finishes in five years' time. but I think it's a little dangerous to predict what we will be doing in five years' time. But make no mistake, we are committed to winning, and we will do whatever we can to win as quickly as possible in a realistic set of circumstances."

Ford flew 55 journalists over to its headquarters in Detroit for last Thursday's announcement, before chairman Albert Caspers flew back across the Atlantic to the AUTOSPORT International show in Birmingham to launch the new new alliance was featured in nearly all the national press in Britain.

afforded this kind of attention, but then this is no ordinary new team. Quite apart from an enviable record in the lower formulae, which includes 88 wins since PSR's inception in 1988, Stewart Grand Prix is the first team to enter F1 with a works engine deal since Ligier 🕨



Jackie Stewart (on left) and son Paul are playing down the team's expectations

did so with Matra in 1976. But it is, of course, Jackie Stewart's association with the team that has guaranteed all the press.

The triple World Champion retired in 1973, but he has retained a high-profile involvement with motor racing, not only with his son's team but also with lucrative promotional contracts with such companies as Moet et Chandon and Rolex, as well as Ford. And, perhaps because of this as much as his driving record, he is one of the few names from the sport's past still able to excite newspaper editors.

To that extent, the new team has already won Ford probably more coverage outside the specialist press than Ford achieved throughout the whole of 1995 despite the fact that its engine had won the World Championship with Michael Schumacher and Benetton the previous year. In that way, the new deal is already a triumph for the US giant.

But in some ways this is a risky decision for both parties. Ford has chosen to put its works F1 effort behind a brand new team (see separate story, page 29); and Stewart, although he might deny it, is putting a hard-won reputation at risk in the remorselessly tough

world of F1, which has never been one to respect past success.

though, appears Stewart, unconcerned. 'People ask me why in the hell are you doing this. Why put my reputation on the line? If you live in cotton wool, you only taste cotton wool, and I don't think that tastes very good. I've been taking calculated risks all my life. I try to eliminate unnecessary hazards. We will have to try to avoid the unnecessary pitfalls that have befallen many of the top teams. It

will be a well-planned, structured and financed team. A five-year contract with Ford is unheard of, and it's a tremendously brave move by Ford. I've studied the top teams of F1. I know what they're about. There are a lot of teams who would give their right arm for the Ford factory deal in F1, so we're very thrilled.

'I really don't see that I'm putting my reputation at risk. It's just a normal challenge and a natural progression from the formation of the three teams in 1990. But it's not going to be easy. We don't expect to go out there and be competing with Ferrari, Benetton, Williams and McLaren, or even Jordan to begin with. It is a five-year programme and we have to think long-term.

'Hard work, determination, funding a works engine, people around you - that's how we intend to succeed where others have failed. We've got to be quite humble, we're going to suffer from a certain amount of defeat, and we're going

If you live in cotton wool, you only taste cotton wool. l've been taking calculated risks all of my life JACKIE STEWART

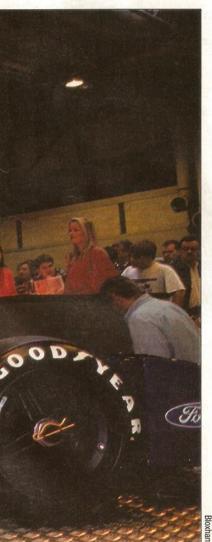








Above: Stewart won three world titles with Ford and been an adviser for Ford for nearly 30 years, so he has much to lose if **Stewart Grand Prix** doesn't deliver. Left: He helped turn the **Tyrrell-entered Matra-**Ford into a World Championship winner, and is looking for a driver to make the same commitment to his team. Below: The Tyrrell 003, which has won more GPs than any other chassis, was at the team's launch



to take a certain amount of stick from time to time, but we're just going to do the best we can.'

Stewart negotiated the new contract in a remarkably short amount of time. A first discussion, which he describes as 'almost casual' came after last work Canadian GP, when he suggested to Ford, in his capacity as an adviser (which he has been for nearly 30 years), that it needed radically to overhaul its approach to F1.

After that, the Stewarts made a presentation in October, and started negotiating seriously in November. A decision came in December.

Paul Stewart says PSR had had offers before to go into F1 - especially in 1990. But only now has everything - PSR's experience in racing, desire to go into F1, and Ford's new levels of commitment -

come together.

The technology at Ford is going to bring a completely new dimension to what we think of as a factory alliance,' said Jackie. 'Until now, manufacturers have been engine suppliers. Why, in an industry that is second only to construction as the largest manufacturing industry in the world, should they be narrowing themselves down to purely engine suppliers when they have this fantastic wealth of engineering, equipment and personnel. I see a tremendous wealth of opportunity that Grand Prix racing has never tapped. I have more keys to more doors within Ford than perhaps anybody else to tap it. This technology union and marriage is going to mean much more in the future and I feel we're going to be writing a new book on that one, guarantee the other and manufacturers will follow.

'Ford will provide more technology to us than they've ever provided in their history in F1. There is such an enormous amount of wealth to be drawn on, and I see that as one of the major aspects of our relationships with Ford. Why let its resources go when you have

access to them?

McLaren, Benetton, Ferrari and so on have been at it a long time, so we're not going to be able to go out on to the race track and do something very different. Likewise, we can't make our pitstops much faster than these guys do. So we've got to do it differently off-track to begin with, to secure the financial support and the backing that will require the technology and people that we'll require to start winning. We've got to be better at hospitality and entertainment, at bringing in companies that perhaps have never been in the sport before, and showing them the business opportunities. And they are so big, you cannot imagine what there is out there. Companies that have never thought of motor racing before can see business in the Asian basin, Australasia, all over the world.

### WHAT'S IN ITFOR FORD?

### FORD'S FIVE-YEAR DEAL WITH STEWART GRAND PRIX MARKS A DISTINCT SHIFT IN THE US GIANT'S APPROACH TO FORMULA 1

Until now, Ford has been renowned more as a company that merely dabbled in Formula 1, providing money for Cosworth to produce an invariably excellent engine, but keeping itself at arm's length. It has also been accused of relying far too much on its heritage as a promotional tool, rather than seriously publicising its most recent successes. And never was this better illustrated than by the startling lack of promotion it gave to the fact that it won the World

Championship in 1994 with Michael Schumacher and Benetton.

However, it now seems Ford has realised that F1 is crucial to the company's motorsport goals, and that it has to be committed to it - and be seen to be so. It is a bold step, but the company's top brass have been watching Jackie Stewart in his capacity as technical adviser for nearly 30 years. They don't see the new liaison with the Stewarts as a risk.

As one Ford insider put it: 'Jackie has incredible ability as a motivator and galvaniser and Ford believes he can do a very good job for

us. He's full of dynamism, very progressive, very strong and has good ideas. At the marketing and communication side of the business, he is excellent - probably better than anyone currently in F1.

With this in mind, the fact that Paul Stewart Racing never managed to win the Formula 3000 International Championship to add to its many British Formula 3 and Vauxhall titles is seen as practically irrelevant.



'The technical side is more open to question, of course,' the insider said. 'But Jackie has not been in racing for over 30 years, establishing the reputation he has, to risk destroying that reputation. He has an extremely strong relationship with Ford; the people in the company trust him. They know that Jackie will not put his reputation on the line, and won't do it in a half-hearted way. But at the same time they know they won't be winning races in 1997.'

Stewart's position as a man behind the development of Ford's road cars for so many vears also allows the company to make a more direct link between success on the track and the quality of its road cars. Albert Caspers (pictured, top), the chairman of Ford Europe,

said: 'For Ford, Jackie is more than a racing driver. He is a highly respected and valued technical adviser and development consultant. Many Ford vehicles are the better for his input. He understands how Ford does business, and has a single-minded determination to succeed. The aim of this liaison is to maximise the benefits for Ford.'

Jackie's son, Paul Stewart (pictured, above), adds: 'They want to use Stewart Grand Prix as a gymnasium for their engineers and technology to benefit their production cars, and because of my father's relationship with the company there are open doors for us. We will have to make sure we give back to them more than they give to us.

'We don't want just to be receiving engines and giving press releases out. We want the senior management to feel that this is as much a Ford team as it is Stewart Grand Prix.

This is one foot up, and that's going to be the key of our beginning.

We have to walk and sometimes crawl before we think of running. I am not getting any delusions of grandeur. I'm being very realistic. We will be a well-profiled team and we will be professional, and I hope we will bring another dimension to the sport. New blood is always healthy. I think F1 has to have a new breath of air.

As is the way of things in F1, speculation has already started as to who may drive for the new team in 1997. Both Paul and Jackie last week said they wanted one experienced driver, and one man new to F1, preferably from PSR's 'Staircase of Talent' of junior

formula teams - which could be any one of David Coulthard, Indycar Rookie of the Year Gil de Ferran, British Touring Car star Kelvin Burt, McLaren test driver Jan Magnussen, International Touring Car star Dario Franchitti, or PSR 1995 Formula 3000 driver Allan McNish.

'I would rather not have a dream team,' says Jackie. 'A lot of those have failed and I think we need to be more cautious than that and less ambitious than that. Scots are quite dour about it. We're never very optimistic, but when we do well, we're hell of a pleased with ourselves, and I would rather feel that we can do it that way, rather than have dreams and aspirations that are beyond us at this stage.'

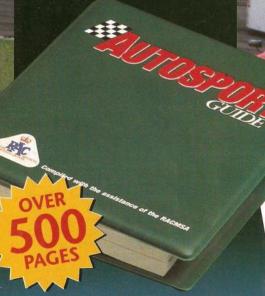
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■ Stewart recognises that a star driver would have very different aspirations from that.

Of course. We need a hungry person who's going to drive us and influence us. Jim Clark had a lot to do with [Lotus boss] Colin

Ford will

provide more

technology

to us than

they've ever

provided in

their history

in Formula 1

JACKIE STEWART

Chapman's success. I hope that I had a lot to do with Ken Tyrrell's success. I know that Niki Lauda and Jody Scheckter had a lot to do with Ferrari's success. It needs that.

'But you need two drivers, as one driver falls asleep. The best racing I ever had is when I had a good team mate. I had to deliver a little more than him, and he was constantly

sticking a pin in my backside. That's what Damon Hill had with David Coulthard.

'But we can't expect a star to come in at this level. But if they are convinced, as I was when I went to Ken Tyrrell, that there is enough in there to make it happen and they wanted to be in on the ground floor - if that's practical and possible - that may be a long-term view taken by a talented driver who not only has confidence in himself, but confidence in the future we have and the engineering back-up.'

For now, the Stewarts will quietly go about the business of building up a Grand Prix team.

'We're not coming in as a super team,' says Paul. 'We're going to be a little team initially and we are going to grow - and that's why we'll be starting by designing and building the car ourselves, but using outside contractors [to do the carbon fibre and manufacturing work and so on].

'We'll want to start building

our own facility when we are mature enough to handle that: if you suddenly step into a factory when you don't know what's going on, then you're going to mess up.'

So caution and modesty are the watchwords for Jackie Stewart's return to F1 - as a team owner. But make no mistake about it, for all the protestations, Stewart Grand Prix is out to win,

and win big time, just as Jackie did in his career as a driver. In time, the team's success looks inevitable and, whatever happens, F1 will be better off for its presence.

Above: The
Stewarts have no
illusions over how
hard the road
ahead will be, and
the return Ford
Europe chairman
Caspers (on right,
above) expects for
his money.
Right: Jordan's
entrance into F1
will provide
Stewart GP with
valuable lessons

# Pireland ISMOBAN

# BEGINNER'S LUCK

# FEW F1 TEAMS HIT THE GRID RUNNING. JORDAN DID, SO HOW DOES ITS COMMERCIAL BOSS RATE STEWART GP'S CHANCES?

The plight of Pacific and Simtek in the past year has emphasised how difficult it is for new teams to make the leap into Grand Prix racing. Stewart Grand Prix, though, will head into its first Formula 1 season, in 1997, with more advantages than any new team for many a year.

The biggest of these is a works engine deal. According to lan Phillips, the commercial director of Jordan, 'That frees up effectively £5 million, which you can spend on other things — a top driver, or a bigger test team, or having your own wind tunnel.' He should know: Jordan graduated to F1 from the lower racing echelons in 1991, but did not win a wothwhile works engine contract until its liaison with Peugeot started last season.

Phillips reckons that Stewart's and Ford's contacts with Goodyear will ensure a free tyre contract in its debut year – new teams usually have to pay, and only the very best teams are given their tyres for free. But Phillips shares Jackie and Paul Stewart's belief that the first few years will still be tough.

'A works engine is a big help on

cashflow,' he says. 'It saves millions, but being the Ford works team brings its own pressure. If you go in as a customer, the only pressure is from yourself.'

Phillips backs the Stewarts' decision to start small and build up slowly. 'Super teams last a lot less time than a team that starts small and grows in the way that Jordan has,' he says. 'You've got to be sensible with your ambition. You need to build a solid foundation. And there's really no point going in with a megabudget. If you had £23 million in your first season, you'd probably only achieve as much as you would have done with just £15 million, because you won't have the resources or experience to make the best use of the money you've got.

'Having to build your own car is very different from buying a customer chassis. It requires an awful lot of organising, as well as getting to know suppliers and getting their trust.

'Giving themselves a year's lead-in time is the best way to go about it. But when it starts to bite is in August/September of your first racing season, when you've got to start designing and building the next car but you've still got some racing to do.'

But Phillips says that no matter how well it prepares this year for their debut season, Stewart Grand Prix will have a rude awakening in '97. 'F1 always comes as a shock to you,' he smiles, 'however experienced you might be. The thing that catches you is the manufacturing.

'Jackie's got enough people around who know what's involved. But, until you've actually done it, you don't realise how much pressure you are operating under.'

# Johnny

AFTER A LONG, NERVOUS WAIT JOHNNY HERBERT HAS LANDED A RIDE WITH SAUBER FOR THIS SEASON. ADAM COOPER ASKED HIM ABOUT HIS REVIVAL OF FORTUNES bounces

t is entirely true that 1995
World Champion Michael
Schumacher and Johnny
Herbert didn't always see
eye to eye last year, and this
winter their personal
preferences were about as
far apart as you could
imagine.

While the double World Champion spent his Christmas slipping and sliding on the frozen ski slopes of Norway, his former team mate opted for sunnier climes. Herbert was too late to book a flight to the Caribbean, so he ended up in Dubai, where among other things his relaxation included a ride on a camel.

Peter O'Toole and Omar Sharif made it look easy, but for Johnny of Arabia the experience was not much fun.

'They're bloody uncomfortable,' he reports. 'I sat on the back part of the hump, and it was bloody awful. They have a funny, lazy walk and their hip bones really dig into you. It was horrible!'

In other words, about as relaxing as driving a Benetton B195 set up by M Schumacher...

The family holiday was Johnny's Christmas present to himself after scooping an F1 equivalent of the lottery jackpot. Six weeks of waiting after Adelaide was finally rewarded when Sauber announced that he'd landed the second seat, in the face of a good deal of strong

opposition from Mark Blundell.

It seems crazy that a man who's just won two Grands Prix and finished fourth in the World Championship should have any trouble finding a home for the following season, but Johnny had a very strange season in 1995.

His problems have been discussed before (see AUTOSPORT, 23 November 1995), and there's no need to reiterate them here in depth. Suffice to say that the Benetton did not suit Johnny's driving style, he didn't get the testing miles he wanted, lack of intra-team support sent his confidence spiralling downwards, and he was up against a man who is quite clearly the class of his generation.

The F1 paddock is a fickle place. Twelve months earlier Johnny was everyone's favourite underdog, and now he was seemingly exposed as an average talent. His ability to guide a car he didn't like into the top three – and on two occasions, to victory – was all but overlooked.

Nevertheless, Peter Sauber admitted in Aida that, should Karl Wendlinger not stay, Herbert and Blundell were the only real choices for 1996. When asked how he compared them, Peter shrugged, implied that there was no real difference in his mind, and confirmed that Ford wanted a Brit.

In Adelaide Johnny was confident that he had the upper hand on Blundell, which seemed a trifle optimistic, as most assumed that Mark was the favourite. But Johnny was right all along, and it's his name alongside that of Herr Sauber on the 1996 contract.

Team insiders confirm that in the end, Johnny's hard results in 1995, together with his higher PR profile,

gave him the edge. Managerial support from IMG, which has been connected with Sauber for a long time, clearly helped too.

Was the wait nerve-wracking?

'Not really. I always knew that of all the offers I had, one of them would come along. I didn't really have any serious worries about it.

'Tyrrell fizzled out in Japan. It started getting

somewhere, and then it just seemed to drop dead, basically. I didn't really chase that up. The only thing that came up recently was Ligier a little bit, and then later on the PacWest Indycar thing.'

Johnny had been due to test PacWest's Reynard, but the team called to postpone his run because Blundell, Allan McNish and JJ Lehto were more than enough for one session. Before he could take up the chance, Sauber confirmed his place. Johnny says that he held out until he was offered the sort of status he wanted.

'There was never any time that they said, "We're not going to do

it, we'll take someone else," it was always "We'll try it this way or that way." It was just getting the situation right.'

So the deal improved as time went by?

'It got better, sure. It's the normal thing. Negotiations always iron out certain things. You always start at a certain level, and then you work up from there. I wanted

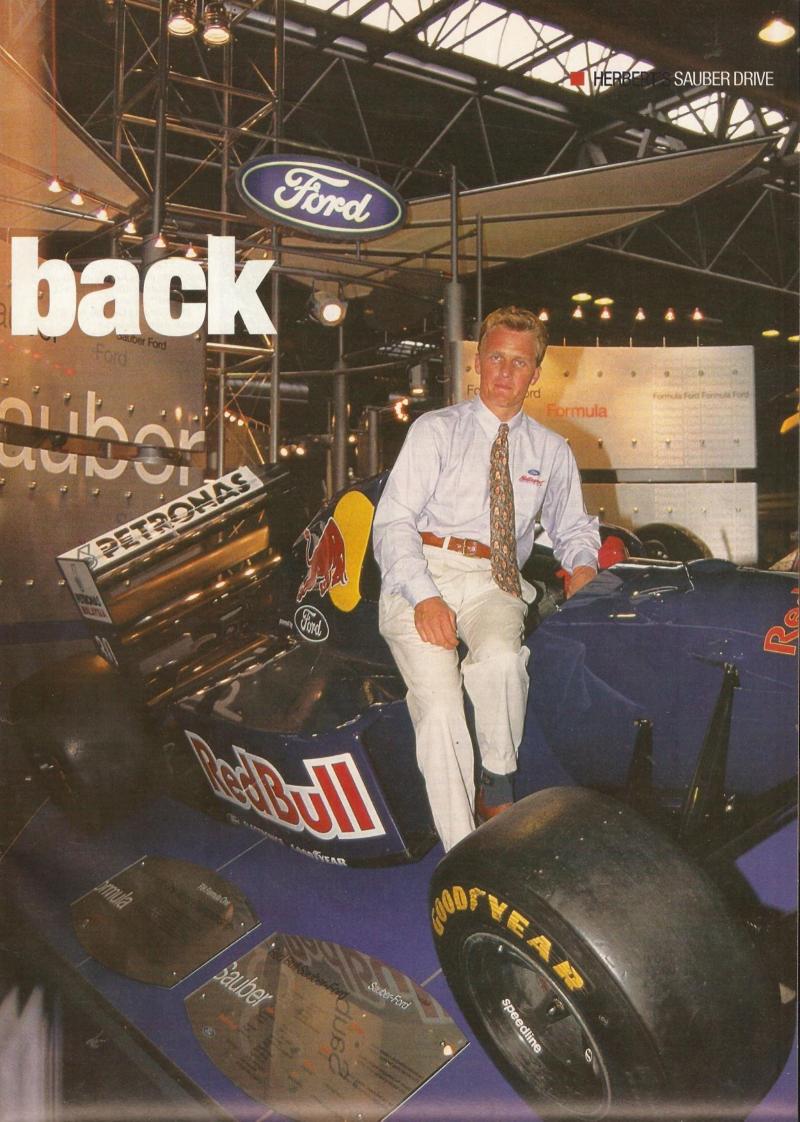
something that I felt happy with.

Within a couple of days of the deal being completed, Johnny was at Paul Ricard for the first test. He fitted in well, for despite the team's dour Swiss image, the Sauber guys are actually a fun bunch. His first evening out ended up with a team karaoke session in an Austrian





Left: Herbert gets his first run in the Sauber Ford at the Paul Ricard circuit. Right: Johnny presents his new baby to the world at the AUTOSPORT International show



### **OUT OF THE FRYING PAN**

## HERBERT LANDS HIMSELF ANOTHER TOUGH TEAM MATE

While Johnny Herbert's supporters can breathe a sigh of relief that their man has found a decent drive for 1996, the situation he faces at Sauber is similar to the one he had last season.

Heinz-Harald Frentzen did a superb job last year, comprehensively outpacing both the recovering Karl Wendlinger and Jean-Christophe Boullion, and he's clearly an outstanding talent.

HHF's Sauber connections go back to the Mercedes junior days of 1990, and he's well established within the team where the official language is German. He certainly got first call on development parts, including new engine specs.

A solid team favourite who destroys his team mates? Sounds familiar. You can only really be compared with the other guy in your pit garage, and Johnny is going to find it tough to go up against Frentzen — rather than say, Ukyo Katayama — at the very time he has to prove to the world that he can do the job.

'I think it will be tough against any driver, especially a driver who's been there a long time. Obviously that's when the team comes into play, sharing everything out, and I have all the faith that they will do that.

What guarantees has he had?

They're promising that it'll be as close to 50:50 as it possibly can. They don't want anything to disrupt the team. So from that point of view, if there are any problems, hopefully they can be dealt with within the team. When it goes outside the team that's when it starts to be disruptive. Contractually, there is a thing that says they'll give me testing on a regular basis.'

Last year, Johnny's main complaint was that the car didn't suit him the way it suited Schumacher. At Paul Ricard, he was satisfied with his first taste of the 1995 Sauber, and learned something about what direction Frentzen took in developing it.

'I'm pleasantly surprised at how good it was. From the stability point of view, and the way I drive, it seems to be OK, so that made me a bit happier. The car didn't have any bad characteristics like wanting to snap out at the back, but it's always difficult to tell when you're at a circuit that you don't actually go to very often.

'I didn't have the opportunity to go into the data and blow everything up to have a look, so I can only go on the feel of it. As far as his style is concerned, I really

haven't got the faintest idea at the moment. But hopefully that won't be an issue at all.'

Heinz-Harald Frentzen: a potent force



 ▼ restaurant near the track, although Johnny wisely chose not to spoil things by singing himself.

They were very welcoming and seem to be quite up front with everything. It's a happy atmosphere there, and I found it fairly easy to slot in.

'Last season they suffered more than the previous season, because everybody else made bigger jumps than Ford could with the V8. Now they've got a V10, obviously they've got a much better chance of getting a good car/engine package.'

But a couple of weeks after signing, Johnny learned that Jackie Stewart will have first call on Ford's services in 1997, which throws a spanner in the Sauber works before he's even started.

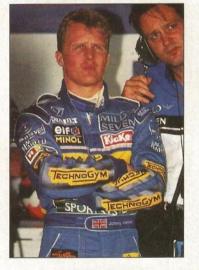
'It's a bit of a shame, being that it's the first year of the V10, and if they do a good job, it probably still wouldn't change the situation. So that's a bit disappointing for the future. But if they do well they might end up getting another works engine from somewhere.'

But there has been some heartening news. It's not like Johnny to gain satisfaction from the misfortunes of others, but he has watched with interest as Gerhard Berger has suffered not one but three major accidents while testing the B195.

'After what I've seen with Gerhard, it makes me feel a lot better – it wasn't really down to how I drove, it was just down to how the car had to be driven, basically. The wins I got, I never really got any recognition for, because people said this, that and the other happened.

'But when you get someone who's got the reputation of Gerhard and he can't even handle it, then it makes me feel good. I just hope people look at that and think, "Oh well, maybe he didn't do as bad a job as we thought." Plus the times they're doing – even Jean – are not really on the pace. It's helped me in my own mind, and maybe other people will look at it too.'

Johnny has a one-year deal with Sauber, with future options, so this



Top: Sauber personnel like Herbert's style and find him approachable. Above: Herbert had a hard time last season with the Benetton team. Below: Johnny familiarises himself with his new machine time next year he could be looking for a job once again. After last season, is there extra pressure on him to set the world alight?

'It doesn't put me under any extra pressure, because whatever year you're in, you've got to produce the goods. I know you've got to do well with any team mate you ever get. If you don't, people will hammer you straight away. So it doesn't give me any extra pressure. It gives me more of a fighting instinct to actually prove what I can do.'

Does he feel that his confidence needs to be restored?

'It was a bit of a vicious circle. I felt most of the time that I was never near the limit of the Benetton. Then when I tried sometimes to get near it, I had some big moments, and I always used to come back again and try to build up. When you're trying to do that, you do actually lose a little bit, because you don't actually get anything back for the effort you put into it.'

It's been quite a busy off-season for Johnny, and he's worked hard at raising his profile. Everywhere he goes, he's introduced as 'British GP Winner Johnny Herbert,' and that's a calling card that he can keep using. Appearing on children's television is routine F1 driver stuff, but he also turned up as a guest presenter at ITV's Comedy Awards, sharing the stage with the likes of Liza Minelli and Michael Barrymore. It remains to be seen whether the new Sauber C15 will allow hinf to share any podiums this year, but he's optimistic.

Tve always wanted to get something where I felt at home, and if we can do that, obviously it will be for the benefit of all three of us; myself, Ford and Sauber.

'The main thing for me this year is to enjoy it. Last year I lost all that enjoyment side of it. I think you've got to enjoy a sport, or whatever you do, to get the best out of it.'





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# Welcome to



# 1996!

THOUSAND UPON THOUSAND FLOCKED TO SEE THE CARS, RUB SHOULDERS WITH THE STARS AND BE BLOWN OFF THEIR FEET BY THE LIVE ACTION AT THE AUTOSPORT INTERNATIONAL SHOW. BRUCE JONES MINGLED WITH THE FANS

rom the moment that Colin McRae, Britain's first ever World Rally Champion, opened the show on Thursday, by predicting that there was no reason why he can't win the crown again in 1996, AUTOSPORT International was up and running. Growing bigger every year, and sixth enjoying its visit to Birmingham's NEC, the annual motorsport extravaganza truly flourished.

The stars were there, the cars were there, the crowds were there and launch followed launch as the hot news for 1996 was announced.

Audi was the first to break cover on Thursday, with double one-make champion John Bintcliffe being named as the lucky second driver alongside experienced German driver Frank Biela in its all-new attack on the British Touring Car Championship. Rotating in front of the stage on AUTOSPORT's stand, the silver A4 racer really looked the business. And many a rival BTCC racer – such as John Cleland and Will Hoy as well as those scouring the show for a drive like Derek Warwick and Robb Gravett – was seen to cast envious glances at it.

Just down the main walkway, single-seater guru Dick Bennetts talked of his new challenge for 1996 which is to run Ford's British Touring Car programme.

Sportscars were not missing a trick, either, as Ray Bellm and James Weaver were called on to the central stage to talk about the Gulf/Eurosport McLaren F1 GTR that they'll be driving in the BPR's Global GT series.

Meanwhile, always keen to drive something fast, McRae had scurried off to rehearsals for the high-revving and Live Action indoor display (see report on page 42) that was to kick off for four one-hour shows per day on the three public days.

And so the pattern was set: lights, action, noise.





Left: Michael Cane shakes on a deal with James Weaver to race this Gulf McLaren. Right: Murray Walker thrilled the fans on the first Public Day



#### **YOUNG DRIVERS**

#### NEW GENERATION REVEALS ITS PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

The traditional dinner for the McLaren/Autosport BRDC Young Drivers of the Year was without the Scottish contingent this year - neither Portuguese Grand Prix winner David Coulthard nor Dario Franchitti could make it – but boasted a welcome Northern Ireland accent for the first time, courtesy of the exclusive club's newest member, Jonny Kane.

Kane will be vying with his immediate predecessors Jamie Davies and Ralph Firman (his Paul Stewart Racing team mate)

for British Formula 3 honours this season. Gavin, given a fair wind, will be moving inside to join Franchitti in the International Touring Car Championship, having stunned Opel's management with his recent testing performance at Nogaro. Despite not having a budget in place as yet, Gavin has not altogether burned his Formula 3000 bridges, for Edenbridge Racing would move heaven and earth to keep him for its graduation.

'Edenbridge has been a very happy family for me,' said Gavin, 'and I'd love to drive for Peter Briggs again, but there are financial considerations and my long-term career to consider.' Gareth Rees is aiming for F3000 again, and would like to renew his links with David Sears's team with which he won the GM Euroseries in 1992.

'Most of the same guys are now with Super Nova, and we work well together,' said Rees, who is among several drivers trying to land a plum seat with the defending champion team.

The strong camaraderie between the young drivers is always a feature of their social gatherings, and they all hung on Davies's every word as he discussed his McLaren-Mercedes Formula 1 test. Jamie, a far more confident fellow since he switched Formula 3 teams mid-stream last year, to become a front-runner overnight, did a superb job at Jerez, and his enthusiasm was infectious.

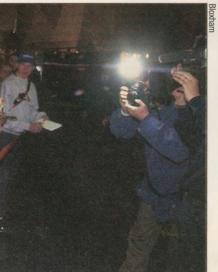
Gavin was equally enthusiastic about his Opel Calibra test, and his description of his 25 laps in the saloon, accompanied by much arm-twirling (more for effect than accurate demonstration, we thought) was splendid. His big grin said it all. Here is a talented young man who adores racing and would be an asset to any arena.

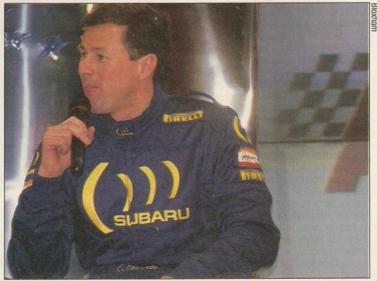
Kane cannot wait for his promised Formula 1 chance with McLaren, but wants to get his own Formula 3 programme off to a good start first. Having won his first major championship FF1600 and Formula Vauxhall races, he has a reputation to uphold. Jonny added to his experience by gamely trying one of the US-built Legends car on the Live Action oval at AUTOSPORT International — without practice. 'I couldn't get my car to turn-in on that slippery surface, but that engine (a 1200cc Yamaha motorcycle unit) was incredible.'

**Marcus Pye** 



Left: Goodyear's stand was adorned with some glorious F1 and Indycar machinery. **Above: Mercedes** junior stars Jan Magnussen and **Dario Franchitti. Below: World Rally Champion Colin McRae** opened the show on the Trade and **Press Day** 





#### **AUTOSPORT SHOW**

#### **STAND BY STAND**

#### VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF AUTOSPORT'S SHOW

The diversity of the 322 stalls at the AUTOSPORT International show surpassed all expectations this year. A stroll among them provided a rare glimpse of the heart and soul of the motor racing world – and all under one roof. While the manufacturers took central stage, each with its own supply of Birmingham's finest pushing promotional material the way of show-goers, there were also stands for the aficionados.

Take for example a company called Racelit, a family-operated business offering out-of-print motoring literature. Anyone with a feel for the history of motorsport was left in awe of its display. One needed the three days of the show just to wade through Racelit's hoards of books and magazines.

On a similar note, there were the brilliant sculptures of Don Batey, a clay stylist from the Royal College of Art in London. 'Specialising in automobiles,' he said, 'AUTOSPORT International has helped increase the awareness of my work to the right audience.' Good to know the exhibitors get as much out of the show as the admiring public.

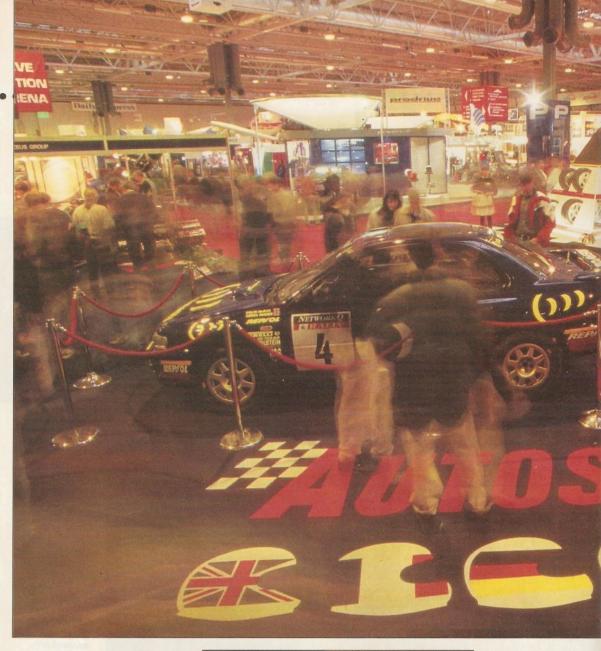
Despite the presence of a dedicated trade hall for specialist companies. performance products were also in the main exhibition hall. Performance hoses company Earls had a large stand alongside the Champion Pavilion, which itself had an example of Michael Schumacher's 1995 World Championship-winning Benetton B195. As well as increasing the public's awareness of the brand, Earls' Andrew Newell told us that good business had been completed during the show.

Karting is one area of motorsport that always speaks loudly to fans, given its relative cheapness compared with other areas of the sport. No one knows this better than the boss of Playscape, Martin Howell. 'We always do good business here,' he said. 'I'd never miss it.' His company specialises in public entertainment and runs several indoor karting tracks. His market trapped

under one roof, it seemed.

Among the clothing stalls was Le Stitch, not a French company but entrepreneurs Charles Moore and Steve Massey making use of the French connection for their T-shirt design company. From Moss and Fangio to Senna and Hill D and G, there were some brilliant caricatures of motor racing's legends, printed on a high quality material, to make ideal presents. All was sold out by Sunday night, indicating success in a niche market. It proved a common story at AUTOSPORT International

**Tom Clarkson** 



From Formula 1 to Formula Ford, from World Championship Rally Car to historic rallying Mini, from four-square BTCC racers to the wacky 5/8th scale Legends, from Ford, Vauxhall, Peugeot and Volvo, and from Superkart to Cadet kart, the show had it all. Even the American Indy Lights, Toyota Atlantic and Barber Dodge singleseater championships had stands.
And it wasn't just ready-to-rock

competition cars that were on sale, for AUTOSPORT International was packed with stands selling the myriad components which show why Britain is the market leader in the motorsport manufacturing business. You could buy helmets, race suits, scales, books, models,

videos, rally jackets and much more.

If you felt energetic, there was a pit-stop challenge (in which two members of the public raced the clock as they changed all four wheels on an Escort Cosworth). For the dextrous and the young, there were computer games galore. And, for the cerebral, there were the daily quizzes, with six lucky winners walking off with tickets for the British Grand Prix.

Down the corridor in Hall 7 was AUTOSPORT Engineering, a collection of 60 component manufacturers plying their wares for the specialist trade.



Above: Colin McRae's 1995 championshipwinning Subaru Impreza. Left: T've got how long to change all four wheels?



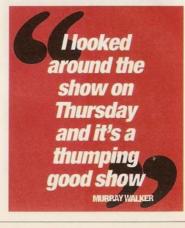








Finally, to cap it all, there was a special kart enduro, which closed the press and trade day, with an entry that rivalled Bercy. Try Jos Verstappen, Jan Magnussen, Allan McNish. Kelvin Burt, Dario Franchitti, Jason Watt, Oliver Gavin, Ralph Firman and Johnny Kane for starters. It was cracking stuff, and then some... Thousands of visitors did their best to emulate these skills before the show was brought to a close late on Sunday afternoon. For many it was their first time in a kart, but for others it was merely a shakedown for the competitive season ahead



BBC Grand Prix commentator Murray Walker perhaps summed up the show best after he'd cut the ribbon to open the exhibition to the public on the Friday: 'I looked around the show on Thursday and it's a thumping good show. Hats off to AUTOSPORT for arranging both this and another fantastic function, the AUTOSPORT Awards dinner. Both are great events and show how Britain is at the head of the world motorsport business.'

Even more excited about the forthcoming F1 season than normal, Walker laid his cards on the table: 'Not only would I love

#### **INDOOR KART RACING**

Haymarket's soon-to-be-launched F1 Racing magazine scored a hard-won victory over sister publication AUTOSPORT in the inaugural Elf Media Karting Contest held on Thursday evening on Silverstone's Ultimate Kart Challenge track at the NEC. What was conceived to be a fun event for journos grew into something a good deal more serious thanks to a rule allowing quest drivers in the four-person teams.

The F1 Racing team, captained by Andy Hallbery, and the AUTOSPORT team, with Matthew Franey as leader, tried to 'out-superstar' each other. Hallbery recruited Dario Franchitti plus Allan McNish, and even flew over Jos Verstappen especially for the event. AUTOSPORT retaliated with Jan Magnussen, Jason Watt and Jonny Kane.

But after the 30-minute qualifying session – we told you it got serious – Oliver Gavin was on pole for the Hitchin Hustlers, whose team was comprised of *Daily Telegraph* motorsports writers Jonathon Noble, and Mike and Andrew Cotton.

However, it was another star driver who sprang the surprise once the lights turned green. Kelvin Burt (below), representing the *Birmingham Post*, opened up an immediate lead and posted the fastest lap time of 21.26s.

Soon after though, AUTOSPORT hit the front and looked set for victory with its team of lightweight former top karters. Meanwhile fireworks were coming from the Vauxhall Sport News team whose



captain Adrian Bourne had drafted in 10year-old Vauxhall karting cadet Lewis Hamilton (he turned 11 two days later) and Niki Cleland, the 11-year-old son of British Touring Car Champion, John Cleland. Hamilton had spun off in the opening lap of the contest, but started making up lost ground fast.

With the event two thirds over, some very hot laps by McNish suddenly put F1 Racing on terms. In the closing stages, the diminutive Scottish Formula 3000 star took the lead and by the chequered flag had pulled away to win by a lap.

A highly commendable third went to the Daily Telegraph writers, whose team included sportscar guru Mike Cotton, who is the wrong side of 50! A great effort. Burt's early efforts backed up by a good late run by Phil Andrews clinched fourth place for the Birmingham Post team

A full report of this popular event will appear in next week's AUTOSPORT.

◀ to see Damon Hill win the world title, but I expect to see him win it. Mind you, my saying this has probably put the brakes on him winning it. I don't expect Damon

will thank me for that...'
Not surprisingly, Walker had something to say about the BBC's loss of rights to cover F1 after the end of the 1996 season: 'Quite simply, we've lost out to superior finance. I asked you to show your hands if you would be happy for an increased TV licence fee so long as the BBC kept the F1 contract. Only 30% of you raised your hands, and this in a crowd of dedicated motor racing nutters, so what chance do we have?"

In years to come, Friday will be remembered as the day on which Jackie Stewart first told British fans of his forthcoming F1 project. Arriving weary from Ford's headquarters in Detroit, where he'd first announced the ambitious plans for the 1997 season and beyond, the







the karting area. Far right: 'It will cost me how many vears' pocket money to buy this F1 car from Peugeot?'. Below left: Derek Warwick chases a drive for 1996. **Below centre: Renault touring** cars star Alain Menu with Audi's new man John Bintcliffe. Bottom: Eurosport commentator Ben **Edwards meets** one of the many very keen young fans at the show. **Bottom centre: TWR Ligier junior** team signings **Jamie Davies and** Mark Shaw with TWR marketing manager Richard Hays. Bottom right: Honda touring car star **James Kaye signs** for the fans

Left: He couldn't

afford a full-size

one... Right: The

of the largest in

Zip stand was one



three-time World Champion was joined on the AUTOSPORT stage by son Paul, and Albert Caspers, chairman of Ford of Europe.

'This is the largest challenge I've ever had,' said Stewart Sr. 'Ford's five-year contract is a huge vote of confidence in us.'

Clearly, at this early stage in the Stewart project, there was no car to show, but older visitors were given a shot of nostalgia by Jackie's Tyrrell 003 rotating beneath them.

It wasn't only Tyrrell which was showing cars from the past, but Jaguar too. A special display was put together to commemorate Jaguar's rich, 45-year history at Le Mans. Cars on show ranged from a really standard-looking XK120 racer to the sleek XIR racers that came on strong at the end of the '80s, up to an XJ220C that Hugh Chamberlain has entered for this June's Sarthe classic. A lucky handful of the show's visitors went on to a celebration dinner at Jaguar's Browns Lane base (see page 62).

Martin Brundle was one such diner, but first he graced the central stage and let it be known that he is looking for reliability as well as speed from his new Jordan-Peugeot in the season ahead. 'The car must

finish more times than the Jordans did last year,' he said. 'It's a very important year for me. At 36, I'm the oldest driver in F1. Indeed, Gerhard Berger and I should be under pressure from a host of young talent, but it's not coming through as it should be.

Not to F1, perhaps. Nevertheless, the show was visited by five of the SIX MCLAREN AUTOSPORT BRDC Young Drivers, with only David Coulthard absent as he underwent intensive fitness training in Austria before heading out to Estoril for some serious testing with McLaren.

Dario Franchitti was there, talking of his fruitful, race-winning first year in the mighty Class 1 touring cars. F3 rivals Oliver Gavin, Ralph Firman and Jamie Davies were also present. The first two explained how their battle for the top two slots in the 1995 British series went down to the final race, Davies talked of forthcoming season with the TWR Ligier Junior team. In that capacity he will be pitched against Firman and Firman's new Paul Stewart Racing team mate, Jonny Kane.

Mark Blundell was also on stage on the Saturday, having cut the ribbon to admit a tidal wave of fans.



Sadly, Mark was unable to look forward to any firm plans for the coming season, his F1 hopes seemingly in tatters after missing rides at Sauber and Tyrrell.

Like Saturday, Sunday witnessed a bumper attendance, and the star of the stage was the driver who pipped Blundell to the Sauber ride - Johnny Herbert. People wanted to know why Herbert had taken so long to clinch the deal, landing the ride just when it looked certain that it was Blundell's: 'It took a long time until I was confident Sauber would put enough weight behind me and not just concentrate on Frentzen. I'm delighted to have signed, and also pleased to see the problems Berger has been having with the Benetton in testing. That makes me feel a lot better about some of the things I said about that car in 1995.

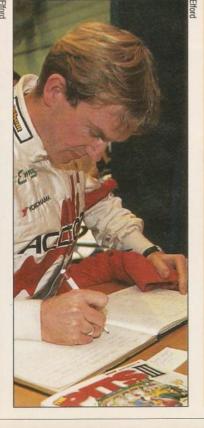
The quality of stands was well ahead of those in previous years, and Ford, the 750MC, Kelgate, and Kart Pro Stratos were rewarded for their efforts by the organisers

Peter Osborne, managing director of Haymarket Exhibitions, said: 'All in all, Britain has a racing car show as excellent as the performance of the British motorsport industry across the board.'









#### **AUTOSPORT ENGINEERING**

#### SPECIALIST MANUFACTURERS MAKE THEIR MARK AT NEC

A new initiative for 1996 was AUTOSPORT Engineering, a separate trade hall from the main exhibition, designed for the trade to meet the trade beyond the glare and noise of the general public.

'Many companies have traditionally done very good business on the first two days of the show,' explained Quentin Spurring, publisher of Racecar Engineering and organiser of the show. 'To this end, we have introduced a twoday show aimed at meeting their needs. We are offering our exhibitors direct

access to existing and potential clients.'
Alan Davies from CNC Ltd, a computerised numerical control company, said: 'This year I wanted to meet the people who are involved in the trade. F1, saloons, Indycar... everybody. The show has been very good for us.

The maze of technology was fabulous, although of too high an octane for the average petrolhead.

Sodemo, the engine preparation company behind the Williams Renault Lagunas in the British Touring Car Championship, had an array of information available to interested parties. 'It seems the people coming here are more motivated about what they are looking for,' said Pierre Godof. 'The interest has been high and I feel it has been good publicity for us.'

BJB Exhausts had a similar story to tell: 'We have had a surprising number of trade enquiries, including quite a number from overseas,' said BJB's Bob Ellis. 'Keeping the general public out

is a good idea and business has been better as a result.

Safety fuel cell company ATL found



that a majority of its business at the show was about enforcing existing relationships with customers, while a quarter of its time was spent negotiating new contracts. 'It has been a very constructive two days for us,' said ATL's Steve White.

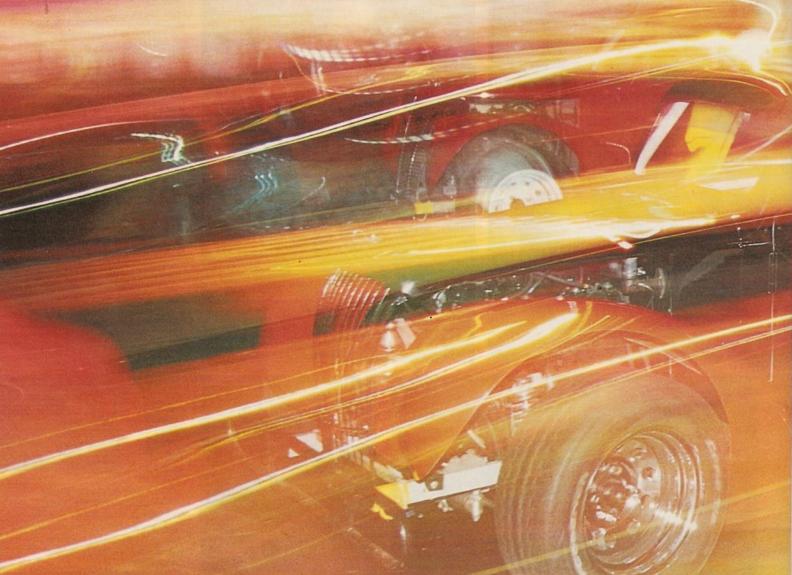
The same was true for aerodynamic specialists C&B Engineering of Poole, Dorset, which was adjudged by an AUTOSPORT panel to merit the Best Stand award (above). C&B Engineering had the most innovative display and exciting product applicable to all forms of racing, from club level upwards. The company was approached by two BTCC teams to carry out aerodynamic work in 1996.

Peter Osborne, boss of Haymarket Exhibitions, said: 'The innovation of AUTOSPORT Engineering provided the opportunity the industry has always sought for real business with both home and overseas visitors.

Tom Clarkson



# Gladiators



ou can forget about Flame, Hunter and the Wolfman. Gladiators of an altogether different kind boldly took Birmingham's NEC by storm at the AUTOSPORT International show. These road warriors spurned the rigours of the pugel stick and travelator for the sheer adrenalin rush you can only get from battling with powerful competition cars at speeds of up to 80mph on the most slippery surface imaginable.

This was what awaited spectators

at the AUTOSPORT Live Action Arena
– the sole display of indoor racing to
grace the UK's shores this year.

Those road warriors included World Rally Champion Colin McRae, who put in an appearance on the first day of the show, plus his Subaru team mate Piero Liatti.

And they were joined by rallycross ace Will Gollop in the awesome 600bhp Peugeot 306, and Formula 2 British Rally Championship aces Dom Buckley, Martin Rowe, Mark Higgins and his brother David.

Add to that a heady mix of celebrity karting, a breathtaking

display of car control by Russ Swift of the Rover Display team - yes, he's the bloke responsible for that incredible Rover TV advert a couple of years ago - plus kart guru Martin Hines on an incredibly quick 250cc Superkart capable of 160mph.

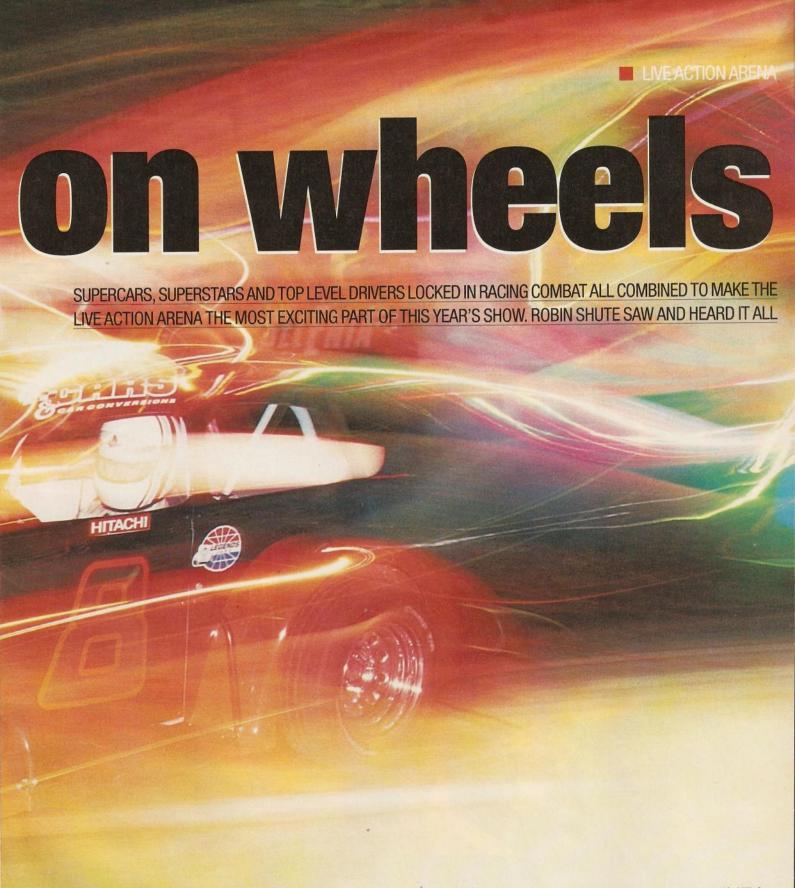
What's more, visitors to the Live Action Arena were treated to three exclusive sneak previews. There was the first chance to catch the new Legend racers in action as well as a glimpse of the latest V8 5.3-litre EUROCAR, and Ford's state-of-the-art Escort R\$2000 Kit Car driven by Welsh rally ace Gwyndaf Evans.

This hour-long high-octane dish

of racing fever was served-up four times a day to kick-off 1996 with as big a bang as possible, all compered by *Top Gear*'s Jeremy Clarkson and Tiff Needell.

Hall 12 of the NEC was a heady cocktail of anticipation, tyre smoke and two-stroke engine fumes as the 2400-strong crowd waited with baited breath for the off.

The roar of Barry Lee's 5.4-litre EUROCAR signalled the action was about to commence. Lee hurled the monstrous racer around the sinuous figure-of-eight course to the delight of the crowd, capping his entrance with a series of doughnuts



right under their very noses.

Clarkson brought proceedings down to earth with a sedate entry on a 1950s' Chevrolet soft top to the strains of Buddy Holly's *Peggy Sue* and accompanied by a sextet of dancing girls.

Needell's entrance was more dramatic: he opted to wow the crowds with a breathtaking entrance in a British Racing Geen McLaren F1 supercar.

The *Top Gear* television stars proceeded to hog centre stage with their usual mix of jovial banter and good-natured mickey-taking. But by this time the crowd was hungry for

action. And the show didn't keep them waiting.

It kicked off with a vengeance when four of the latest-spec Legends burst into the arena for a nailbiting four-lap race. The 1200cc Yamaha motorbike-engined cars were driven by an eclectic mix of Legends specialists and celebrities, including World Hot Rod Champion Ian McKellar, TVR Tuscan ace Mark Hales and current McLaren/Autosport/BRDC Young Driver Jonny Kane.

Then it was the turn of the British Rally Championship's Formula 2 boys to have a crack. First off was David Higgins in the 1600cc Honda Givic VTi. Tyre smoke licked round his front wheels as the race official counted down to the start. Then Higgins Jr put on a graceful display of car control as he battled with terminal understeer around the slippery course.

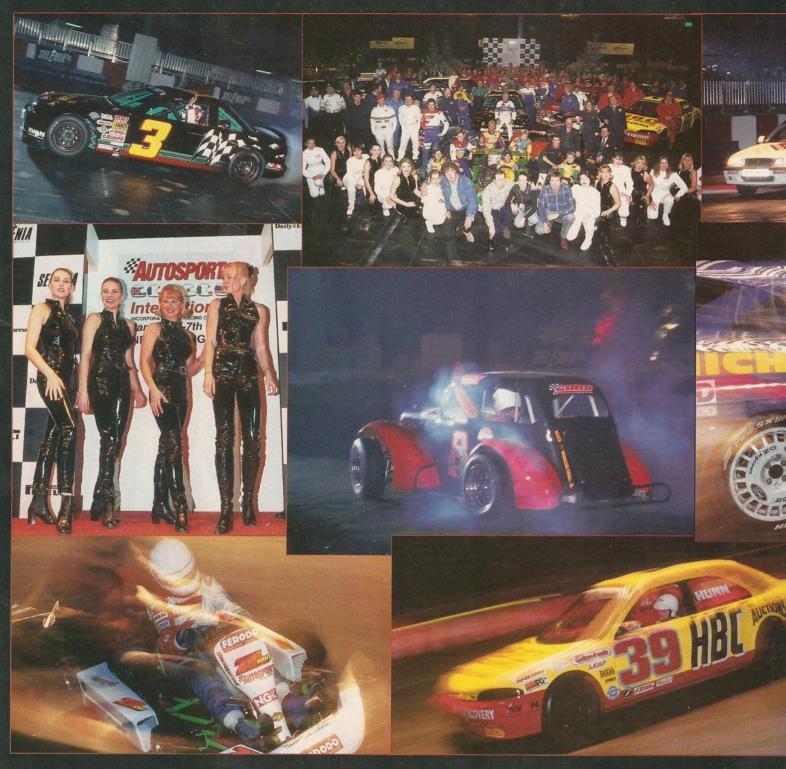
He made quite a reputation for himself in the Live Action. His underpowered Honda – 1600cc versus his competitors' 2000cc – was the class of the field. He won every single race on the Friday of the show and went on to win the Formula 2 class.

But that didn't stop Dom Buckley

in the Volkswagen Golf GTI from doing his utmost to usurp the Honda. You could see him left-foot braking into the corners as he fought to make-up time.

Peugeot 306 \$16 driver Martin Rowe was also peering through the red mist in an effort to knock Higgins off the number one spot. Rowe, who dominated last year's Live Action, took a neat and tidy line around the course, gracefully lifting a wheel as he struggled to maintain that knife-edge balance between grip and speed.

Last of the British rallying boys to have a go was Mark Higgins in



■ Nissan Sunny GTi. as Clarkson jibed 'you could almost mistake it for a Ferrari V12 or something' the senior of the Higgins brothers put on a late burst of speed, to the delight of the crowd. His secret? 'We've gone back to our old suspension settings,' he explained to the crowd.

Gwyndaf Evans rounded off the session with a demonstration of the awesome-looking Ford Escort R82000 Kit Car in an exclusive presentation to the Live Action crowd. After battling with the 260bhp supercar in spectacular sideways style for three laps, he admitted in his usual laid-back style

to Messrs Clarkson and Needell that 'it goes pretty good'.

The astonishing Rover Display Team took things back to a graceful level with a balletic display of car control from Russ Swift. His series of synchronised handbrake turns, both forwards and backwards, simply defied belief, and had the crowd on its feet in appreciation.

As Swift's pall of tyre smoke drifted out of the arena, kart ace Martin Hines sped onto the course on his awesome 250cc Superkart. 'It's good for 160mph and goes from 0-60 in 2.5s,' he joked.

Hines was there to introduce the Vauxhall Young Guns kart team.

And this time the whiff of tyre spoke was replaced by the heady aroma of two-stroke engine oil as these young chargers sped around the course.

The piece de resistance of the karting show was a celebrity race between teams from Vauxhall, Peugeot, Zip/AUTOSPORT, Ford, Honda and Volvo on 100cc karts. The celebrities included ex-Peugeot rallyman Rowe, competitions boss Mick Linford, plus touring car stars Kelvin Burt, James Kaye and Matt Neal.

Next it was the turn of the EUROCARs to take centre stage. Stars Tony Gale and Jason Dance

urged their V6-powered Ford Mondeos sideways on the slippery course in a nailbiting three-lap pursuit race. And it looked as though veteran Gale had the edge.

EUROCAR expert Barry Lee rounded-off the Eurocar display with an awesome sneak preview of the 1996-spec 5.4-litre car. The sheer noise of this aggressive-looking car drowned out the crowd's cheers as Lee enthusiastically chucked it into another series of doughnuts.

Before the crowd had time to catch its breath, the strains of *Carmina Burana* wafted across the arena. This was the grand finale:



a display of muscle from rally stars Piero Liatti, Malcolm Wilson and James Cullen, plus rallycross ace Will Gollop.

Their four-wheel drive muscle cars were led on through a cloud of dry ice by PVC-clad dominatrixes to give the crowd some idea of exactly what to expect.

First off was Cullen, who spectacularly two-wheeled his Ford Escort Cosworth around the course, to the accompaniment of pops and bangs from his turbocharger's anti-lag system.

By comparison, Will Gollop was decidedly quiet. His Peugeot 306 does not have anti-lag, but it makes up for this with three times as much power as the Escort. And you could hear him feathering the throttle as he struggled to maintain traction.

Gollop admitted afterwards 'we've had to de-tune the car from its standard 750bhp, because we just can't get the power down on the slippery surface.'

Ford Escort Cosworth ace Malcolm Wilson outdid Cullen in the noise stakes. And the Cumbrian showed he had put his experience of the Live Action Arena from last year to good use with a magnificently-controlled flame-spitting performance.

This approach was devastating. It

allowed Wilson to beat World Rally Champion Colin McRae on the first day of the show and eventually to run out as Group A winner.

World Rally Championship tarmac ace Piero Liatti crowned this blistering display with an ultraquick and very sideways performance in his growling Subaru Impreza.

The show was rounded off with a display of doughnuts from Hines McKellar, Lee and Liatti to the delight of the crowd. The hustle and bustle of the Autosport International show's halls must have seemed tame in comparison with what they had just seen.

#### OVERALL RESULTS 4x4 RALLY CARS

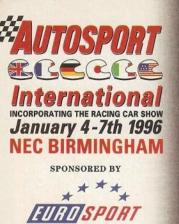
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1	. Malcolm Wilson	11m39.93s
2	. Piero Liatti	12:26.42
3	. James Cullen	12:32.47
4	. Will Gollop	12:41.80

#### FORMULA 2 RALLY CARS

1	. Mark Higgins	11:16:57
	. David Higgins	
	00	
	. Dom Buckley	
1	Martin Rowe	11:30 68

#### **CELEBRITY KARTS**

1	. Volvo	46 points
	. Zip/AUTOSPORT	
	. Honda	
4	. Peugeot	38







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thank you must go to the NEC, the



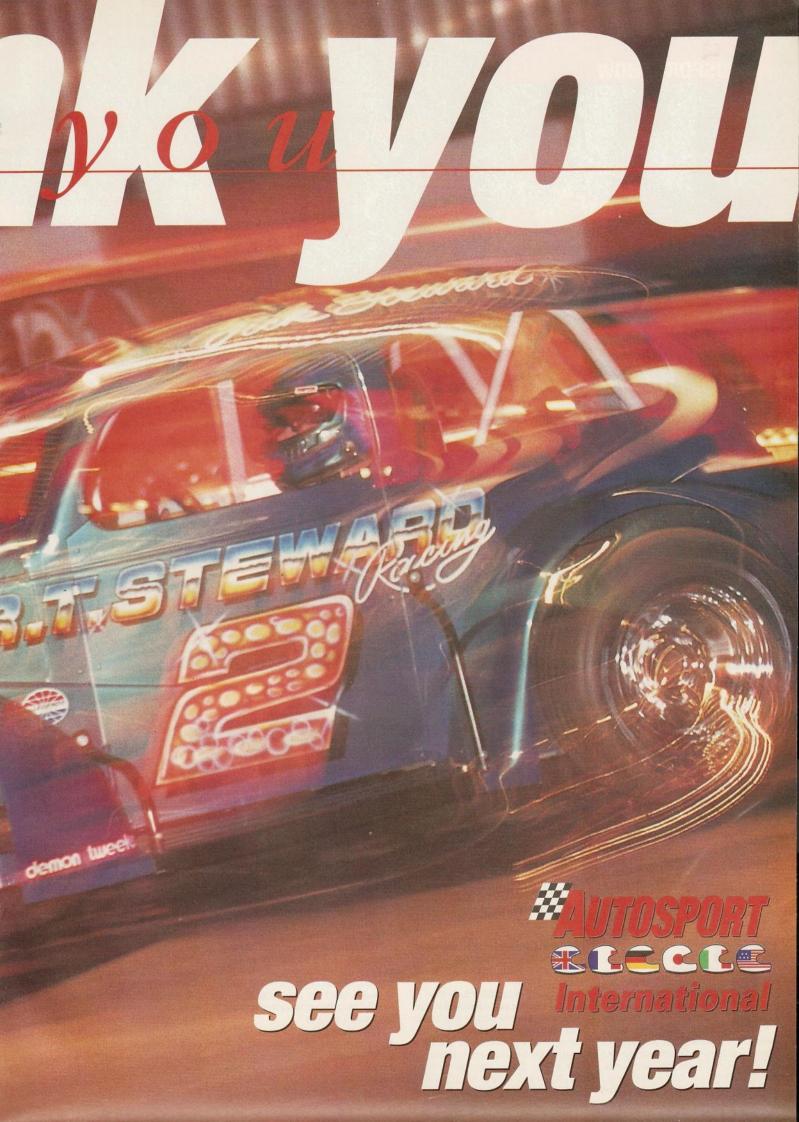
Silverstone, Jaguar and the

media, plus Tiff and Jeremy and

the Live Action crew who

produced a truly explosive show.







# Auditops BT

BRITISH TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP STARS LITTERED
AUTOSPORT INTERNATIONAL, BUT IT WAS NEW ARRIVAL
AUDI THAT SHONE BRIGHTEST, GWYN DOLPHIN REPORTS

he AUTOSPORT
International show
proved to be an
irresistible draw for
all of the top names in
touring car racing.
Every British Touring
Car Championship
team was represented, in addition
to several International Touring Car
runners. Centre stage went to Audi,
which finally confirmed its entry
into the this year's BTCC and

produced the surprise of the show
- unveiling reigning Fiesta
Champion John Bintcliffe as its

second driver.

In reality, Bintcliffe was one of the few people not surprised by the decision. 'I knew before Christmas that I had been chosen, so I've had a couple of weeks for it to sink in. It really is my big chance,' he said.

'I'm a little surprised how quickly everything came about with Audi. I was talking to Ford but then I met Richard Lloyd, Audi's consultant, in October. We started talking, he asked for my CV and it went from there. I had an interview – Tim Sugden went in just after me – and then an offer was made.

The 'phone really started to ring from almost everybody at Ford just after that. I felt it wasn't fair to keep them hanging on, so I told Ford of my decision and signed with Audi. I said earlier in the year that it would be a dream to drive for Audi, and now I'm here.'

The Yorkshireman has yet to drive the car, 'but the seat feels comfortable'. He will only get behind the wheel for the first time in Italy in February. The cars destined for Britain are now being

built in Audi's Ingolstadt base and will arrive in March. Before that, the Audi race squad will head to the Swiss Alps for a fitness programme.

Bintcliffe's team mate, Frank Biela, was on hand for the announcement and spoke enthusiastically about the challenge that lies ahead.

'The British series is the most competitive in Europe and I think that a lot of the tracks here will suit the A4 quattro system. We could have an advantage in some places. From what I've seen from videos of some of the circuits, there are a couple which aren't going to be good to us – but there are only a few of those,' said the World Champion. Already, Audi Sport's BTCC challenge looks as ominous





Main picture: Audi's new signing Bintcliffe and Biela steal the limelight with the A4 quattro, Bintcliffe (inset) enjoying a brief spell behind the wheel. Above left: Volvo shows off Burt, plus new Ericsson decals, for first time; Rydell retained for 1996. Above: Kaye unveils his wellsponsored ex-Mallock Cavalier for Total Cup assault. Left: Harvey will partner Watts, with hopes high for 406 success. Below: Cleland's signature in demand, Vauxhall already has it





as did the Schnitzer BMW and Alfa Corse title-winning entries in 1993 and 1994 respectively.

Audi Sport

Peugeot chose the show to confirm its 1996 BTCC driver lineup and, to little surprise, Tim Harvey emerged as Patrick Watts's new partner. 'I've won races for almost every manufacturer to have employed me and I really believe that I can do the same with Peugeot. I've talked with Steve Ridgers, our designer, and I'm really excited about the potential in the new 406 model. It can be a race winner.'

Team boss Mick Linford emphasised the importance of success for the new 406. 'We're one of only two manufacturers not to win a BTCC race yet, and we're very keen to change that. We cannot continue to be a midfield team any more. We've made major changes within the team to make ourselves more competitive and our budget has been increased by 50% on what we've had before. Patrick and Tim are topline drivers and both have immense experience in sorting and developing a new car.

Peugeot's hopes rest on the new 406, currently in test with the French factory team. The Total squad has its first shell in build and hopes to be running in late February. 'At the moment, we're waiting on some gearbox bits, because the design is new, but

we should be alright' admitted

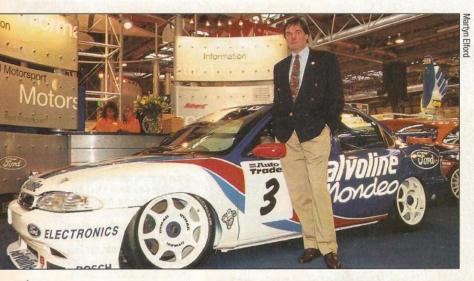
Ridgers is optimistic about the new car. 'It is totally different to the 405 and, although it is a bigger car, we haven't gained weight because we've been able to save it in other areas.'

There were new arrivals on the Ford stand as well, with West Surrey Racing's Dick Bennetts making his first appearance as the man behind the Mondeo touring car programme. It is still early days for the WSR operation, but it already has some valuable experience with the Mondeo.

'We spent a day at Silverstone, not so much testing as giving the team more time with the car,' said Bennetts. 'Paul Radisich and his engineer, Will Phillips, worked together for the first time, establishing a relationship. People warned us that there would be enormous differences between an F3 car and a tourer – dampers take a few minutes to change in F3, they take a lot, lot longer on a saloon car.'

WSR and Ford have already decided to push ahead with the design of a new 1996 car, rather than rely on a modified 1995 runner. 'I'd spoken with Kelvin Burt during the last year, so I had a good idea about the basic car. Our boys stripped and rebuilt the car before the first test, so we learned a bit that way.'

Although nobody will yet ▶



Left: New man behind the Mondeo, West Surrey Racing's Dick Bennetts, promises car with radical features. Below: Vauxhall also starting with fresh challenger, its Vectra said by Thompson to be 'more of a racer' than the 1995 Cavalier. Bottom: No shortage of fans for Total Cup Champion Matt Neal

confirm it for contractual reasons, Reynard will design the car and there will be a computer link between its base in Bicester, Oxfordshire, and WSR's workshops in Middlesex. The 1996 car is in the very early stages of development, but Bennetts feels that it will have a number of radical features. A new gearbox is also being designed and close links are being maintained to Schubel's race team in Germany, which has its own Mondeos. A test team will also be established.

As far as a second driver is concerned, Bennetts plans to test a number of drivers in the next few days. Single-seater experience seems to be important to both Bennetts and Ford boss Peter Gillitzer, placing the likes of Warren Hughes and Tim Sugden at the top of the list of five hopefuls. Both men were part of a queue to see Bennetts at the show. Whoever is finally chosen, they will, like Bennetts, be in at the deep end. 'We can't afford for 1996 to be a learning year. There is a lot of pressure to do well.'

Volvo's new boy, Kelvin Burt, was on hand with team mate Rickard Rydell to reveal a revised colour scheme on the 850 saloon and the name of Ericsson as a sponsor. Both Volvo men spent a few days in France, at Nogaro, before Christmas, continuing to learn about Michelin tyres. Rydell topped wet testing, with Burt a few tenths off the pace of the Alain Menu's Renault in the dry. Burt was impressed with the car. 'It was strong on the entry to corners and good in changing direction,' he said. More testing is planned.

Vauxhall duo John Cleland and James Thompson (see sidebar) spent Thursday posing with the new Vectra racer, although Cleland also fitted in parental duties by overseeing his children's kart racing efforts. Other BTCC regulars at Birmingham included Renault's Will Hoy, Honda men David Leslie and James Kaye, and Total Cup winner Matt Neal (who spent



We can't afford for 1996 to be a learning year. There is a lot of pressure to do well

time working on his family's Rimstock stand).

Neal's former rival, Richard Kaye, unveiled his new mount for the year, too. The Brighton man will handle an ex-Mallock Vauxhall Cavalier in this year's Total Cup, putting together an impressive sponsorship package from Danepak, Fuji Film and Sofitam to back his efforts. Nissan's new German Super Tourenwagen Cup signing, Anthony Reid, made an appearance, while BMW man David Brabham was on hand, still waiting to find out if he would be driving at all in 1996.

The ITCC series had representatives from each marque. Mercedes stars Dario Franchitti and

Jan Magnussen were joined by new Alfa Romeo signing Jason Watt and recent Opel tester Oliver Gavin. 'I still find it a little hard to believe that I've got an ITCC drive,' said Watt. 'I did my test at Mugello, went home on Friday and, on Monday, there was a offer made to me.'

Gavin, another to have sampled an ITCC car in the past few weeks, appeared with Watt on the main stage. I enjoyed my test with Opel in Nogaro. I managed to go half a second quicker than Klaus Ludwig, who crashed later on. I haven't been offered a contract yet but, if I was, I'd look at it very seriously. The ITCC really is a route into F1 now,' said the British F3 champion.

#### FIGHTING III

#### IT'LL TAKE MORE THAN A BIG SHUNT TO STOP THOMPSON

Having missed the second half of the 1995 British Touring Car Championship, recuperating from injuries sustained at Knockhill in July, James Thompson is



raring to return to the driving seat.

'I drove the new Vauxhall Vectra first of all at Silverstone in September, putting some miles on the very first car. But I was still recovering from my accident then. The only other chance I've had to get behind the wheel was at Silverstone before Christmas – but it was so icy that the circuit couldn't be used. I spent some time just running up and down the short circuit straight.

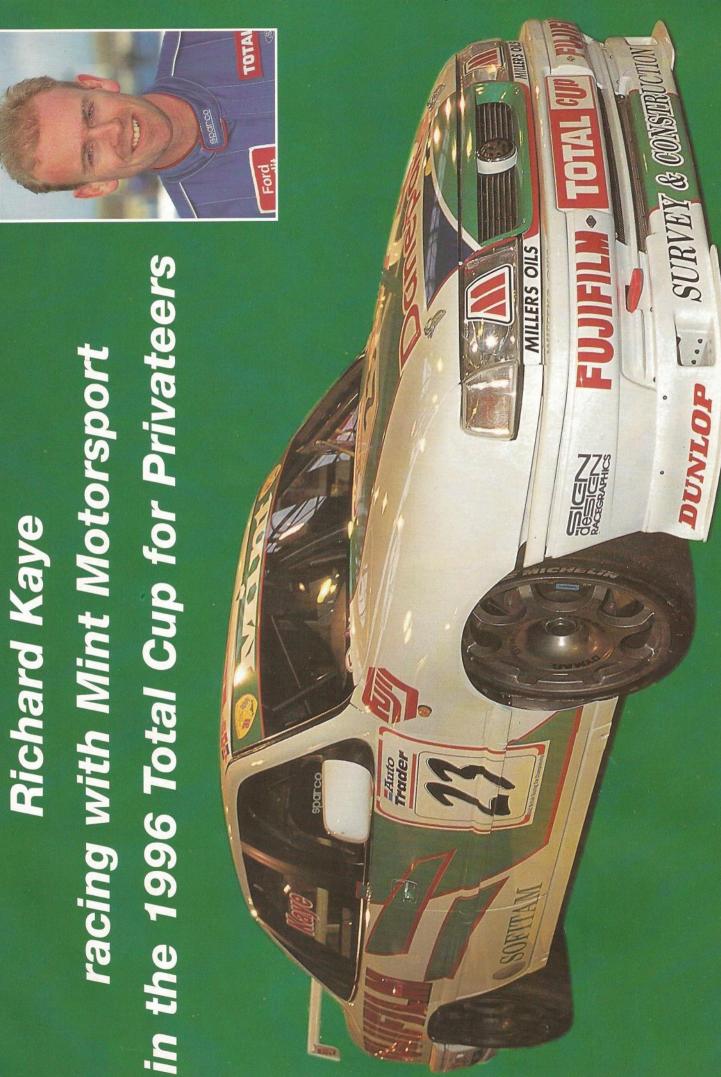
'It'll be almost eight months by the time I do get behind the wheel again — in mid-February — when my race car will be ready to run. I'm raring to go.'

In the meantime, development work on the new Vectra has been handled by BTCC Champion John Cleland, whose initial comments about the new Vauxhall have been 'guarded'. Following end-of-season outings at Pembrey, the Vauxhall Sport team moved to Nogaro, in France, for Michelin tyre tests before attempting to find more track time in Britain – only for the snow to fall.

'From what I've found out at the wheel, the Vectra is a very different type of car to the Cavalier,' says Thompson. 'That was an easy car to drive — quite friendly — but the Vectra is more of a racer. It has more grip over the front wheels and, if you swap straight from the Cavalier into the Vectra, it feels very different. I think it is a much better car, but one that will take a little bit of time to get to the bottom of its handling.'



# racing with Mint Motorsport











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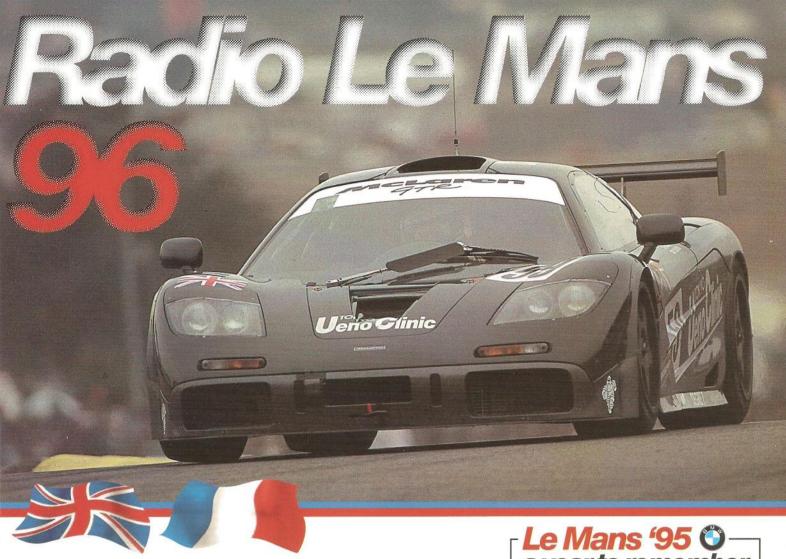
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## 1996 CALENDAR

8th April	Donington Park (GP)	21st April	Brands Hatch (Indy)
6th May	Thruxton	19th May	Silverstone (International)
27th May	Oulton Park (Int)	16th June	Snetterton
30th June	Brands Hatch (GP)	28th July	Knockbill
11 August	Oulton Park (Fosters)	26th August	Thruxton
8th September	Donington Park (GP)	22nd September	Brands Hatch (Indy)



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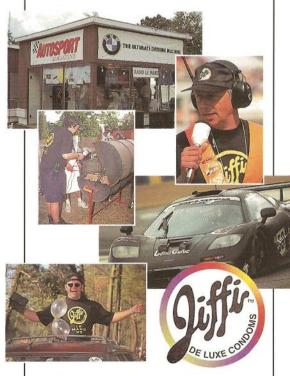
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"Radio Le Mans did a great job of raising our profile at the event in 1995. As a result we are looking at a more extensive involvement in Radio Le Mans and motorsport for 1996"

Jiffi Condoms

## New Elise of life for Lotus

ou probably remember the fuss over



Road Test Editor

the front-drive Lotus Elan. If one car magazine loved it, you could bet the next would hate it. *Autocar* even managed to love *and* hate it, depending on which story you read, so violently did the opinions of its journalists vary at the time.

There is nothing wrong with this. In the testing pusiness different cars affect people in different

There is nothing wrong with this. In the testing business, different cars affect people in different ways and, while most variances can be ironed out into one magazine voice through a process of democratic discussion some, like those aired over the Elan, cannot.

Here was a car which both amazed and bored me. Its chassis was extraordinary, safe to a fault, providing more grip than any other front-drive car that has ever been sold. It was despite or because

This car is a real

Lotus, born from

real Lotus values

of lightweight,

advanced

technology and

maximum driving

enjoyment

of this that the Elan was more yawningly dull to drive than I ever imagined a Lotus could be. The issue to me was not whether it was a good or bad car – no car this able could ever be considered bad – no, what mattered to me was whether it was a good car for Lotus, and it emphatically was not.

I've just spent a day in the new Lotus, the Elise. It's less powerful than the Elan, slower, noisier, altogether more raw and therefore less likely to appeal to the pinstriped warriors who first flocked to the Elan in the hope of finding a brave new way to be seen in Knightsbridge.

In fact, the car I was lent was an early prototype with a hood

that didn't fit properly, very little sound-proofing, and suspension that was not close to halfway finished. Furthermore, the whole day was spent battling filthy weather conditions on the way from Millbrook in Bedfordshire to Lotus's headquarters near Norwich, as miserable a route as you're likely to find in that part of the world.

And yet I loved the Elise. More than that I was profoundly excited by it. Derek Minter, the man in charge of the car's development, says that people are trading in their old, rear-drive Elans in order to take their place in the queue when deliveries start

up at Easter. I believe him.

Too many times in this business, hacks have made rash judgements on the basis of an unrepresentative prototype and come hideously unstuck when it reaches production as a very different animal. So, before you read on, I absolutely reserve the right to call the Elise a lemon and anything else I choose when I finally drive the finished article.

But I don't think I'll need to. This car is a real Lotus, born from real Lotus values of lightweight, advanced technology and maximum driving enjoyment. This is a car which will dance to the throttle command, change direction with an alacrity no heavy front-engined, front-drive car ever could and thrill you to the marrow not with its performance (which, to be honest, isn't that great) but with its unadulterated love of the open road. It is one mighty exciting prospect.

What is most odd about the Elise is that I didn't even drive it. For not only did Lotus loan me an Elise for the day, but also the driving talents of one Matthew Becker, a development driver who, while ever affable, would sooner be persuaded that the Tories were going to win the next election than it was a good idea to let me drive. And yet, despite being a worse passenger than your average

rollercoaster virgin, I enjoyed that one drive in the passenger seat of the Elise more than the sum total of days and hours I have ever spent driving Elans. Until I am

Until I am allowed to drive it I cannot tell you whether it is a good or a bad car. But, again, perhaps this is not the point. What matters most to me is whether it is a good car for Lotus. And that, I would hope and believe, it emphatically is.

OCEAN UNITS OF THE PROPERTY OF

Elise looks set to provide the raw edge that was so lacking in the Elan



## Mister Motivated

TOURING CAR VETERAN TIM HARVEY ADMITS THERE IS MORE TO LIFE THAN RACING, BUT DON'T QUESTION HIS MOTIVATION, BY MATT FRANEY

ou don't have to look too far in motor racing to find people who take life all very seriously. But look the other way and you will find Tim Harvey. Officially revealed to the media in Birmingham last week as Peugeot's new recruit to its British Touring Car Championship team, Harvey raised a few wry smiles when he stepped forward to say a few words.

For someone who has raced for five manufacturers in six years, I don't expect to take too long sorting out the new Peugeot

406,' he announced.

I put it to him that, once again, after a moderately successful year with Volvo, he has landed on his feet with a works drive for a manufacturer that knows 1996 must bring results. Harvey thinks I am being unfair.

'I'm not being funny about this,' he says. 'But I don't approach people for drives because I have always seen racing as a hobby

ever since I started.

'I believe there is more to life than racing cars and, while you have to draw a fine line between having fun and enjoying your racing and still being professional, when I do something I do it 100%.

'If I had to chase after drives, then I wouldn't be interested. Unless someone thinks I have got something to offer, I am not

going to prostitute myself.

People have always approached me, which is the right way, because if someone comes looking, it is because they believe you

are the right man for them.

At 34-years old, Harvey has seen and done it all in touring cars. The 1992 champion with BMW, he took the title after an acrimonious and controversial battle with last year's champion John Cleland.

Harvey had more success at Renault, but not since his title-winning season has he been seen to mount a serious threat again. Now Peugeot's new 406 beckons and, after leaving Volvo last year following a troubled climax to the season, Harvey knows exactly what he has learned from his time with TWR Racing.

I am at the stage where, because I have driven for lots of teams and have a lot of experience and information in the memory banks, there are certain people at certain times who can benefit from that.

Tve a lot more to offer Peugeot than I did with TWR and Volvo. The design of the car was all set before I got there. To be honest, I didn't have a lot of input. But that is the way TWR works - drivers are very much cogs in a large wheel and they can be slotted in and out

'At Peugeot I am here to contribute to all areas. I don't want to feel I can't pick up the phone to the engineers and have a chat about how we can do this, that or the other.

I am always mindful of my championship season where a small group of highly-trained people could overcome the might of bigger organisations. That's the kind of situation I feel we have here.

Harvey is not the kind of person who is cut out to be a cog in a wheel. He admits he was not comfortable in the 'pressure cooker situation' in which he found himself last year, but adds that, with the advent of the new 406,

> If I had to chase after drives, then I wouldn't be interested. I am not going to prostitute myself

he is more motivated for the challenges that lie ahead than at any time in his career.

And here, perhaps, you get the first look behind the bluff persona at the true Tim Harvey. He lists the passions in life as his eightyear-old son - for whom he has bought his first kart - his motorbike collection, his golf, and his friends away from the racing scene.

The trouble is I enjoy too many things in life,' he smiles. 'If I only had one other passion it would be easy. Yes, there is more to life than racing, but you can never totally switch off. I enjoy other things, but in the middle of the season, with things to test all the time, you are always thinking about it.

The pressure of course comes with the territory, but in Harvey's eyes it extends far beyond the desire to see the chequered flag. He talks of the need to explain to people exactly why he has succeeded - or failed.

'Come the end of Sunday,' he says, 'people are going to be happy or disappointed. If they are disappointed, then I am disappointed. If you finish sixth and can say you did your best, then that's fine. But it is that pressure to achieve your ultimate potential that stays with you all week

Like most racing drivers, he admits the people he lives with bear the brunt of the stress most of all. 'On Sunday night and Monday I am not very good company,' he says - but qualifies that with a simple message - 'I just make sure that I don't live, eat, sleep and breathe motor racing.

Harvey's pursuits away from the track take him regularly from four wheels to two. With eight bikes in his newly whitewashed garage, he says tinkering on his machines is the ultimate stress reliever.

'I was more interested in bikes than cars as a kid,' he says. 'I'd love to have a go racing them, but to be honest I wouldn't be brave enough to hang it out as much as the quick boys. Still, bikes give me a thrill that I cannot get in cars.

Indeed life seems fun for Harvey and I am left wondering if anything actually winds him up. 'Life's too short to bear any grudges or have any chips on your shoulder,' he grins. 'I am a reasonably easy-going bloke and get on with most people. If they're straight with me. I'll be straight with them.

But there must be something inside Harvey that serves as that inner steel. Any successful racing driver must carry something that keeps them at the very top of their respective ladder.

There's a hard side to me,' he relents at last. If I sit down to do a contract I do it straight and I'm not mucking or laughing around. We all have public personas and it is easy for people to think that is the way you are. And it becomes difficult for people to change the image that others have of them as well - as Damon Hill has found out."

Harvey says his marketing background - he ran an advertising agency when he began racing - has helped him to win the 'PR battle'. Now the man who looks ideally suited to taking the close-knit Peugeot team one step nearer to the winner's circle has just one more battle to fight.



here was no shortage of anticipation at the AUTOSPORT International show, and although it didn't translate into a huge raft of major rally announcements there was more than enough to indicate a busy season lies ahead for us all.

Top of the bill, of course, was the world debut of the Ford RS2000 kit car (which must surely represent the future of the British Rally Championship), with Gwyndaf Evans chucking the aggressive-looking beast around the indoor arena with full-throttle power

slides. The car is still very much in its infancy and the 'action' car was so new the paint was barely dry. The Ford mechanics had worked over the Christmas holidays to get it ready for the show and it gave us our first sight of the way Ford's minds are working.

minds are working.

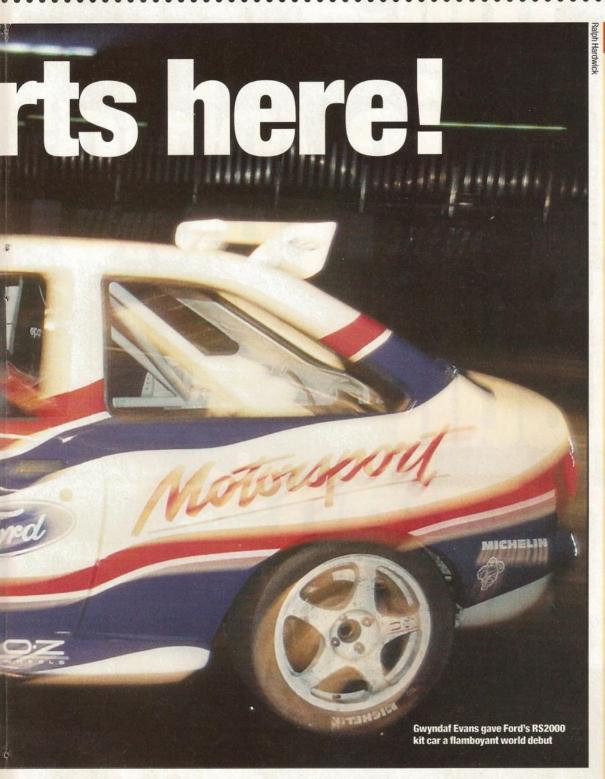
The Escort Cosworth (shown for the first time in Repsol colours) is still the first choice car for 1996 but when the World Rally Cars come along in 1997, the RS2000 must be what Ford has planned, albeit with four driven wheels and a turbo.

While delighted to be driving the new car, Evans is still not sure what his 1996 programme will be. The car was so new the paint was barely dry. The mechanics had to work over Christmas to get it ready

Everyone believes he will be out to chase the British title in the Gordon Spooner RS2000, but Evans admitted that he has yet to see a contract.

Normally, at this time of year, the rally fraternity would be setting its sights on the Monte Carlo Rally and the start of the World Championship campaign. For 1996, however, the Monte has been dropped and battle lines are drawn in Sweden next month instead. Entries for the snow rally close in a week's time, two weeks after the show's press day, so the sense of urgency just wasn't there.

There was plenty of speculation, though, and some worried faces



among the drivers who have yet to see a contract. Mitsubishi had Tommi Makinen's Catalunya Rally Lancer on the OMP stand, but Richard Burns was reluctant to stand too close as his transfer from Subaru had not been formally confirmed, even though it was on Monday (see Special Stage).

The biggest interest among the World Championship teams was centred on Ford, but there's no news yet on who will partner Sainz in the second car. Malcolm Wilson was taking a keen interest in the discussions, as was Alister McRae, but neither came away from the NEC with a deal.

There was much Ford activity on the second day of the show as Jackie Stewart announced his push into Formula 1, but it was not an announcement that gave McRae Jr a warm feeling. 'I'm wondering how much money is left for a rally programme,' he considered, before settling down to a meeting with the heavy hitters that proved fruitless.

Subaru was also the subject of some speculation, with three entries in for the Swedish, but so far only Colin McRae and Kenneth Eriksson named. Team boss David Richards confirmed that the plan is for Piero Liatti to make his event debut, gaining both experience and

international respect if he can turn in a steady drive to the finish. Liatti was a spectacular addition to the Live Action arena and admitted he was thoroughly enjoying the experience. His boss added that on Thursday morning he had learned of a driver who was prepared to do the Swedish Rally purely for the hell of driving the Impreza and that he was giving serious consideration to the proposal...

But if the sport's premier series was proving frustrating, there was encouraging news among the best that Britain has to offer. Nissan is within a whisker of confirming Mark Higgins for the programme

#### THE HOLIDAY'S OVER

EVEN IN THE FACE OF AN ARDUOUS FAR EAST TOUR, WORLD CHAMPION COLIN MCRAE COULDN'T MISS OUT ON THE AUTOSPORT SHOW



'If it's Thursday, this must be Brum'

AUTOSPORT International may have taken place more than a month before the rally season starts in earnest, but it marked the start of a busy year for World Champion Colin McRae.

He was on hand for the press and trade day to face a busy schedule of interviews and demonstrate his skills in the Live Action arena, where lurid fourwheel drifts had the press-gang on the edge of their seats, even if they didn't quite match the precision of Malcolm Wilson's explosive Escort Cosworth.

He could stay only for the one day as,

He could stay only for the one day as, by Thursday night, he was on his way to Thailand to start a 10-day tour of the Far East, underlining the fact that he is the new king of rallying.

'It's a new place every day,' he admitted ruefully, albeit aware that it has come as part of the deal with his 1995 title.

"It ends in China and then I go straight to Sweden for some testing. I'll get a week in Verbier with my mates – I'm only allowed to stay on the nursery slopes – but then it'll be back to the snow for the recce and then the event itself,' he added.

He's clearly looking forward to the defence of his title, confident that he can hang on to the crown, even if it won't be easy. He is teamed with Kenneth Eriksson: 'He's easy-going like me, so it should be good. I'm looking forward to working with him; he's consistent and quick, so he'll be a force to reckon with.'

On stage, McRae admitted that his biggest threat is likely to come from Mitsubishi's Tommi Makinen, if the Finn isn't overwhelmed by doing all the work himself, and he knows that his ex-team mate Carlos Sainz will be up there once he gets the Escort sorted to his liking.

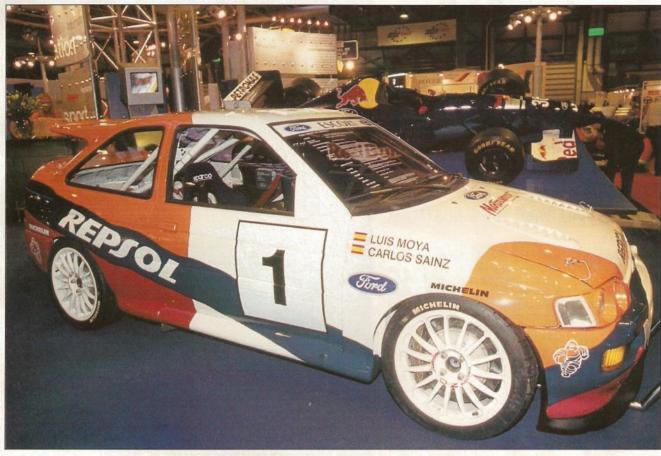
Of the future, he said: 'The new World Rally Cars will look much more spectacular than the current ones, so it will be much better to watch. These cars are hard to drive and look like showroom cars. The sport needs something a bit special to get the excitement going again.'

When the flag drops for the first time in Sweden, McRae will be on the event he rates as his favourite, but it won't be all fun for the next 11 months. 'The holiday's over already,' he concluded.

Plus Is Serie A really any better than the Premiership? Teddy Sheringham confesses that he's a moody bugger, Stuart Pearce confesses 'I'm no saint!' and why a Millwall fan rescued the Gills

February issue on sale now FourFourTwo

The life of



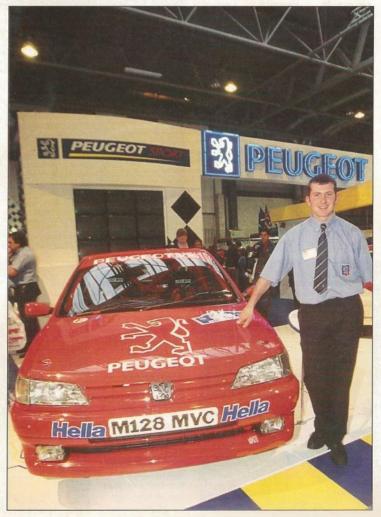
**Left: Carlos** Sainz's World Rally Group A car, seen for first time in livery of new sponsor Repsol. **Below left:** Neil Wearden. Peugeot's sole representative on the BRC, with his 306 \$16. **Below: Black flew** from New Zealand to see home of Formula 2 rallying

◀ this year on the Mobil 1/Top Gear British Rally Championship, and his younger brother, David, should line up against him in a Honda Civic.

The brothers-in-arms drew their own battle lines in the spectacular Live Action arena, in which David turned the disadvantage of only 1600cc into the advantage of 100% traction to sort out the 2-litre Sunny on a regular basis. 'I'm happy enough with second,' quipped Mark. 'Don't forget that Martin Rowe won everything here last year then didn't finish a rally. Perhaps this place puts the jinx on you!'

Rowe was there as well, struggling this time in a clubman version of the Peugeot 306 S16 and not destined to drive it in anger once the season begins. That task will fall to Neil Wearden, Peugeot's lone ranger on the championship now that the touring cars have nicked the best of the budget.

Championship manager John Horton reported a flood of interest in the series, while John Haugland flew from the snow of Norway to tempt our youngsters to his renowned ice-driving school. Ilkka Kivimaki came to push the Finnish Junior Team programme and promised at least eight Finns for the opening British Championship round. Britain no longer has a Junior Team but, as Ford operations manager John Taylor pointed out, when we did it led to two World Championship crowns, for Louise Aitken-Walker and Colin McRae.





Closer to home, the Mintex National Series also took the opportunity to push its wares for the coming season. Like the Mobil 1 stand, the Mintex version always had visitors on hand to discuss the future and take a look at the off-road Simbugghini driven by the Simmonite sisters when not chasing Mintex ladies prizes. A cash boost for that category is on offer and the organising team was keen to attract F2 interest in order to re-establish the championship as a stepping stone to the international arena.

But the furthest-travelled visitor must have been David Black, who came to have a look at the home of Formula 2 rallying. He was braving the chilly English winter instead of staying at home in the relative warmth of a New Zealand summer. Black won the F2 category on last July's New Zealand Rally while McRae was winning the event outright. International? The AUTOSPORT show is, clearly, precisely that.

# Cats with the cream

JAGUAR'S CELEBRATED 45-YEAR HISTORY AT THE LE MANS 24 HOURS WAS THE THEME OF A STAR-STUDDED DINNER. BRUCE JONES WALLOWED IN THE NOSTALGIA

artin Brundle was out to dinner in Coventry last Friday. There's nothing odd in that, perhaps, except that Jordan's latest Formula 1 signing was eating at Brown's Lane, Jaguar's factory. Not on the factory floor, you understand, but in a flashy black tie function at the smart end of the complex.

With a menu comprising Saumon Fumé Arnage and Medallions de Boeuf Mulsanne followed by 'Ligne d'Arrivee', a lemon tart garnished with a laurel wreath, you didn't need to be a genius to work out the theme of the evening: Jaguar at Le Mans.

Derek Warwick, John Watson, Jan Lammers and many of the other heroes of the 1980s were also there. But so too were the likes of Jack Fairman and Paul Frere from the '50s, and many of the characters such as Tom Walkinshaw who shared in the highs and lows of Jaguar's 45-year history at Le Mans.

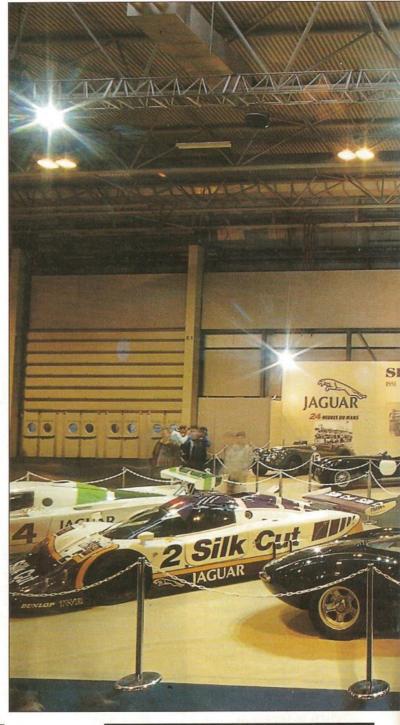
It was almost by accident that Jaguar became an integral part of the Le Mans 24 Hours. Way back in 1950, three privately-owned XK120s were entered for the race. Watching from the sidelines, Jaguar's William Heynes and 'Lofty' England were

more than a little impressed when they saw one of these running in second place before dropping out. Reporting back to Jaguar supremo William Lyons in England, they said that the race was there for the taking. And so began the marque's love affair with the great race.

The XK120 led to the C-type, which won first time out in 1951 in the hands of Peter Walker and Peter Whitehead, and then again in '53. The D-type followed, and more glory was secured in 1955, '56 and '57.

The stories were spun by compere Simon Taylor, with much merriment greeting Frere's explanation of the farcical incident in 1956 that saw two of the three works D-types spin and crash out together on the second lap. 'The story is that I was bloody stupid,' grinned the suave Belgian. He still thanks his lucky stars that an Ecurie Ecosse D-type came good and spared their blushes by winning the race.

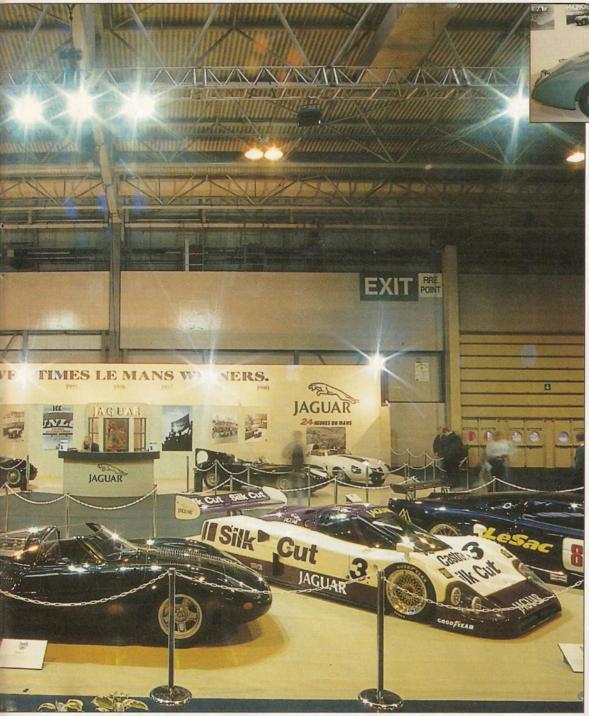
While the 1950s were glorious, the 1960s were not. Jaguar test driver Norman Dewis was asked to explain why the XJ13 project was scrapped. But despite wittily describing how all testing had to be done on the sly in his spare time, and how its promise was thwarted when British Leyland pulled the plug, he contrived not





Left: John Nielsen entertains the crowd with a rather familiar bridge as his backdrop. Right: 'I was bloody stupid!' explained Paul Frere when asked the reason for the 1956 crash that eliminated two works D-types just minutes into the 24-hour race





Left: The glory days on display at the **AUTOSPORT International show. Above:** The car that started it all - the 1950 XK120

to mention how he had destroyed the car at MIRA... A career in politics beckons.

And so silence fell on Jaguar's involvement until Bob Tullius brought his XJR5 over for a shot in 1984. Once again a privateer toe in the water led to renewed works interest. It took until 1988 to get gold. 'The world's tallest Dutchman' Jan Lammers was thought to be acting as a 'rabbit' as he tore into the lead.

'Maybe I didn't listen in the briefing,' he said, 'so I've no idea. But it held together and I was able to hand the car over to Andy Wallace in the lead. He just looked at me and said: "Oh my god, my first experience of an endurance race and I'm in the lead." It was a very proud moment when we won.' Two years later, Jaguar's Two years later, Jaguar's finest ascended the rostrum as winners again.

It wasn't just the winning that was being recalled on Friday, but also the other times. Derek Warwick best summed up what it meant to race for Jaguar at Le Mans: 'Le Mans is special, with thousands of Union Jack-waving nutters filling the grandstands. Before the start, the emotion is phenomenal. I wanted to win for them so much that I had tears streaming down my cheeks."

Jaguar Chairman Nick Scheele has a message for all you Jaguar fans: 'Jaguar has a legacy that was started by Sir William Lyons and rekindled by Sir John Egan. Will we go back to racing? Well, I can give you a firm "maybe".' So, start booking your places for next June.



**Left: A Eurosport** commentator now, **but John Watson** raced for Jaguar at Le Mans in the 1980s. Right: **Norman Dewis test** drove the XJ13 project that never really got off the ground in the 1960s



#### SPORTSCARS

he stands are a heaving sea of black and white, thousands of flagwaving fans wearing team colours and chanting for their favourites. It's not St their James's Park at three o'clock on a typical Saturday during the football season, but four o'clock on Sunday one summer afternoon at a race track in the middle of France. But, soccer fans to a man, they are waiting to celebrate a unique double Newcastle United's victory in the Football Association Premiership and the Le Mans 24 Hours.

It's not as fanciful as it might seem. Itinerant football fans have long made their presence felt at Le Mans, but this element of the crowd is set to mushroom in 1996. The black-and-white stripes of Newcastle - not to mention the logos of the city's famous brown ale and Adidas, both club sponsors – will grace the gothic lines of the Lister Storm GT racer for its attack on Le Mans, the Daytona 24 Hours in America next month and, possibly, the Suzuka 1000Kms in August.

Newcastle, currently the class act of the Premiership, is branching out into motorsport as part of far-reaching plans for Britain's first true sporting club, which could rival anything on offer in Europe. Under the chairmanship of property magnate Sir John Hall, United's sporting portfolio has already grown to include ice hockey, Rugby Union

and athletics.

'Motorsport,' says Sir John, 'is just part of our strategy to create a club with 100,000 members. Sport brings the family together, it gets to the kids in the inner cities, offers them something when maybe they

can't get a job.

But the establishment of the sporting club is not undiluted philanthropy, according to Sir John's son, Douglas, the motivating force behind Newcastle's move into motorsport. The younger Hall, a self-confessed car nut who has owned three Lister-modified Jaguars over the years, drags out the old adage, 'you've got to speculate to accumulate'.

'We are trying to go beyond

soccer,' he says, 'because that limits our earning potential. The great growth in our earnings is from television. Look at the global audience for car racing, and it is way above football. I'm a great believer in the marketplace for sport, but also

for the way you do sport.'

It's a desire to go racing with 'panache and style' that has brought him together with Lister Cars boss Laurence Pearce. When you sit down with Laurence, he talks about winning Le Mans and not about selling you a car.' The cold business ethos of a certain manufacturer of GT sports racing cars left Hall cold, it is said.

But Hall isn't the only member of Newcastle's racing squad to succumb to Pearce's sometimes over-bearing enthusiasm. Sometime Grand Prix driver Geoff Lees was seduced by the Lister dream last year, and despite a fiery relationship with Pearce during Lister's at times disorganised racing debut at Le Mans in 1995, he's back

He'll be joined by another who couldn't resist Pearce. A sportscar regular with Sauber-Mercedes, Nissan and Toyota, Kenny Acheson had all but turned his back on motor racing, contesting only one race over

the past two seasons. 'To be honest,' says Acheson, 'I only went to see Laurence because he seemed nice on the telephone. I wasn't expecting much, but when I saw the way the car was being built, I thought it was first class.

If the driving squad, which is completed by Tiff Needell, has been drawn in by Pearce's enthusiasm, then some of his passion has rubbed

off on the design team.

consultant Design Southgate, who conceptualised the car, has the same self-belief as Pearce. 'It's a small team, but it has the potential to go to the top.' And designer Geoff Kingston looks a new man after a difficult season running the second Gulf McLaren F1 GTR in the Global Endurance GT Series.

Kingston's enthusiasm has been converted into a GT racer that is a far cry from the 1995 version, which even Pearce admits was 'little more than a modified road car'. As neatly finished as his previous ground-up design, the Honda NSX GT2 racer which won its class at Le Mans last year, Kingston's Storm casts off the shackles of its predecessor - weight.

Not only is the 1996 version the best part of 200kg lighter than its 1270kg predecessor, but the distribution of the kilos has been dramatically altered.

big front-V12 mounted engine has been shifted back in the chassis by an undisclosed but substantial amount', a move that went hand in hand with the relocation of the gearbox to the back of the car. The 7-litre

Jaguar engine has been improved too. Now properly dialled in to Le Mans' air-restrictors, it is, claims the team, at least a match for the BMW V12 in last year's victorious McLaren.

Borrowed from the Le Manswinning Silk Cut Jaguars of 1990, its V12 growl should be familiar enough to persuade the 70,000-odd Brits who descend on Le Mans each year to swap their fading Silk Cut shirts and jackets for the Newcastle home strip. 🔲



LISTER STORM





A MODIFIED ENGINE AND LOWER WEIGHT ARE NOT THE ONLY CHANGES ON THE 1996 LISTER GT RACER. IN A SPONSORSHIP FIRST, IT WILL SPORT THE BLACK AND WHITE STRIPES OF NEWCASTLE UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB. GARY WATKINS REPORTS

# Alen wins for Opel

RALLY GREAT MARKKU ALEN BECAME THE LATEST DRIVER TO WIN A RACE IN THE ANDROS TROPHY, BUT PHILIPPE GACHE WON THE DAY FOR MEGA

Markku Alen made his ice racing breakthrough when he won the A2 final at La Bresse, but former Formula 3000, Indycar and touring car racer Philippe Gache beat the larger-engined class cars of his rivals with his 2-litre Hondaengined Mega to take a welldeserved victory after a very wet weekend of racing on 'ice'

As well as being Gache's first outright ice racing victory, it was also the first win for the Mega team 1994, when François Chauche beat all the big names to win the Andros Trophy series.

For the record, it was the first time Gache had won a race since he beat Eric Bernard, Jean Alesi and Erik Comas in a French Formula 3 Championship round at Magny-Cours back in 1987...

Practice had shown that the 2litre cars would be a serious threat to the larger-engined cars on the short and flat track. Indeed, 1995 Porsche Supercup Champion Jean-Pierre Malcher posted best time with his Peugeot 306 Maxi.

In the heats, though, Eric Helary was the first to come to prominence, guiding his Opel Astra V6 home ahead of Marcel Tarres's BMW, with Gache a close

spun his BMW in that heat. This meant he would have to start the second heat from the rear, when the ice had almost all melted, and he was never to recover from this set-back.

The second heat rounded out the first day's racing and saw Gache beat Opel's Helary and Dany Snobeck, Muller and promising Porsche-driving privateer Jean-Philippe Dayraut.

On the Sunday, the ice melted again as rain fell, leaving patches of tarmac showing through all around the circuit. Gache won the third heat from the Opels of rally star Markku Alen and Snobeck, with the powerful BMWs of Duez and Muller next up.

The A2 final is always run first, and it witnessed Alen streaking clear for his maiden win. And this performance propelled the Finn to fourth overall and a competitive in the championship rankings.

Helary started second, but was overtaken by the BMWs of Tarres and Muller's team mate Marc Duez as well as Malcher's 306. But Tarres retired when his suspension broke and Helary got his head down to work his way back to second place at flagfall. Combined with his form

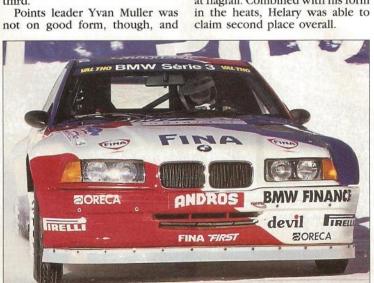
Christophe Vaison completed the top five.

Starting from pole in the A1 final, Gache left no room for suspense or disappointment by breaking away when the start light was switched to green.

Snobeck pushed him hard, but then suddenly slowed in the closing laps. A violent tweak of the wheel had broken his wrist. Although he made it to the finish in second place before slumping from the car in agony, Snobeck will not be fit enough to defend his third place in the rankings at the expected to race again until the Chamonix 24 Hours in February.

Dayraut ran third in the early laps, embarrassing the works drivers, but Muller worked his way back to third to maintain his championship lead (albeit by only three points), with Jean-Marc Gounon demoting also Porsche driver before flagfall.

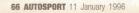
With Gounon and Vaison having gone so well in the two A finals, and Franck Lagorce and Yves Loubet winning the B1 and B2 finals respectively, it was a very good day for Seat.

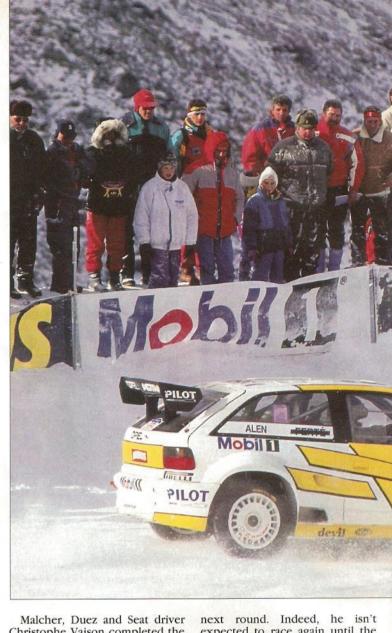


Yvan Muller still leads outright despite spinning his BMW out of contention in the heats



Opel's ice racing squad of Eric Helary, Markku Alen, Dany Snobeck and Alain Ferte







Markku Alen gets it sideways en route to victory in the second final. Photos: Ralph Hardwick

With the first three rounds seeing three different overall winners in three different cars, the Andros Trophy looks set to enjoy its most keenly-fought season ever.

The 2-litre cars have 100bhp less than their 3-litre rivals, but weather and track conditions combined with driving skill appear able to reduce the gap.

Thus Muller, who had looked to be a runaway winner after the opening races at Val Thorens before Christmas, will now have to work hard to remain ahead of the pack for the remainder of the championship. Despite Snobeck's

enforced absence, Opel's Helary and Alen look capable of preventing BMW from claiming the ice racing championship title for the first time.

Daniel Ortelli

ANDROS TROPHY ICE RACING CHAMPIONSHIP, ROUND 3, LA
BRESSE (F), JAM 677, Overall 1, Phillippe Gache (Mega-Honda);
2, Eric Helary (Opel Astra V6); 3, Dany Snobeck (Opel Astra V6); 4,
Marrkku Alen (Opel Astra V6); 5, Yvan Muller (BMW 318 Compact);
6, Marc Duez (BMW 318 Compact); 7, Jean-Pierre Dayraut
(Porsche 911); 8, Jean-Pierre Malcher (Peuged 306 Maxi); 9,
Marcel Tarres (BMW 318); 10, Francois Chauche (Mega-Honda).
A1 final 1, Gache; 2, Snobeck; 3, Muller; 4, Jean-Marc Gounon
(Seat Cordoba); 5, Dayraut. A2 final 1, Alen; 2, Helary; 3, Malcher;
4, Duez; 5, Christophe Vaison (Seat Toledo). Championship
posttions 1, Muller, 294pts; 2, Helary & Snobeck, 291; 4, Tarres,
278; 5, Chauche, 271; 6, Gache, 270; 7, Herbert, 267; 8, Alen &
Malcher, 266; 10, Duez, 265. Next round Isola 2000, Jan 13/14.



Chauche makes an unwanted impact in his Mega. Team mate Gache did better. Photo: DPPI

#### ANDORRA ICE RACING

### MECHANICAL FAILURE TO YVAN MULLER'S LEAD BMW ALLOWED OPEL'S DANY SNOBECK THROUGH AT THE CLOSE OF PLAY



Former Grand Prix driver Patrick Tambay came home third for BMW. Photo: DPPI

Opel team manager Dany Snobeck pulled off a big surprise in the final of the Andros Trophy Championship round in Andorra by beating the favourite Yvan Muller. It had been anyone's race throughout the thrilling contest until Muller's rear steering broke and he was forced to drift back down the field.

Before his unfortunate mishap, Muller had dominated the whole weekend, despite the consistently mercurial weather conditions. Practice started in heavy rain which soon melted the ice, causing serious electrical problems for many. The downpour eased for the qualifying rounds, but the track was still treacherously wet. In such difficult conditions, the power of the big cars was especially telling. The efficient trio of Muller, Snobeck and BMW driver Patrick Tambay dominated all three rounds. Muller was always in command and after three timed rounds he was running between 2.5 and four seconds ahead of Snobeck in the leading Opel Astra and Tambay, who was driving Muller's 1994 car.

Behind them, Eric Helary took fourth twice, and Francois Chauche in the leading 3-litre Mega-Honda fought hard with the BMWs to clinch a spot in the top five, ahead of Herbert, Duez and Tarres.

On Sunday morning, the sun and the cold were back for good and a solid layer of ice meant that the enthusiastic Andorran crowd could enjoy a great show without being showered with mud. The third round allowed the 2-litre cars to show what they are made of, with little-known Pierre Colard in a private Peugeot 306 Maxi leading the class ahead of Porsche Supercup-winner Jean-Pierre Malcher, who was driving a semi-works 306 Maxi. Steadily-improving F1 hope Franck Lagorce followed close behind in his Seat Cordoba.

In the A2 final, Snobeck was hassling Muller right through the race and was a deserving beneficiary of the Frenchman's misfortune. He left Tambay — who secured third in the overall standing — and Chauche far behind.

Bertrand Balas raised a few eyebrows by taking fourth in his turbocharged Seat Cordoba, which was entered by Fred Stadler's ROC team. His 10th overall placing for the day delighted the Seat managers and was a big hit with the Andorran crowd, too.

Starting from pole in the A1 final, Muller broke away at the green light and cruised to what looked set to be his third consecutive win on ice, having won the closing round last year and the opening one this year. But after a few laps the BMW began to lose speed and it wasn't long before Helary took the lead. Muller's rear steering had gone, and it had become almost impossible to drive the powerful BMW around the track's numerous hairpins.

Pressed by Herbert and by Finnish rally star Marku Alen in the other Opel, Muller finally gave up any hope not only of winning the race, but also of taking top spot in the final rankings.

Fourth place in the A1 final went to Malcher, who was classified ninth overall, first in the 2-litre class, ahead of Philippe Gache and Paul Bourion's surprisingly rapid Daewoo Nexia which made history by being the first podium finish for a Korean car in Europe.

After scoring his first win of the winter, Snobeck gave up all thoughts of retirement: after all, his victory elevated him to second in the rankings. As a result, 1994 World Rally Champion Didier Auriol, who was being considered by the Opel squad, has been left free to hunt for a drive in the Monte Carlo Rally... However, his wrist-breaking moment at La Bresse may reverse this decision.

■ Daniel Ortelli

ANDROS TROPHY ICE RACING CHAMPIONSHIP, ROUND 2, ANDORRA (AND), DEC 16/17 Overall 1, Danny Snobeck (Opel Astra V6); 2, Yvan Muller (BMW 318); 3, Patrick Tambay (BMW 318); 4, Eric Helary (Opel Astra V6); 5, Patrick Herbert (BMW 318); 6, Francois Chauche (Mega-Honda); 7, Marc Duez (BMW 318); 6, Marcel Tarres (BMW 318); 9, Jean-Pierre Malcher (Peugeot 306 Maxi); 10, Bertrand Balas (Seat Cordoba), At final 1, Helary; 2, Herbert; 3, Alen; 4, Malcher; 5, Tarres. A2 final 1, Snobeck; 2, Tambay; 3, Chauche; 4, Balas; 5, Phillippe Gache (Mega-Honda), 2-Hitre class 1, Malcher; 2, Gache; 3, Paul Bourion (Daewoo Nexia); 4, Francois Chatriot (Peugeot 306 Maxi); 5, Franck Lagonce (Seat Cordoba).

#### WORLD OF SPORT

Ari Vatanen is on an African crusade to save his rallying career. The Finn knows that to clinch a deal for this year's 1996 World Rally Championship, he must win this Granada-Dakar Rally.

The four-time victor of the punishing cross-country rally has not won in Africa since 1991. And his last win was his fabricated victory for Subaru on the 1993 Hong Kong-Beijing Rally.

'My New Year's resolution is to win the Dakar and get myself a full World Championship season,' said the Citroen driver in a remote camp on the Moroccan border with Algeria.

Four days into the two-week, 4500-mile marathon, the shortest Dakar ever, Vatanen had pulled out a slender lead from French rally driver Pierre Lartigue, who won this event in 1994 and '95 and has taken over as the team leader.

'The stages so far in Morocco have been good Dakar stuff,' said Vatanen. 'Tight trails with plenty of rough bits, just the right thing for a Finn. I don't think it was really a strategy, but I wanted to establish a good lead early on.

The plan was working a treat until the front right tyre on his improved, more stable but less powerful 1996 ZX Rallye Raid let go 310 miles into the 375-mile special stage between ES Smara in Morocco and Zouerat in Mauritania.

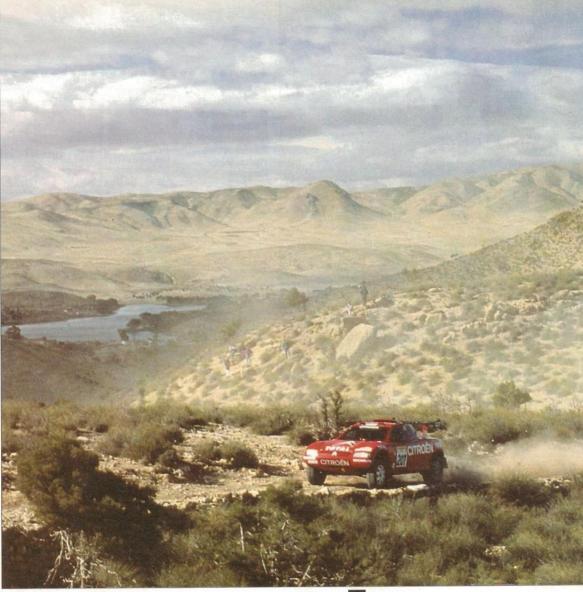
At first the puncture seemed routine to the Finn, who normally experiences one or two per day. 'When Gilles (Picard) and I tried to get the wheel off and put on one of our four spares, the lock wouldn't move. I knew there was no way to move it with our manual jack.

'I couldn't wait for one of our support trucks, so I decided to drive the 65 miles to the finish with the tyre gone and the car on the rim. In the sand, it wasn't too bad. But, on the stones, it cost us a great

deal of time.'

Last year, while leading, Vatanen nose-dived his Citroen into a hole within a few miles of this year's incident and retired within hours of the halfway rest day.

The fluke stroke of bad luck cost Vatanen 1h42m, the lead and any



# tanen trips

LARTIGUE LEADS THE WAY FOR CITROEN AFTER TEAM MATE VATANEN LOST TIME

realistic chance of scoring his fifth Dakar win. 'Even the wheel nut is against me winning again," despaired Vatanen. 'This drought will come to an end soon, I hope."

For the second year in a row, Vatanen's troubles handed the lead to Lartigue. He now enjoys almost an hour's lead from Citroen newcomer Philippe Wambergue and Fred Gallagher.

Despite Bruno Saby winning the Dakar for Mitsubishi in 1993, the Japanese team has been in the French team's shadow all event, with Jean-Pierre Fontenay's Pajero its highest-placed runner in third.

Saby had won the first stage for Mitsubishi in a muddy field outside Granada on December 30, and this form was matched by Fontenay and third team member Hiroshi Masuoka who both clocked up a special stage win apiece on the fast run south through Morocco and Mauritania.

However, Saby is currently grateful just to be alive, let alone still in the rally. Speeding into Es Smara in the former war zone of the Western Sahara, he forward rolled his Pajero five times after hitting a deep rut at over 90mph. Gallagher, following close behind, described the scene 'as if a small aircraft had crashed...

Amazingly, Saby's damaged Mitsubishi was repairable by mechanics from one of the team's support trucks and the Frenchman started the next day in 80th place. Shinozuka and Fontenay also dropped out of the race for the lead with damaged suspension.

'I know our car is competitive,' said Saby. But we have been unlucky during the first week. I hope it will be Citroen that has the trouble in the second week.

On that same stage into Es Smara, though, tragedy struck as Laurent Gueguen, driving one of Citroen's fleet of support trucks, was killed when he appeared to hit an anti-tank mine left over from a war in the Spanish Sahara, now part of southern Morocco (see Special Stage).

Retirements in the first half of the rally included former Grand Prix drivers Bertrand Gachot and Paul Belmondo, whose Chevrolet Blazer had been plagued by electronic injection problems.

Also out before the Zouerat rest day was Jutta Kleinschmidt in the second of Jean-Louis Schlesser's 2WD buggies. Seat-powered Schlesser, himself, is seventh overall, running as the only threat to the Citroen/Mitsubishi duopoly.

The rally finishes on Sunday.

Jeremy Hart



Fontenay's progress for Mitsubishi comes under close scrutiny as he blasts out of a wadi



Pierre Lartigue's Citroen is but a dot on the rugged landscape as he puts the power down on the race south to the Moroccan deserts. Photos: DPPI

#### MANFEILD TOURING CARS

#### **Baird wins for BMW**

Defending New Zealand Touring Car Champion Craig Baird enjoyed two all-the-way wins in his Castrolbacked BMW at Manfeild while his principal rivals clashed and spun behind him.

Paul Radisich, taking home-leave after his BTCC campaign, had a torrid time. First his Ford Telstar suffered engine problems in qualifying. Then he tangled with the Toyota Coronas of both BTCC rival Julian Bailey and Greg Brinck (twice), earning both a stop-go penalty and angry words from his rivals who'd finished one-two at the previous round. They'd also dominated the opening round but later had their Coronas disqualified for alleged technical infringement.

While all this argy-bargy went on behind them, Baird and BMW team mate Brett Riley scored a one-two.

In the second race, Baird took an unassailable lead ahead of Brinck, Riley and Bailey.

In the accompanying TraNZam race, Steve Johnson - son of Australian touring car hero Dick won both races in his Ford Mustang ahead of a quality field graced by Jim Richards, 1995 champion Kayne Scott who won both races at the previous round and Chris Kneifel

The Formula Ford honours were





Above: Toyota's chargers Julian **Bailey and Greg** Brinck had a torrid time at Manfeild. Left: Homecoming hero Jim Richards prepares for some feisty TraNZam action, Photos: **Euan Cameron** 

taken by Swift driver Simon Wills from veteran Kenny Smith in the first race, with Brazilian Luciano Burti chasing him home in the second on a day when the Van Diemen forces were out of sorts. Greg Tulett, a winner at Pukekohe on New Year's Eve, had to make do with a third place.

Wayne Munro

#### THE BRAZILIAN MOTORSPORT SCENE

#### FORMULA 3 AND STOCK CARS LEAD THE WAY IN A COUNTRY THAT CONTINUES TO PRODUCE STAR AFTER STAR FOR THE WORLD STAGE

Even before the lights went green for the opening round of the SudAm Formula 3 Championship, the Brazilian teams and drivers knew that their Argentinian counterparts would not be able to match their pace. And the reason for this confidence is that the Brazilians had spent 1994 running contemporary F3 chassis, while the Argentinians split away after a troubled close to the '93 season and spent '94 racing with 1990 vintage chassis, losing out in the technology scramble along the way.

Teenager Ricardo Zonta set the pace from the first round, dominating the opening round in his Cesario Formula Dallara-Mugen. Five more wins followed in the remaining 12 rounds. Added to this the nine pole positions and seven fastest laps, he was a worthy champion.

Max Wilson also shone, despite financial troubles forcing him to shift from Amir Nasr Racing for the new Propoar team, whose Dallara-Opel he guided to four wins, although other strong drives were spoiled by his accident-prone nature.

Life could have been harder for this pair if veteran F3 racer Tom Stefani, back from two years in Italy, had coped better with pressure. Always fast in testing, he wilted when the lights went green, and he won but once for Amir



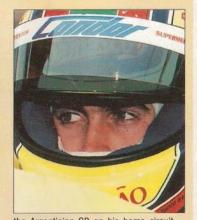
Max Wilson chased hard and won four races, but finished second to Ricardo Zonta (right)

Nasr. His sixth other rostrum placings helped him to third place overall.

Nestor Furlan again finished as the highest placed Argentinian, in fourth place overall. It took him a while to get his Fiat-powered Dallara onto the pace, and it wasn't until the 11th round that he scored his first win. Typically, this came at Buenos Aires, his home circuit. And even this was shrouded in controversy as a last minute decision saw the round held on a different variation of the circuit than the one used for the Grand Prix supporting round in April. And Furlan was the only driver to have tested on the revised layout. Expect him to be more of a force in 1996.

Teenager Bruno Junqueira could have done better than fifth had he started with Nasr's team. But he dallied for seven rounds with his family-run before making the jump, after which his form improved notably, with four rostrum finishes topped by victory at Guapore. He starts the new season as one of the title favourites.

Argentinian Ricardo Risatti ended up sixth overall in a season in which he was unable to devote as much time to his racing as he would have liked, due to business pressures. His best result came in the one that counted, supporting



the Argentinian GP on his home circuit. Ruben Fontes scored five times in seven races before his money ran out.

In the bustling Stock Car series, it has taken six years, but finally someone has beaten former Formula 1 driver Ingo Hoffmann to the title. The man who pulled this off was Paulo Gomes, who won five of the 10 races. His team mate, Xandy Negrao, ended up second overall. Indeed, so poor was Hoffmann's season in his self-run car that he won only once and was classified sixth overall behind Wilson Fittipaldi Jr, Adalberto Jardim and Carlos Alves.

Lito Cavalcanti

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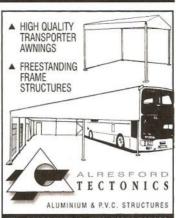
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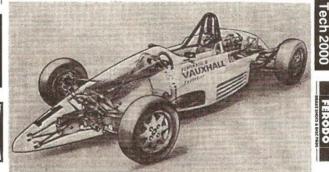
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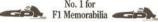
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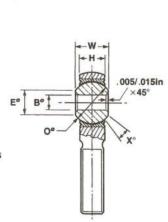
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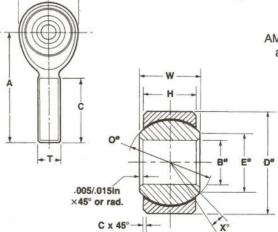
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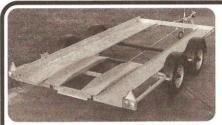
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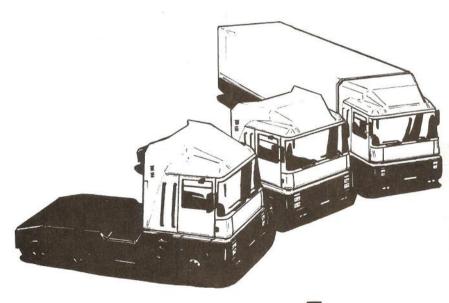
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# GLUBAUTOSPORT

ALL THE NATIONAL RACE, RALLY & HISTORIC NEWS PLUS FULL RESULTS ROUND-UP

EDITOR MARCUS PYE ASSISTANT EDITORS. TOM CLARKSON, KEITH OSWIN, SIMON STRANG



Successful in Europe last year, the diminutive Tatuus Formula Renault Sport cars are now coming to Britain with DC Cook. Photo: John Colley

### DC Cook: Tatuus exclusive in '96

DC Cook Racing has struck an exclusive deal to supply and run Italian-built Tatuus chassis in the Formula Renault UK Cup series.

Derek Cook's team has bought four FR96 chassis, and will field two in the European championship. British customers will be able to buy cars and spares via the team's base in Barnsley, Yorkshire. The decision was made after

The decision was made after successful tests with the 1995 car at Snetterton, Silverstone, Brands Hatch and Oulton Park. These were overseen by Tatuus's chief engineer Gianfranco de Bellis. 'The

# Rover looking at 200 for competition in 1997

Rover's new 200 model will be assessed for racing and rallying in 1997, once its chassis development team has signed off a competition version of the MGF for France.

An artist's impression of a 200 racer was a teaser on Rover Sport's stand at AUTOSPORT International, and, while personnel refused to discuss it, the 220 Turbo Coupe's successor looks likely to provide an ideal stepping stone to the BTCC.

The MGF for a multi-discipline class in France, was at the show.

car was fast everywhere we went,' said de Bellis. 'It will perform very well on the British circuits.'

David Cook, Derek's son, will drive in the EuroCup, but his team mate and the UK Cup drivers are yet to be confirmed. De Bellis is keen for an Italian, possibly former Formula Alfa Boxer frontrunner Giovanni Anapoli, to race in Britain.

The first 1996 Tatuus is due to be shaken down at Monza next Monday, by David Cook. It will feature revised bodywork and new front and rear uprights.

DC Cook Racing will then

transport the car back to England via Spain and several French circuits where it will be subjected to more extensive tests.

'I think it's a very good car,' said Cook team manager Paul Haigh on Monday. 'During testing, Gianfranco allowed us to put our own engines in the car, which enabled us to establish comparable data to the Swifts we ran last year.

'We were impressed by the incredible level of confidence in us that this demonstrated. Everyone here is totally committed to us being on the pace from the outset.'

# Swift takes flight again

Swift RCS enjoyed massive interest at AUTOSPORT International, two weeks after Gavin Wills bought the company. Swift's stand showcased plans for the 1996 Formula Renault and Formula Ford cars, although the first chassis is still a week away.

Swift consultant Robin Webb reported an unbelievable number of enquiries, with overwhelming interest in FF1600 and US Pro-2000.

'It's incredible,' said Webb, 'I can't believe what is happening. We've had to have an emergency meeting to figure out how we're going to build the number of cars that have been ordered.'

Webb confirmed that Swiss Formula Ford Zetec team Jenzer Motorsport ordered three cars, the German Continental Racing team two Zetecs and the Dutch GEVA squad another one.

James Linton, formerly of Reynard, has taken on the role of commercial director. The entire Swift operation is set to move to Wills's Plymouth base in the next week, where the new telephone number is 01752 201777.

# Van Diemen's FF1600 way off the pace in NZ

The first batch of Van Diemen RF96 FF1600 cars shipped to New Zealand has thus far failed to live up to the promise shown by the model in Australian specification in testing before Christmas.

The five NZ cars were so far off the pace in the opening round of the Street-Skills series at Pukekohe on December 31 that all but Class 2 champion Andrew Bowler have ditched them for older chassis.

The RF96's poor showing at Pukekohe — where Luciano Burti finished ninth in one race and Bowler seventh in the other — prompted Van Diemen boss Ralph Firman to go to last weekend's Manfeild races to assess the situation.

He believes the problem stems from the combination of 1600cc Kent engines and NZ's Avon control tyres which develop more grip than the Dunlops on which it has run so well in Australia.'

'It is a nightmare,' said Firman. 'In the 20 odd years I've been building cars, we have often fought to find two or three tenths. When I learned that the new car was two seconds down, I couldn't get on the 'plane quickly enough.'

Having pledged to find the answer, Firman has booked two days of testing at Manfeild this week...



Rover Sport's proposed 200 racer could provide a leg-up to the BTCC. Photo: Jeff Bloxham

### HUMBLE PYE

MORE CHOICE THAN EVER
FOR THE BUDDING RACER AT
AUTOSPORT INTERNATIONAL



AUTOSPORT International is now the traditional venue for motorsport's family and its supporting industry to exchange New Year's greetings, to discuss latest trends, mull over last year's successes once more and reveal fresh aspirations.

Its influence seems to increase with each passing year — this was the sixth — and I met competitors from the USA and Australia who had made special trips to England to view this microcosm of the sport. And spend their money.

At the sharp end of British racing however, in the BTCC-supporting package, many home-grown competitors are still cautious about their plans. The ban on paddock hospitality — blamed squarely on circuit owners by TOCA — which has made it difficult to attract sponsors, was never far from the lips of frustrated drivers and team managers for whom entertaining financiers is a lifeline.

Star of the event from the National angle was the thunderous EUROCAR V8, which arch-showman Barry Lee debuted in the Live Action arena. If the V6 versions have changed the face of the sport in two years, these 450bhp monsters will put bums on seats big time.

Club racing's mood indeed was more buoyant than for many a year, particularly at grass roots level, where value for money is the doctrine. The 750 Motor Club attracted huge interest, as did the Selenia Fiat Challenge, while the Clubmans Register — which has upped its profile to match its cars this past year — was inundated with enquiries.

Elsewhere, the new Westfield Midget racer caught my eye. If short oval racing is your bag, this front-engined machine could form the basis of an inexpensive training class for Grand Prix Midgets.

The message is that the prospective club racer now has a wider choice than ever, and there are a lot of options from karting upwards which are making the sport more accessible. I still fancy Rover Sports 1600 (any commercial partners out there?), but the options would make a very interesting series of features...

# **Lechner vying for Van Diemen**

Austrian Formula Ford champion Robert Lechner is pushing hard for a drive in the Slick 50 Formula Ford championship. Lechner, son of Interserie racer Walter, impressed at last year's FF Festival with his Eurocup victory and strong run.

Lechner has had meetings with Van Diemen boss Ralph Firman, who has offered him a drive in the Duckhams-backed squad, but Lechner faces a clash with current sponsor Valvoline.

The 18-year-old Austrian is also backed by energy drink Dark Dog, which is insisting on an all-yellow car, something that the British team has stipulated against.

team has stipulated against.

Although his first option is obviously the works team, Walter Lechner indicated that he may well run Robert himself if need be.

With Australian Mark Webber all but signed, the other factory Van Diemen seat is open. Finnish star Miku Santavirta and Brazilian Vitor Meira, who won the Winterseries for the team, are in the frame.

Although Santavirta has yet to sign a contract, it is believed it will be with a Van Diemen team.

Robert Lechner preparing to do battle at the Formula Ford Festival. Photo: Jeff Bloxham





Silverstone will run its single-seater champion in a Zetec Swift at Brands. Photo: Chris Dixon

### **TOCA races for Silverstone champions**

The Silverstone Driving Centre is running fully-fledged RAC MSA-sanctioned racing championships for its pupils this season — on three of its seven circuits — with prizes of sponsored TOCA races by courtesy of Ford Motorsport.

The winner of the one-make Zeus SC1 Formula Ford 1600 series will graduate to one of Silverstone's Zetec-powered FF Swift SC95s for the Slick 50 race at Brands Hatch at Brands Hatch on September 22.

The saloon car champion, meanwhile, will jump from an SDC Peugeot 306 into Ford Motorsport's 'celebrity' Fiesta 1.8 Si for the last round of the frenetic Ford Credit Championship.

Competitors will be able to count six results from the twin 13-round series towards their final scores. A special championship package of six races and two blocks of three timed lapping sessions is available for £3591.

Silverstone is considering running its own FF team in 1997 and its Driving Centre will forge links with France's La Filiere racing university through its strengthened links with its major sponsor Elf.

### Puddy to oversee Haywood FF Mygale

Legendary Formula Ford engineer Malcolm 'Puddy' Pullen has joined Haywood Racing to oversee a new two-car assault on the Slick 50 Formula Ford Championship.

Haywood, which runs a Formula Renault Sport team, has dropped its BEI championship-winning FR1700 effort to make way for the second TOCA attack, for which it is this week negotiating to run French-built Mygale chassis.

Team owner Jim Warren is now seeking FF drivers although Peter Clarke has upgraded from FR1700 to FRS alongside David Henderson.

### Vortex expands into Formula Vauxhall

Vortex Motorsport boss Bob Salisbury has set up a Formula Vauxhall team with Jason Watt's Opel Euroseries-winning engineer Paul Leach.

Its driver line-up has yet to be confirmed, but the outfit will be run out of workshops alongside the F3000 team in Bicester.

'We started the FVauxhall team because we need more going on in the workshop than just F3000,' said Salisbury at AUTOSPORT International. 'We want the F3000 team to help the Vauxhall team.'



# Huge interest in Vauxhall Junior

This year's Formula Vauxhall Junior Championship will be another humdinger if provisional entry lists released by Vauxhall Sport at AUTOSPORT International are a guide to the final grids.

Martin Donnelly Racing will defend the title won by Marc Hynes last year with Leighton Walker and Luciano Burti, while World Cup-winning karter Daniel Wheldon finds a berth at 1993 and '94 champion team JLR, alongside Charlie Butler-Henderson.

British kart champion Michael Simpson has yet to name his team, but fellow graduate Doug Bell slots in alongside Neil Moulton at the strong Paston team and Lewis Motorsport has re-signed Andrew Kirkaldy and Alberto Jacobsen.

Triple Formula Vauxhall, champions Paul Stewart Racing have Justin Wilson confirmed for the winged class and look set to sign Peter Dumbreck too.

They will face Ben Collins and Hynes for MDR, and quick racing returnee Henry Stanton with his own team. Other two-car efforts in Class A teams are expected to emerge from PTM, JVA and Vortex.

The jousting commences at Donington Park on April 8.



Richard Petty will provide the Olympic Oval Experience in his awesome NASCAR stock cars

### Petty and Russell offer Olympic gold

Britain's Jim Russell Racing Drivers School and NASCAR king Richard Petty's Driving Experience have teamed up to provide an exclusive motorsport opportunity for major corporate sponsors and guests of the Olympic Games this summer.

Using the oval and one-mile road course at Atlanta Motor Speedway, the distinguished alliance will enable delegates to sample US and European racing disciplines back-to-back, in an initiative which will bring motorsport closer to the Olympics than ever before.

Petty's fleet of race-prepared

600bhp Winston Cup racers will make up the 'oval experience', while JRRDS plans to run 15 of Van Diemen's new single-seater World Cars — powered by Chevrolet-badged Vauxhall Nova engines — for the road course activities.

'To be part of the world's highest profile sports event is going to be pretty exciting,' said RPDE president Bob Lutz. 'It seems we are fairly similar to JRRDS in our methods of teaching. The only difference is that our cars weigh in at 3500lb compared to the 900lb of the Van Diemens.'

### **NEWS IN BRIEF**

Justin Keen has signed to contest the USAC Formula Ford 2000 Championship with L&R Motorsports Inc's Vector team, following his superb testing performance at Phoenix before Christmas. The 23-year-old former works Swift, Van Diemen

rormer works swift, van Diemen and Vector FF driver left for the USA last week. His racing programme opens at Walt Disney World on January 27.

Jenson Button, who finished second in last year's World Formula A Kart Championship, was quickest of all on Justin—US Vector Silverstone's circuit at AUTOSPORT International. He set a sensational time of 18.20s, albeit running in a TKM kart rather than the slower karts used in the journos' race on the Thursday.

Formula 3000 stalwarts Paul Heath and Rick Sherwood are setting up a new FOpel team, Northern Racing, to run at least two cars in this year's Euroseries. Heath will engineer the lead car. Call Sherwood on 01993 882208 for details.

Paul Stewart Racing's super-successful Formula Vauxhall team suffered a blow before the Christmas holiday when manager Graham Taylor resigned his post to join his former colleague Marc Julyan on Audi Sport's new BTCC team.

Formula First champion Tim Spouge has ordered a Van Diemen RF96 for his graduation to FRenault Sport. Mark Burdett Racing, which runs the Texaco-backed driver, hopes to field a second car.

**Uruguayan** Daniel Fresnedo is set to move up from FR1700 to FRS with the Bev Jones/Tarry Racing conglomerate.

Startline Racing is to run Mygale chassis in FRenault Sport for Malaysian Alex Yoong and Edward Horner. One of the cars has been sourced from Martello Racing.

Rob Maclean, who runs Team Australia's GM Nations Cup challenge, has set up a new Mygale-equipped team to take on Alan Jones's AMSA Van Diemen squad in the Motorcraft FF1600 Championship 'down under' this season. Dugal McDougall is the lead driver.

Peter Duke, 21, is expected to race a singleton Dukes Transport car in the TOCA Formula Vauxhall Championship. Brother Michael, 25, who competed successfully alongside him in Ireland last season, is

returning to one horse power in show-jumping.

Michael Simpson has turned down a paid drive with the Italian Tibikart team to contest the FVJ Championship. The multiple British Formula A champion is in negotiation with three teams which are eager to run him. A decision

is expected imminently.

As a service to Van Diemen customers in the Slick 50 Championship, works team manager Mickey Galter will oversee a clinic for setting up First Division cars. 'My aim is to get as many Van Diemens up to speed as possible,' says Galter.

**Z-Speed Racing's** projected return to FF could well be led by Kristian Kolby. The Dane, who is being courted by Mygale, could find himself in a Swift as newly-signed team manager Robin Webb is still a consultant to Gavin Wills's marque. Martin Byford's team is also running three Dallaras in the British F3 Championship.

Briton Matthew Davies is considering FF and FRS programmes in Britain this year, having commuted to France for an eventful Renault Campus season with La Fillere. An FRS offer with Elf's academy is also on the table for the ex-karter.

Richard Tarling has lined-up Bas Leinders's 1995 Slick 50 title-winning Swift SC95Z for a switch to FF. The car will be run by former Star of Mallory champion Alister Lane and we understand that it will remain in the ownership of Brian Holmes, who sold the Swift company last month.

Former F1 driver Jan Lammers's new corporate entertainment venture is booming in Holland. The NZH Ultimate Driving Experience's first Van Diemen sportscar, debuted at AUTOSPORT International, is likely to be followed by two more, and four of the marque's new World Car single-seaters are on order.



Jan Lammers with his first Van Diemen sportscars at the NEC. Photo: Ralph Hardwick

### **NEWS IN BRIEF**

FAD Sport, which guided Javier Diaz to last year's Spanish Formula Renault Sport series — and scooped five of the top six places with its Van Diemens — may field more cars this season. Team owner Jose Luis Bermudez de Castro wants to sell his seven FR1700s and 12 engines to make room for RF96s!

Alex Deighton, who has been without a drive since he split with Jim Russell's FVJ team last summer, is looking to FAsia. 'I want to drive something,' said Deighton, inspired by the success of current champion Brian Saunders. 'and if an opportunity arises, I'll jump at it.'

PTM Motorsport has found big backing for its first full-scale assault on the FAsia Championship. Principal Peter Thompson was unwilling to confirm details of the package at AUTOSPORT International, but hinted that his two-car effort will have the resources to run at the front. Last year, PTM's Technology division provided engineering support to Leif Norberg's Team Shell Lux cars.

Scottish FF1600 champion Ricki Steedman and last year's FFirst runner-up James Beales are hoping to land FVJ drives with Jim Russell Racing this season. The team is committed to Australian Peter Hackett, winner of the 1995 JRRDS World Scholarship, in its JSB Electrical-supported car.

Jeremy Gumbley who won SP Motorsport's FVJ Scholarship last year and made fine progress with the team, has re-signed with Chris Perkins's equipe. He will be run alongside Kartpro Stratos-backed Oli Freeling-Wilkinson and the winner of the next SP competition. Costing just £150 to enter, it carries a full season of FVJ as its prize...

Newcomers to FVJ this season include karter Mark Boost in an ex-SpeedSport car, and Anthony Dunn, David Howells and Paul Parker, whose cars came from Chris Buchan, Charlie Butler-Henderson and Leighton Walker respectively.

Lanan Racing is building a brand new Lola T81/50 for ARP Formula 3 and Pro-Sport 3000 graduate Kevin Sherwood to run in BOSS Formula events. The Alcatel Data Networks car will be powered by a Nicholson McLarenprepared Ford Cosworth DFZ engine. Lanan is also rebuilding Kevan McLurg's Formula 2 Minardi.

Alan Cornock's FCS concern (the Fulmar name has been dropped for 1996) continues as exclusive distributor for Van Diemen's one-make formulae — FVauxhall Junior, F2000 and FFirst — and to handle FVauxhall sales and parts back-up. In addition to operating a trackside spares service for F2000 and FFirst, FCS specialises in Reynard FF1600 and FF2000 parts (with factory blessing) and can supply components for all Royale cars from original patterns.

# Westfield takes to the ovals

Westfield Sportscars's Classic Grand Prix Midget racer could take the ovals by storm if the enormous interest at its launch at AUTOSPORT International turns into firm orders.

Designed and built to RAC MSA regulations, it answers demand for the traditional front-engined cars which have not been marketed in number since Dastle stopped producing them in the 1970s.

The brainchild of Martin Lyon — whose initial aim was to produce an inexpensive and versatile racing car for his own enjoyment — the £3000 kit boasts a sturdy spaceframe chassis which takes standard Westfield suspension.

With running gear sourced from Ford Escort Mk2, Cortina Mk3/4 or Sierra models, Lyon reckons a competitive, reliable racer could be on the track for under £5000! Factory-built cars are also available.

The prototype is powered by a 1700cc Ford pushrod engine – Grand Prix Midgets use full-race 1300cc units – but interest was such that a one-make budget class could quickly evolve. Details from Lyon on 01242 241398.

The Westfield Classic GP Midget spells low-cost oval racing fun. Photo: Bloxham





The Vento/Esso Ultron package unveiled at AUTOS PORT International. Photo: Jeff Bloxham

### Ventos tiger into '96 with Esso Ultron

Esso Ultron is the new title sponsor of the Volkswagen Vento VR6 Challenge, it was announced by Nick Mead, the marketing manager of Esso Lubricants, at the AUTOSPORT International show in Birmingham last Thursday.

The deal, along with additional backing from Dunlop and Mintex, makes the series the most lucrative one-make racing series in Britain with a prize fund in excess of £70,000, including an innovative 'grand-a-win' award to each individual victor throughout the season.

'We are delighted to be associated with Esso Ultron this season,' said Volkswagen product marketing manager Nick Berry. 'With their support, the championship will be even more rewarding for the competitors.'

This season sees a major technical upheaval for the championship. Chief among the changes are re-valved front dampers, a re-chipped engine management system offering an extra 10bhp, a revised air intake system and new compound Dunlop race tyres.

## Yokohama backing for 750MC's Hot Hatches

The runaway success of the 750 Motor Club's Hot Hatch racing series over the past two seasons is set to continue this year with Yokohama replacing Marshal as supplier of its control tyres.

The Japanese company, now a co-sponsor of the series with Demon Tweeks and Fast Car magazine, has specified its A510 covers as standard wear.

Yokohama also provides the slicks and wets for the club's Formula 4 single-seaters, and backs its Reliant-powered Formula 750s with Wesprey Castings.

### Harris lands Comma Caterham-Vauxhall

Caterham K Series champion Simon Harris, has won the Comma Oils Scholarship prize — a sponsored drive in this year's Caterham-Vauxhall Challenge.

The 31-year-old futures trader, beat Neil Delargy, Mark Humphrey and Mike Neumann to win the award, worth £25,000, announced at AUTOSPORT International.

The Comma car will be overseen by Hyperion Motorsport's chief engineer Jeremy Richardson, who was 'very impressed' by Harris during the finals day at Donington.



Mallock's sleek new Mk32b at the NEC

### **Lowline Mallock for Supersports racing**

Mallock Racing has reduced the frontal area of its rear-engined Vauxhall Supersports design - the first of its type to win in the class in evolving the Mk32b model.

The car's centre section and tail have also been lowered to improve aesthetics. Four-pot rear brakes and revised front suspension bellcranks are now standard.

Mallock is also offering a frontengined Mk31 for Rover Sports 1600 in four stages from £3900 for a body/chassis kit to £17,480 for a complete car with the customer's engine. Prices are plus VAT.



Don Hardman (1) rounds Shaws Hairpin en route to a Boxing Day double. Photo: Steve Jones

### Hardman's plum pudding at Mallory

Don Hardman scooped the festive car spoils as two superb Formula Ford races warmed spectators who braved freezing conditions at Mallory Park's traditional motorcycle-centred Plum Pudding race meeting on Boxing Day.

Ian Smythe led the FF1600 pack around Gerards at the start of the first race, but spun at the Esses. Mike Gardiner took to the grass in avoidance and through into the lead came David Ashton.

Gardiner and Hardman fought to the front and Mike, in his first race for 18 months, tried hard to contain Hardman. But a sweet move around the outside at the Esses took the Mallory veteran to the front.

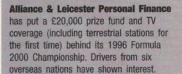
Later, Hardman had to defend resolutely from Russell Dixon and their titanic struggle only ended on the penultimate lap when a brave bid by Dixon ended at Gerards with a spin. Hardman was left to score a second win from Smythe.

Slaney took the first Porsche race as his pursuers tripped over each other. First race spinner Quartermaine worked through to grab victory with a late move around the outside at the Hairpin.

### **NEWSIN BRIEF**

Tulip computers will sponsor Tony Gale's Maxim EUROCAR V6 team this season. Gale, who finished sixth in last year's championship and beat Jason Hunn to win the pursuit sprint competition at AUTOSPORT International, will again be teamed with Steve Dance.

Top race commentator lan Titchmarsh, the voice of Silverstone, is so enthused by the Clubmans Register's Rover Sport 1600 initiative that he is considering joining the RDS Automotive championship fray. Titchmarsh, a Liverpool solicitor by profession, was spotted in earnest discussion with series prime mover Peter Richings at AUTOSPORT International.



Formula 2000 sponsor Alliance & Leicester is putting third season competitor Elliot Lewis in its car this year. ME Motorsport, which has run Lewis since 1994, has set up a separate team for the job.

Mike Gardiner broke an 18-month lay-off to race Martyn Porter's Van Diemen RF86 at Mallory Park on Boxing Day. Gardiner, who prepares the ex-Don Hardman car for Porter to use at Oulton, will run at least four Formula Fords at all levels in 1996.

Caterham's eagerly-awaited six-speed dog gearbox will not, now, be used in the Vauxhall Challenge until 1997. 'We are not interested in providing our customers with a 'box which is not 100% race reliable,' said Caterham's technical director Jez Coates. 'By the start of next season, the unit will fully tried and tested.'

**Beecrofts Racing Services's TVR Tuscan** Challenge effort will be known as the 'Junior Team', for 24-year-old Matthew Kelly has signed up to partner Caterham-Vauxhall graduate Verney Wood, 21. BRS is also in discussion with rapid MGB pedaller Suzi Hart-Banks regarding its Renault Spider Cup and TVR programmes.

Edward Moore started his preparation for the BRC FF1600 Championship by running his Swift at Mallory Park on Boxing Day, his first race away from Castle Combe. The ex-karter, son of former

Combe champion lan whose self-built car was also named Swift - will also do non-clashing races at his home track.

Frozen engines forced David Ashton and Paul Duddle to miss FF1600 qualifying at Mallory Park on Boxing Day. The water in

the blocks solidified as temperatures fell to -10 degrees while their cars sat in a truck in Lancashire overnight. Engine builder Neil Bold defrosted them for the races.

John Packham rolled his Porsche 924 at Mallory Park after a tangle with Tom Moss on the exit of Gerards. Paul Lund shunted his version into the tyres at the same corner during qualifying.

One of John Greasley's Blue Coral team Porsche 911 GT cars is currently on display at Demon Tweeks's palatial new premises in Wrexham, with DT boss Alan Minshaw's BMW M3. The intention is always to have a couple of interesting cars in the showrooms.

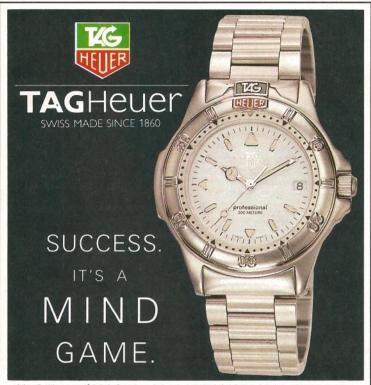
Far Eastern tyre giant Kumho is to continue backing the BMWCC's race series. The 14-round competition, which includes four of the exciting handicap races - but no overseas round this year - opens at Silverstone on March 2.

Preston's Mike Howes has bought the ex-Sam McEwan/BRS Caterham Sport which was featured in National Focus on December 7. The Ford-powered machine is now equipped primarily for road use.

The 750MC South London Centre's club night next Wednesday, January 17, focuses on how to start marshalling. Five guest speakers will cover racing, rallying, speed events and trials. Venue it the Old Whitgiftians Club House, Blacksmith's Hill, Sanderstead, near Croydon, Surrey. All are welcome, kick off is 20.15. Details from organiser John Murrell on 0181 686 6583.



Wood (left) and Kelly (right) flank TVR team chief Beecroft. Photo: Ralph Hardwick



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The winning team of this series will be invited to participate in one of the following European 24 hour event of their choice up to a total value of £4000.

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Race suits and crash helmets supplied.

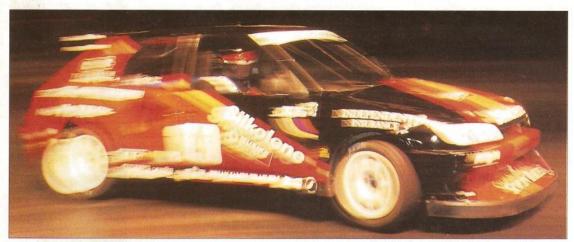
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Ex-British and European Rallycross champion Will Gollop demonstrated his Peugeot 306 at AUTOSPORT International. Photo: Jeff Bloxham

### **96 BRC reduced to two roun**

This year's BRSCC-run RAC British Rallycross Championship will be a transitional one of just two rounds at Brands Hatch on March 10 and Lydden on Easter Monday, April 8. The original full schedule has

fallen apart following widespread discontent among competitors over the club's plans to divert the prize fund to pay for TV coverage, and insoluble differences of opinion with round organisers (see AUTOSPORT, December 7 and 14). Both '1996' events will be filmed

for distribution to a number of TV

Farndon sponsors RAC Sprint Championships

Engine component manufacturer Farndon Engineering is backing the RAC British Sprint and RAC MSA Sprint Leaders Championships, having recently completed an investment in CNC machine tools to put it at the leading edge of crankshaft and con rod technology.

New to the 13-round series, from which competitors count eight scores, are visits to Croft racing circuit and the MIRA proving ground near Nuneaton.

Championship registration forms from its new co-ordinator Robin Boucher on 01562 751163.

### Lane to juggle V8 Pilbeam and Ralt

Triple British Hillclimb champion Roy Lane will use two cars in his quest to beat Martyn Griffiths' record of 67 round wins this year.

Lane, who starts on 66, has acquired an ex-Edenbridge F3 Ralt RT37 and will develop the ex-racer with David Gould. A Judd CV F1 engine is being installed.

The 4-litre Judd EV in his regular Pilbeam MP58-9 has been detuned by Merlin, its peak torque pegged back from 9000 to 7200rpm. 'I'll start in the Pilbeam then juggle the cars,' said Roy at the NEC last week.

stations. A sponsorship contract, to be confirmed shortly, is aimed at covering filming costs and enabling the BRSCC to establish a satisfactory prize fund.

The BRC will be completely restructured over the next 18 months, becoming a seven-round winter series for the 1996-'97 season. This will start at Lydden on August 26 and finish there on March 31, 1997. Brands Hatch and Pembrey will also host events.

Vehicle regulations will also be changed, as series administrator Tony Nisbett explains: 'One of our aims is to make the BRC attractive to manufacturers. The specification and costs of competing cars are obviously important factors, and the 1996-'97 regs will be opened up to reflect this.

RAC MSA chief executive John Quenby supports the plan: 'This is a bold and innovative scheme which should significantly raise the profile of rallycross in Britain. The RAC MSA will be working closely with the BRSCC to further develop every aspect of the BRC.



The third Pilbeam MP72 looked every inch a winner at the NEC. Photo: Jeff Bloxham

### Orange juice for Ritchie and Moran

The new Pilbeam MP72-3 in which former Scottish Hillclimb champion George Ritchie and reigning double RAC MSA Leaders champion Roger Moran will chase RAC British title honours this season was unveiled at AUTOSPORT International last week.
Stunning in its McLaren orange

and purple livery, the Formula 1 Judd/Merlin EV-engined chassis is an evolution of the car in which Ulsterman Andy Kittle won the Dunlop Irish title last season, albeit strengthened in key areas.

Although the engine was not

plumbed in, and its stainless steel exhaust system is due to be fabricated this week, both drivers are delighted with its finish.

'I can't wait to test it,' said Stonehaven-based Ritchie, who saw the car for the first time on Thursday. Moran, who has been involved in the build, is equally enthusiastic. Having mastered a 2litre, 300bhp, Vauxhall engine in his MP62 last year, the Leominster garage owner will have twice the grunt under his right foot..

Sponsorship opportunities are available with the promotable duo.

### **NEWS IN BRIEF**

Selenia Motor Oil Fiat Challenge founder James Bailey held meetings with 83 potential competitors at AUTOSPORT International 'We handled more enquiries in three days than we usually do in six months, and I think we have converted a lot of people who perhaps only came to the show to dream into racing drivers,' he said.

The 750MC has relaxed the regs for its Supersports racing series to admit more or less any sports or kit car derivatives in three classes. Details from Robin Knight on 01379 384268.

Briton Jim Cooke will join the Helmond team's assault on the Dutch Rallycross Championship. The Rickmansworth greengrocer has teamed up with Henk van den Warrenburg and Harrie Delen in new Euro 2000 spec Opel Corsas. Dutch ERC stars Peter Kramer (Ford Escort) and Henk Wey (Alfa Romeo 155) will also contest the class.

The first of Autocross's Euro 2000 rallycross cars has been bought by Mike Wood. 'Un-retiring' for the second time. Wood has bought the rear-wheel-drive Ford Fiesta that constructor John Cross had originally intended for his own use. A Cosworth YB engine will power it. Cross has started a new car, destined to use an RS2000 engine, for himself.

Avon and Yokohama, through its Swiss importer, have tendered to supply the control rubber to rallycross's new Euro 2000 category in the ERC. A test, later this month, is the decider.

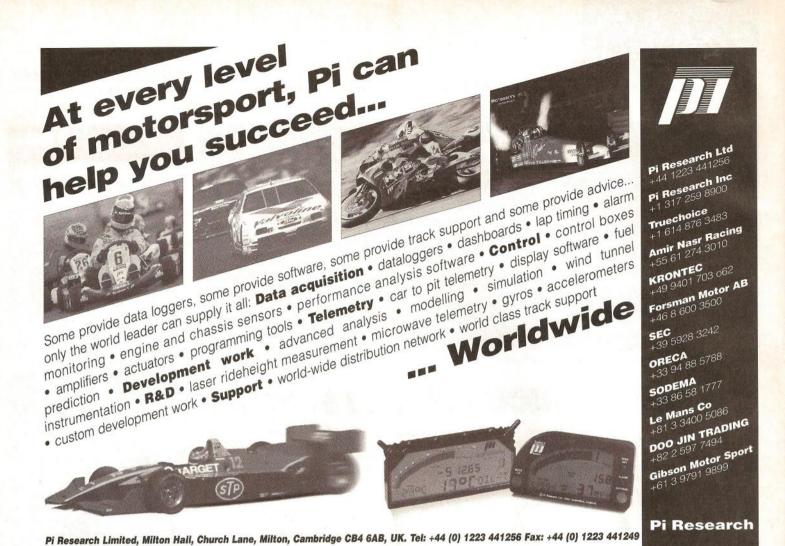
Allways Ferries is sponsoring awards for Euro 2000 rallycross competitors. Several ferry crossings and a package holiday for two are on offer.

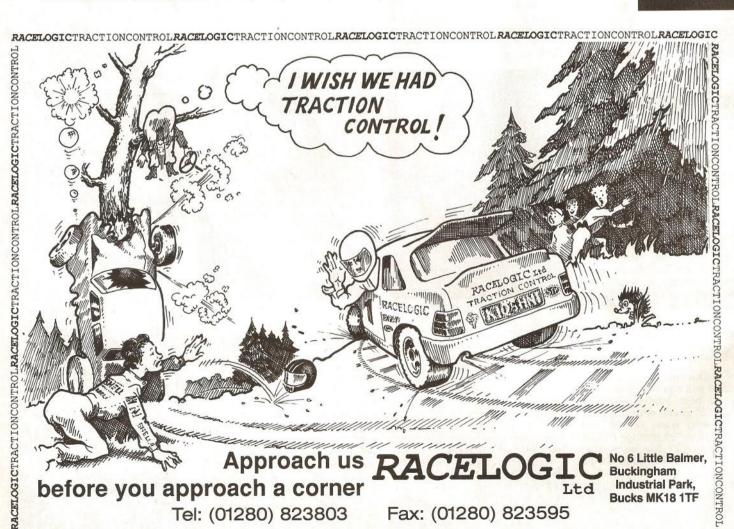
British Hillclimb champ Andy Priaulx and his father Graham set the quickest laps in a kart race for speed eventers at AUTOSPORT International last Thursday.

Provisional dates for the Farndon Engineering RAC British Sprint and RAC MSA Sprint Leaders Championships are as follows: Apr 21, Curborough; May 11, Ingliston; May 19, Jurby; May 27, Colerne; Jun 8, Pembrey; Jun 29, Aintree; Jun 30, Three Sisters; Jul 13, MIRA; Jul 26, Kirkistown; Aug 10, Croft; Aug 26, Curborough; Sep 21, Aintree; and Oct 6, Three Sisters.

Harewood hillclimb champion Tony Mekwinski is switching to circuit racing this season. The Blackpool tyre dealer will share John Baker-Courtenay's Westfield in the Centurian Challenge series of 100-mile events.

Competitor Neville Moon is the new co-ordinator of the Association of Eastern Motor Clubs's Sprint Championship. He intends to revive the series - which continues under Motormania sponsorship and can be reached on 01953 602916.







A capacity field of Pro-Karts races away at the start of one of last season's immensely popular endurance events at Buckmore Park

# more Park raises its game

Buckmore Park karting circuit, at Chatham, is offering the largest ever prize fund for its RAC MSA licensed Pro Kart Owner/Driver Summer Team Enduro Series.

A total of £8000 is to be divided between two championships - a multi-length nine-round for experienced series and professional teams, and a new sixround 'Clubman' series designed for novices and newcomers.

Winning the Pro series will net a £1500 cash prize, while top prize in the Clubmans competition is £800. The balance of the prize fund includes P&O European Ferries travel vouchers.

Each round will feature timed practice, strict scrutineering, a drivers briefing, medical back-up and an RAC Clerk of the Course.

All Owner/Driver Pro Kart Enduro events at the popular venue in 1996 will run to the new RAC MSA Pro Kart Endurance Karting regulations.

All drivers will be eligible to compete in the 'Pro' series. But to be eligible for the 'Clubman'

series, drivers must be beginners, from teams which regularly finished below 20th in the 1995 summer series, or were less experienced members of top teams. To ensure fair play, any team that wins three consecutive rounds in the Clubmans will be promoted to the Pro series.

Entry fees, including fuel, vary from £99 for a two and a half hour race, to £149 for four hours and £199 for a six hour race.

Full details from Buckmore Park Kart Club on 01634 201562.

### **NEWS IN BRIEF**

The Lydd kart circuit, extended to 600 metres last year, is being doubled in length this winter to meet the demand for national and international meetings. Kent Kart Racing Limited, which manages the facility, has also upgraded the off-track amenities within the Herons Park leisure area. Wright Pro-Karts are available for hire all year round.

Tal-Ko, Britain's leading manufacturer of kart racing engines, has been appointed sole UK distributor for the World Championship-winning Kali/CRG chassis and engines from Italy. The new CRG engine range includes 100cc units with reed and rotary valves, as well as a piston port design, and complement Tal-Ko's own proven TKM products.

Bowman Karts, the fast-expanding Pro-Kart manufacturing offshoot of the company which built PRS Formula Ford and Bowman F3 racing cars, has won the contract to run the new sales outlet at Buckmore Park, Barry Callen and Andy Stapley will man the shop.

Aaron Scott Racing, newly appointed UK distributor for Digatron karting and race car instrumentation, showed its range of systems - most with memory at AUTOSPORT International. A fuel tester, costing just over £100, should be of particular interest to kart race organisers as an affordable means of detecting illegal oxidants.

The Puffo fun kart for budding racers of four years and upwards might train some talent for the Cadet class to which they can graduate at eight. The 38cc machine, with centrifugal clutch and extendable chassis, costs £695 plus VAT from Tal-Ko of Sandy, Bedfordshire.

Karting photographer Chris Dixon and the Super One Series organisers raised £611 for the Make-A-Wish Foundation by raffling an enormous cuddly monkey at AUTOSPORT International. The cheque was presented to an astonished Derek Redfern at the championship awards.

The speed event fraternity was shocked and saddened to learn of the death of veteran sprinter Les Edmunds, 53. just before Christmas. The Bedfordshire surveyor was apparently recovering well from severe leg injuries

sustained in a high-speed accident with his BRD-Rover Thundersports car at Aintree in July, and typically had long-term plans to return to the sport. A single-seater stalwart for more than 25 years in



Alexis, Royale, GRD and March chassis, Les will be sorely missed. AUTOSPORT's thoughts are with his wife Gerry, sons James and Max, and his long-serving mechanic Tony O'Brien.

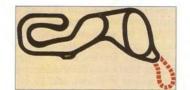
# and aims for world class by 20

Bill Sisley, owner of Kent's Buckmore Park karting venue, has ambitious plans to bring the circuit up to full European and World Championship specification by the turn of the century, subject to the necessary planning approvals.

The environmentally friendly £1m venture begins immediately with the construction of a new administration building and kart shop, due to be completed in the spring of this year.

In 1997, the existing 900 metre circuit will be extended to a full 1200m, which will enable the 33year-old venue to host major international events.

The new section of circuit will



feature a breathtaking rollercoaster switchback with demanding uphill banked hairpin. Plans for 1998 call for a 3000sq ft

purpose-built maintenance building and mezzanine trade floor will be erected as a base for the circuit's

own fleet of karts.

As well as this, there will be a dedicated access road to the main A229 dual carriageway, something which will bring particular cheer to those who are regular visitors.

A clubhouse is the final building on the projected development schedule (in 1998-9) and will contain a hospitality suite and race control office, plus competitor changing facilities, club and dining rooms.

### **National GT king** launches kart team

National GT Champion Chris Hodgetts's new kart team will rely on Kali/CRG chassis and TKM BT95 power units for its attack on the Junior Intercontinental A class.

His 13-year-old son Stefan plus Leon Pesticcio and Seb King, both 14, will chase the British title. The team will also run Cadet Russell Parkes, 11, on a Kali/CRG.

'In Stefan, Leon and Russell we have potential champions, but it will be very much a learning year for Seb in his first year in the JICA series,' said Hodgetts last week.



The eight champions of the 1995 ABKC Vauxhall AUTOSPORT Super One kart series were lauded during AUTOSPORT International at Birmingham's NEC on Saturday evening. Pictured are Carl Breeze, Anthony Davidson, Lewis Hamilton, Luke Hines, Robert Jenkinson, Gary Paffett, Michael Simpson and Stuart Smith. Photo: Chris Dixon

### **NEWS IN BRIEF**

The 30-year rebuild of the 21.5-litre Darracq — the first vehicle to achieve the speed of two miles per minute in 1905 — will be accelerated by a Transport Trust restoration award. Its owner Gerald Firkins was presented with the cheque by Bryan Heatley, chairman of the TT, at a ceremony last week.

Brooklands Museum's Motorsport Day on Saturday, February 24, will be hosted by BBC Grand Prix commentator Murray Walker. Displays of pre-war racing and sports cars, Formula 1, Touring and Indycars will celebrate motoring's competitive side from its early days. The afternoon's Brooks sale of motorsport memorabilia is in aid of BEN.

Twenty years of MG Midget racing and the 35th anniversary of the birth of the 'modern' Midget is to be celebrated with what is hoped will be the biggest ever gathering of the cars at Donington Park on August 4. Drivers of Midgets will be admitted free and are invited to take part in a circuit parade.

Whitby's Ian Colman won the ANCC's Monarch Maxsport Tyres-supported 1995 Ti Motors Rallyspares Northern Stage Rally Championship by 13 points from Jenny Davies. Bob Brown took the navigators' title, having partnered three drivers, including Colman.

The Teleflorist Coupe des Dames within the Mintex National Rally Series has an increased prize fund for 1996. Announced at AUTOSPORT International, the ladies championship will dish out £250 for the winner of each round and £2000 for the overall champion. Barbara Armstrong is hoping to snatch the title, currently held by Stephanie Simmonite, with an SBG-run Volkswagen Polo.

Classes for Historic cars (built before December 31, 1967), and Post-Historics (pre-1974) have been added to the Mintex National Rally Series.

Yokohama is the preferred tyre for the Skoda Trophy, Nissan Micra and Mini Challenges in 1996 — the last requiring a special size of A-017 forest covers to be made. Also confirmed at AUTOSPORT International was Yokohama's Group N F2 Challenge in the British Rally series, a club driver initiative with bonuses for success at every level and support for four Welsh series.

**The World-famous Harry Ramsden's** fish and chip empire is among the supporters of the Bournemouth Winter Rally, round one of the Mintex National Series, on February 24.

**Dunlop is backing F2** on the AWMMC Rally Championship with discounts and free covers for successful crews.

Top novice on the Speedsport Designs Historic rally series will receive a free entry to the '97 Monte Carlo Classic.

### Ferraris head Tour de France

The sensational Ferrari 250LM and 275LM of Brandon Wang and David Piper will be among of the star attractions on the 55th Tour de France Auto, which will take 170 Historic cars on a spectacular jaunt from Paris to Nice in April.

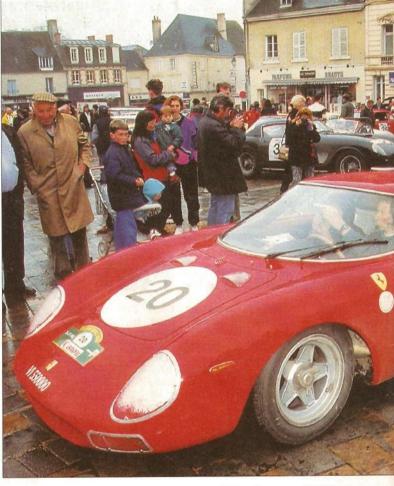
This year's event, which starts in the capital on April 24 features circuit races on the first three days — at Montlhery, Le Mans, Le Mas du Clos and Charade — a feature rally stage at Monte Carlo and an ascent of Mont Ventoux on the final day.

More than 250 applications for entries have been received from all around the world. From this, a representative start list covering all the great marques will be selected.

Likely British starters include Viscount Cowdray (Jaguar E), Paul Vestey (Ferrari GTO), David and Debbie Franklin (Ford Shelby Mustang), Nick Mason (Ferrari Daytona), David McErlain (Ford GT40) and Lincoln Small (Abarth).

Cars will compete in two categories – with awards for out and out racers and regularity – but only pre-1966 machines are eligible for overall honours.

Gary Pearson in Brandon Wang's Ferrari 250LM on last year's Tour. Photo: PAN



### £1000 Subaru wins Tour of Epynt!

Treacherous snow and ice in the Brecon Beacons on December 30 curtailed the Tour of Epynt after seven stages, and played into the hands of Clive Williams and Gwyn Thomas, whose 10-year-old Subaru was bought for just £1000.

The anticipated battle between Bob Fowden and Peter Lloyd on the opening round of the Zenith Motorsport Welsh Tarmac Stages did not materialise, for Lloyd cut and ran for home after two stages, rather than risk damaging his ex-Colin McRae Subaru Legacy.

At this point, with Mike Bowcott and Charles Armstrong leading –

their Vauxhall Astra having started at 42! — many felt that conditions were too dangerous to continue.

Freezing rain and temperatures of -6degC caused the gritter lorry to slide off the road on SS3, but the organisers and remaining teams plugged on until, inevitably, they had to give best to the elements.

Eurwyn Davies/John Morgan (Talbot Sunbeam) finished second, 52s behind Williams, and 9s clear of Gareth Thomas/Louise Evans (Ford Sapphire Cosworth.

Fowden crawled home fourth in his 'full spec' Escort Cosworth, his time equalled by Bowcott's Astra...

### HRCR drops Millers Oils Historic Rally

The Millers Oils Historic Rally will not be part of the revised Safety Devices Historic Rally Challenge this season.

The Historic Rally Car Register, which organises the series, has dropped the end of season event — part of the support act for the Network Q RAC Rally — to make way for three new counters and to reduce the number of rounds to a more manageable 10.

First of the exciting new rounds is the Robin Hood Stages in Nottinghamshire's Clipstone Forest, which opens the calendar on March 3.

The Tyneside Stages on August 10/11 takes crews to the undulating military roads of Otterburn in Northumberland for the first time.

On September 22, crews will be allowed into the Motor Industry Research Association (MIRA) testing ground near Nuneaton.

Competitors chasing outright honours will count their best six results but must score in at least two stage or navigational events. A separate division is available for crews who wish to concentrate on just one of these disciplines.

Register now with the HRCR's Alison Woolley on 01452 790648 (phone) or 01452 790703 (fax).



Prize winners from the Demon Tweeks/Classic & Sportscar Historic Rally Championship collected their awards on Friday in an evening shared with the Mobil 1/Top Gear British Rally Championship. Former British Champion Malcolm Wilson presented the trophies to champion driver John Keatley (right) and winning navigator Kathy Fidgeon. Photo Hardwick



# Francorchamps 6hrs moves to September

The popular six-hour endurance race for pre-'65 cars at Spa-Francorchamps moves to September 7-8 for its fourth running in 1996.

The event, for FIA Appendix K Touring, GT, GTS, GTP-A and Sports Prototypes (up to 1300cc) built before 1965 was won last year by Briton Joe Ward's TVR.

A three-hour race for earlier cars is also planned, subject to demand, alongside a German Open round and races for Ferrari, Porsche, MG and Alfa Romeo cars. Details from Motor Classic on 00 32 41 54 19 50.

### Chiles's March in SuperSports series

Former International SuperSports champion Chris Chiles is continuing in the European series, with a March-Chevrolet 717 which is being prepared by Ian Jones's team at Racing Fabrications in Suffolk.

A CanAm/Interserie March has not been campaigned on European circuits since Ted Williams raced one of the three 707 models with considerable aplomb in the mid-'80s.

Telecommunications supremo Chiles has sold his McLaren M6B to American Victor Myette, who moves up from a 2-litre Lola T212 which he ran with the RF stable.



Tony Worswick, brother of winner Nigel, flung his Ferrari 308GTB into fifth. Photo: Macsport

### Ice man Worswick's Howard Rally

Fresh from a Formula Ford 1600 race at Mallory Park on Boxing Day, Nigel Worswick conquered sheet ice and sub-zero temperatures to win the Gibson's of Brock Neil Howard Memorial Rally on December 28.

Partnered by Clive Molyneux, Worswick was dominant over the 11 stager at Park Hall, Chorley, bringing his Allen Bradley-backed Ford Sierra Cosworth 4x4 home a minute clear of the 65-car field.

The fight for second place was much closer, with Paul Cooper/ Gary Bastiana (MG Metro TPR4100) taking over on stage nine, after David Scialom's Lancia Delta Integrale broke a driveshaft and Bob Atkinson stalled his Sierra Cosworth twice with overshoots.

Kevin Furber/Liam O'Kane (Peugeot 205GTi) headed the two-wheel-drive contenders in fourth place, claiming class honours despite a blown head gasket.

BOSS Formula racer Tony Worswick (brother of Nigel) and Dave Blackburn brought their Ferrari 308GTB home a classwinning fifth despite a battle to realign its gear selectors. PADDOCK PASS

# **Beating Formula 1 drivers in Macau has opened F3's doors**



Winning the Formula Asia Championship last year has helped re-establish my career. Initially I had planned to race Formula Ford 2000 in America in 1995, but then my managers — Matthew Marsh and Peter Windsor — saw the Far East option as a viable possibility and the best direction for my future. They were right...

Because of the lack of racing in South East Asia, what they do have is given a lot of hype. Although the sophistication of the cars is similar to that of Formula Vauxhall, any success I had generated much more publicity than ever would have been the case in Europe.

The series centred on two circuits, Sentul in Indonesia and Shah Alam in Malaysia. The Indonesian races are shown live on Star TV (the biggest cable station in the Far East, broadcasting to 19 million people), while in Malaysia they are shown in full, albeit three weeks later.

I was pleasantly surprised by the level of competition in the series. I arrived at the first race expecting to qualify on pole and drive into the distance in the race. However, there are European drivers in the championship and there is a high level of European influence in the teams. At that first race I qualified fourth, so I quickly realised that it was going to be tougher

than I had initially imagined.

I'm often asked how I coped with the different culture. Well, I spent a lot of time with my Malaysian team mate Alex Yoong, who I got on well with, and Kuala Lumpur is a superb city, in some ways more advanced than London. The cost of living is cheap and the people are friendly.

The Argo FA2000 is a very suitable car for the series. Reliable, fairly simple to work on and with similar power to the Formula Ford 2000s in the USA it puts emphasis squarely on driver ability.

The running costs for the cars are similar to Formula Vauxhall, although the expense of travelling between Indonesia and Malaysia bump the required budgets up by quite a bit.

But my victory in the Formula Renault Campus race at Macau generated more publicity for me than winning the Formula Asia Championship. Having Formula 1 drivers in the field instantly raised the profile of the race and to beat them did my reputation a lot of good.

Macau is an incredible circuit. Fast, very bumpy and driven in a very stiff Formula Campus, the end result was that we spent most of every lap airborne!

I had planned to contest the Formula 3 race there in one of Alan Docking's cars but I couldn't get an entry but, determined to get experience of the track, I looked at Campus as a way of learning it for this year. I raced Formula Ford in France in 1992, so when one of its original drivers pulled out, Elf looked favourably on me and I was given the slot. I have been offered several F3 tests on the strength of that result alone.

Formula 1 is my goal, so F3 has to be the next step up the ladder, if not in England, then in Japan. There is snow at Fuji at the moment, so testing will have to wait a while

If I do end up in Japan, I will continue living in Kuala Lumpur. I really love it there and thanks to Alex (Yoong), I know some brilliant night soots as well!



Saunders in Sonenscher Motor Racing's Argo FA2000 at Shah Alam. Photo: Marcus Pye

### **CLASSIC PORSCHES**

### JOHN WILLIAMS' CLASS ACT LEFT THE REST STANDING

The Pirelli Porsche Cup for the older cars saw a three-way fight for top honours, with John Williams emerging victorious in his Team Eurotech 911E. At the midseason point, there was all to play for with the Class 2-dominating Williams holding a slight lead over David Barnard and Chris Heelev.

Having marked himself out as one to watch in 1994, Williams (46) found the new series very much to his liking. A string of class wins had his rivals on the rack, the ultra-consistent Londoner turning the screw when he used his double points joker to maximum effect at Castle Combe in August.

Heeley did his utmost to keep tabs on Williams, the Carrera RS driver finding life tough. As a Class 1 competitor, he needed to win races outright to score maximum points. Although he won on numerous occasions, the occasional glitch, such as at Silverstone in April when he could only manage to finish eighth, blunted his title hopes.

David Barnard took Class 3 by a very comfortable margin, although the 911T driver's hopes of the overall title evaporated in the second half of the year. Fellow 911T drivers Bob Mason and Dave Benett were more than matching Barnard's pace by midseason and subsequently his run of class wins dried up and with it his title hopes.

Gerald Alticosalian finished runnerup in Class 3, although to be honest it was on pure consistency, as he rarely showed the pace to trouble any of Barnard, Mason or Benett.

Others of note were Darren Litten, Martin Harvey and Nick Cremin who usually chased Heeley for overall honours. Chris Strakosch (who also contested the Caterham Vauxhall series) was another very rapid challenger on occasional outings. Malcolm Sargent had his high spot winning when Heeley faltered at Silverstone. The Class 2 second- and third-placed men, Mike Clapham and Rob Williams finished well adrift of overall champion Williams.

# Bussell bea

RACING UNDER NEW RULES, JOHN BUSSELL SUBDUED HIS BIGGER-ENGINED RIVALS. DOUG CANDLER REPORTS



David and Godfrey Jones were the sensations of the series, their domination of the podium was almost embarrassing

few years ago, Porsche racing was sinking ever further into the doldrums. Years of outside administration had failed to grasp the chief problem. The marque's newer models were being reigned back by a class structure, based on weight/power output, which favoured the ageing but much-loved Carrera RS.

When the series moved back 'in house' in 1993, Porsche Club GB Motorsport Division recognised that mere pruning wouldn't be the answer. New seeds had to be sown. They were, and they bloomed profusely in 1995.

The restructured Pirelli Porsche Cup for the newer models was the club's main championship. Cars over 10 years old, such as the Carrera RS, went into the Pirelli Classic series.

There was a fascinating battle for honours in the Cup series with the Jones twins, David and Godfrey, doing much of the winning. With their points split, Class 2 front runner Paul Edwards came into the equation with John Bussell and Caroline Lucas contesting Class 3.

It was Bussell in his 9248 who came out best, the Devonian needing only to start the final round to be assured of the title. He outnumbered Lucas on class wins and it was his use of the double points 'joker' at Thruxton that stretched his rivals.

CHAMBERS

Lucas finished runner-up overall, her tally boosted considerably by using her joker in the final round which also carried an extra 10 points for just starting the race. Briefly, when on a real winning streak in mid-season, she had threatened Bussell.

Edwards will look back on 1995 and wonder why it all went so very wrong. Alright, he won Class 2, but at the halfway stage he led the series overall. Then his fortunes plummeted and vital points went begging. However, only a fool would bet against the former champion bouncing back and winning the title in '96.

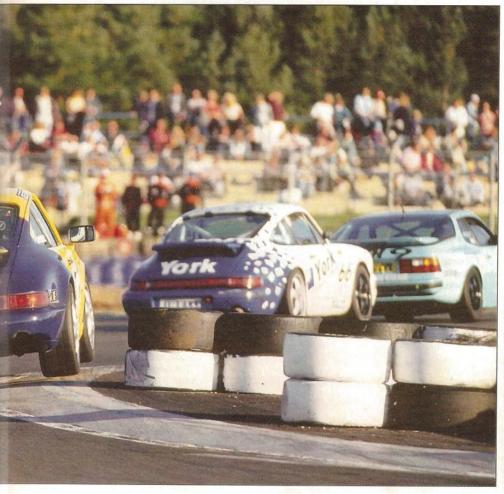
Tom Segrue was runner-up in Class 2 where he relentlessly closed in on the faltering Edwards. The 944 driver got to within eight points with two rounds to run, but he then fared even worse than his rival and finished up 30 points adrift.

Pete Chambers filled the Class 1 top spot, the Carrera 2 driver boasting two defeats of the all-conquering Jones twins' 928GTS. He passed Godfrey Jones at



Chris Heeley leads Chris Strakosch in a Classic Carrera RS battle at Brands Hatch

# ts the big boys



Far Left: Phil Hindley's 944 Turbo leads the field at Thruxton. Left: Pete Chambers cocks a wheel in an attempt to catch Stephen Radcliffe at Silverstone. **Below: Porsche Cup winner John Bussell's Bonnay** 924S lines up behind the big guns at Thruxton

Donington when the V8 machine lost third gear and later he beat him in a wet race at Snetterton.

David and Godfrey Jones were the sensations of the series, their domination of the top step of the podium almost embarrassing. The former rallying duo learned their racecraft in a 968 in 1994, but switched their attentions to a 928GTS for 1995. Their rivals, who had underestimated the ageing 928, were caught unawares. Solid preseason testing honed the impressive machine into a race-winner. It wasn't just that Eurotech's Mike Jordan (a former multiple Porsche champion) had spent time on the car. Equally significant was that the twins had picked up valuable tips on how to get the best from it.

The winning margins often weren't great, but there was inevitably something in reserve. David finished the season second in class, while Godfrey took fifth.

Phil Hindley started the year in Class 2 but moved up mid-season with a 944 Turbo. On course to beat the Jones's 928 at Donington, Phil blew his chances by visiting a gravel trap. A much-deserved success

### **PORSCHE CHAMPIONS**

PIRELLI PORSCHE CUP	
1 John Bussell (924S)	314
2 Caroline Lucas (944)	308
3 Paul Edwards (911SC)	293
4 Tom Segrue (944S2)	262.5
Class 1	
1 Pete Chambers (Carrera 2)	235
2 David Jones (928GTS)	204
3 Graeme Langford (Carrera 2)	150
Class 2	
1 Paul Edwards (911SC)	293
2 Tom Segrue (944S2)	262.5
3 Diane Osborne (944S2)	228
Class 3	
1 John Bussell (924S)	314
2 Caroline Lucas (944)	308
3 Adrian Grieves (944)	159
PIRELLI PORSCHE CLASSIC	
1 John Williams (911E)	318
2 David Barnard (911T)	264
3 Chris Heeley (Carrera RS)	258
4 Mike Clapham (911SC)	215
Class 1	210
1 Chris Heeley (Carrera RS)	258
2 Darren Litten (Carrera RS)	167
3 Martin Harvey (Carrera)	144
Class 2	
1 John Williams (911E)	318
2 Mike Clapham (911SC)	215
3 Rob Williams (911E)	200
Class 3	
1 David Barnard (911T)	264
2 Gerald Alticosalian (911T)	157
3 Bob Mason (911T)	152

came at Thruxton in September and he inherited victory on Jones's exclusion at Silverstone.

Mark Hales took over Stephen Radcliffe's Carrera 2 from Donington, the bearded journalist taking a brace of wins at Oulton and proving a thorn in the side of the Jones's in later races. Others of note were Robert Babikan and the consistent Graeme Langford.





GIRLS just wanna have fun... Graham Leslie's standard 348 joined the fray at Snetterton

he Maranello Ferrari Challenge celebrated its tenth anniversary in 1995, a year in which some significant new cars arrived and three new champions were crowned.

David Barker, John Pogson and Alain Li bagged the spoils as Category M and O (Modified and Original) cars were joined occasionally by European Challenge specification 348s and 355s.

The series got underway at Thruxton, where a 355 driven by Ian Khan (see sidebar) drew first blood. Khan led a 1-2-3 for his team that day, the best of the traditional Class M runners being Barker's 328GTB in fourth. Barker was to win only once more, at Spa in May, but was runner-up on five occasions. Further points were added with a third and fourth place, enough to give him the category crown by a clear margin.

Outgoing champion George Christopher kissed the title goodbye in dramatic fashion. The 308GT4 driver led with three rounds to run, but his three victories and good support results were negated as he failed to score a solitary point thereafter.

Bruno Cappucini armed himself with a 308GT4 in which Simon Toyne had previously taken the title and, while he was never a race winner, consistency carried Bruno to third spot. Michael Millard finished fourth - a fine result considering he missed several races due to his ProSport 3000 commitments. Millard won five rounds in his 512BBi, most notably at the fast open circuits such as Castle Combe. It should have been six, but head gasket failure thwarted him when well clear of the field at Donington in August.

Rory Fordyce won that day, his victory clearly highlight of the year for the 328GTB driver who appeared only occasionally. He was placed sixth in the points table behind Alan Cosby whose 308GTB was a regular top six finisher.

Category O saw reigning champion Thornton Mustard win the opening round at Thruxton, but it was newcomer Pogson who took the next three races. The Huddersfield-based 328GTB driver was never able to dominate like that again, although by season's end Pogson had added a fourth win to his CV. It made for rather impressive reading, with three runner-up spots, braces of thirds and fourths



Towards the end, Stuart
Bowler became the man to beat.
Three wins marked him out as someone to watch in 1996

plus a non-finish. That failure spoiled what would have been the only 100% finishing record. He took the class some way clear of his rivals.

John Anderson (308GTB) was the nearest of them, although he never won a race. Proving very consistent, Anderson invariably claimed top six finishes, numbering a trio of runner-up placings as his best results.

Towards the end of the campaign, Stuart Bowler had become the man to beat in Category O. Three successive wins marked him out as someone to watch in 1996. The 328GTB driver finished just half a point ahead of Mustard. Mustard had an unhappy season, which culminated with his part in a controversial incident at Castle Combe in July. He then bounced back to win the next round, but basically his enthusiasm for the series had been quelled.

The consistent Graham Reeder armed with his 308GTB, and double Castle Combe-winner Martin Shaw in a 328GTB completed the top half dozen.

# The marauders from Maranello

EUROPEAN CHALLENGE CARS ADDED VARIETY TO THE CHAMPIONSHIP CHASE.DUD CANDLER WATCHED IT ALL



CITCUIT PA

### **OUR MAN IN EUROPE**

### IAN KHAN ON THE BIG VALUE EUROPEAN 355 TRAIL

By finishing fourth overall, lan Khan was the highest placed of the seven home-based drivers who contested the European Ferrari Challenge in 1995. It was a season which lan recalls with a great deal of pleasure and pride.

lan's F355 was run by top Ferrari specialists Mortimer Houghton Turner. Apart from a race exhaust, the only mods are for safety (brakes, suspension, roll cage etc). It was delivered just before the first round at Paul Ricard. With no testing, it proved a baptism of fire. On the straight, I glanced down at the speedo and found I was doing 175mph!'

Despite his vast experience which includes Formula 3, British Touring Cars and C2 Sportscars, lan found the opposition tougher than he'd expected: 'I knew John Hugenholtz, then very quickly found out about the likes of Lucien Guitteny and Maxime Bochet. They had race winning pedigrees in the early '70s.'

Rounds followed at Spa, Zandvoort, Donington, Nogaro and Mugello: 'The schedule fitted in really well with my business interests (Khan runs a warehouse/distribution company, his number one customer being Rothmans) as we'd fly out on Friday moming for the one hour practice sessions and then race on Saturday and Sunday.'

A regular top six finisher from the start, lan's first win was at Donington Park in September: 'I had a home advantage.' And his total was doubled when second race victor Hugenholtz was penalised for flag infringements.

It wasn't just on the track where Khan enjoyed himself. lan's love of good food is well-known in racing circles. As he himself says: 'Ferrari organises everything. The circuit catering is something else and at night you all get together and go to the local restaurant. A real sense of camaraderie, unlike England where everybody tends to do their own thing.' Most memorable was the restaurant near Nogaro – lan is still convinced the French tried to knobble rivals by swelling their waist lines!

rivals by swelling their waist lines! lan got the nickname 'Chunky' years ago from his old friend Mark Peters, the 1981 Junior FF1600 champion and later F3 racer. The duo met up again in the Ferrari series and enjoyed many good scraps: 'I had to apologise at Spa because I braked late and spun into him — he was totally innocent,' says Khan.

Aside from the Challenge races, lan also contested the Italian GP support race (non-championship) at Monza and a British Maranello Ferrari round at Thruxton, which he won.

Now at his most relaxed and enjoying his racing as never before, he is set for another year in the Challenge. He's also very pleased with the car: 'Apart from the running costs, which every car has, the F355 has a high residual value. I paid £88,000 for it and sold it for £85,000. That's unbeatable value. Now I can't wait to get my new car for 1996.'

Left: Former BTCC racer lan Khan (31) chases Lucien Guitteny and Maxime Bochet at Paul Ricard. Below left: David Barker's 328GTB won the Modified Class in Britain



The arrival of the European Challenge cars spiced up the series on occasion, Khan's F355 undoubtedly being the quickest of them. His singleton outing (and victory) netted him third place in the points table. English-based Frenchman Li took in two of the rounds in his F355, picking up two good wins and a fastest lap point which would eventually decide

the outcome of Category C.

Regulations state that there must be three starters in a class to score a fastest lap point, a rule which thwarted Tom Waring. Waring won twice in his F355, but against little opposition. John Brown, Nick Cartwright (both 355s) and Pharoah Yam (in a 348) each took second place to be joint fourth in the points table.



### MARANELLO FERRARI CHALLENGE IN ASSOCIATION WITH AGIP

Cat	egory M		Ca	tegory 0		Ca	tegory C	
1	David Barker (328GTB)	111	1	John Pogson (328GTB)	116.5	1	Alain Li (F355/C)	31
2	George Christopher (308GT4)	87.5	2	John Anderson (308GTB)	88	2	Tom Waring (F355/C)	30
3	Bruno Cappucini (308GT4)	84	3	Stuart Bowler (328GTB)	79	3	lan Khan (F355/C)	16
4	Michael Millard (512BBi)	80.5	4	Thornton Mustard (308GTB)	78.5	4	John Brown (F355/C)	12
5	Alan Cosby (308GTB)	78	5	Graham Reeder (308GTB)	74.5		Pharoah Yam (348/C)	12
6	Rory Fordyce (328GTB)	53	6	Martin Shaw (328GTB)	57		Nick Cartwright (F355/C)	12

# Field of dreams

JUST HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO GO KARTING? WE GAVE SIMON STRANG £3000 (WELL, SORT OF) AND SENT HIM INTO THE AUTOSPORT INTERNATIONAL SHOW IN SEARCH OF A DREAM, COULD HE MAKE IT COME TRUE?

o there I was, dreaming at the AUTOSPORT International show on the night when £42 million was up for grabs on the National Lottery. You could run a Grand Prix team for a season on that. Then, as if by magic, into my lap fell enough money for a season's racing. Well, £3000 actually. To go karting

with, said my publisher.

Is it possible to go karting on such a limited budget in these times of inflated prices, and in a discipline where £40,000 for a season is not unrealistic among the top drivers? It

was my job to find out.

Granted, I wasn't going to find myself sitting in Martin Hines's 250cc Formula E kart but, let's face it. £3000 is not an amount to be sniffed at, even a mythical £3000 such as mine. There must be some way to go racing.

Formula Fords, TVR Tuscans or VW Ventos I can talk about to my heart's content, but karting is an altogether different story. So off I went in search of expert advice in the kart hall, which grew in stature again this year as this industry

continues to boom.

It wasn't long before Formula A World Cup Champion Daniel Wheldon offered some pearls of wisdom to aid my increasingly desperate quest.

'In today's world, three grand is never going to get you very far,' he said cheerfully. 'But if somebody is starting out, then Formula TKM is

probably the best training ground. For £3000 it's possible to buy all the kit and a kart and have some fun. If you wanted to get serious, then you would need some more cash later in the season.'

I was in no position to disagree, but the fact that I could actually go racing was a big relief.

Before Wheldon strolled off, he gave me one vital piece of advice. 'When you buy your race suit, make sure you speak to the major manufacturers. It means that you have to spend more money, but quality and safety are essential.

With that I headed towards Sparco at a great rate, full of enthusiasm and new-found hope. Joe Wheeler of Sparco Italy put me in touch with Grand Prix Racewear, who worked out a deal for me to buy all the necessary kit for £410 (suit£135, helmet£175, gloves£25, boots £75). There were cheaper options, but vanity intervened.

All I needed now was a kart, and some more advice. Wandering around the many different kart manufacturer stands I stopped at Kartpro Stratos Leisure and asked Derek Price what I should be looking for.

There are 30 or so manufacturers currently involved in the TKM series and there is a base price set on the chassis. No one is allowed to charge more than that,' explained the ex-racer, whose company, like many others, builds karts for several categories.

'The equipment has a high



Pro-kart was tempting at about £1500







Above: Making the equipment deal. Suit £135; crash helmet £175; gloves £25; boots £75. It is not worth buying secondrate gear to save money. Left: our man gets his kart, a Formula TKM from Tal-Ko for £2192



residual value because there is a three-year homologation period, which means your kart may still be current enough when you come to sell it, and fetch a good price?

Price also explained that you stand to lose as little as 25% of the original price for chassis. And it is quite conceivable that you can win in a secondhand chassis, although you should be very wary of what you are buying.

While I was at this stand, another option was brought to my attention: for about £1500 I could invest in a pro-kart. These twin-engined four-stroke machines are largely responsible for the current boom in karting because of the sheer number used by the corporate facilities.

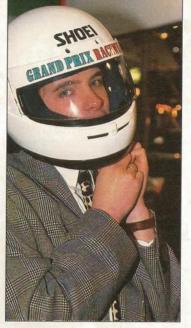
Pro-karts, it was pointed out, are great fun and relatively cheap to run. The engines are not allowed to be tinkered with and they can run for much longer periods.

Appealing as this sounded, my heart was now set on Formula TKM. So I paid a visit to Tal-Ko, the official supplier of the 100cc TKM BT82 engine.

Boss Alan Turney filled me in on the history of the series, which began in 1989 as an alternative way of going karting with a fixed cost.



At least 30 TKM manufacturers available





And the racing relies solely on ability rather than a trick cog here and there.

'To buy the whole kit would cost £2192.68, but if you want the optional extras it would come to a further £618.08,' explained Turney. The karts run on super unleaded petrol and the engines need servicing every 12 to 15 hours, which would normally cost just under £90.'

One of Turney's chassis took the 1995 series title in the hands of Stuart Smith, and he seemed to have the best deal available. I would have to enter the Senior Formula TKM category and run with black plates for six races in at least two different circuits, but that wouldn't be a real hardship.

So, having included a Senior TKM karting lesson at Bill Sisley Kart racing school at Buckmore Park for £75, and a karting National B licence for £18.50, my final theoretical total was £2696.18.

This left me with just over £300 either to put towards running costs or to keep as a much-needed Christmas bonus...

In your dreams, Strang.

### **KARTING ON £100**

### AT CLUB 100, A SINGLE RACE COSTS £105, A SEASON £600



Club 100 uses two-stroke karts

If karting is something that you've always wanted to do, but either haven't had the cash or weren't sure about spending it, then the Club 100 initiative from Playscape Pro Racing is an excellent alternative.

Club 100 works on the arrive-anddrive principle and it uses 100cc twostroke TKM karts fitted with a clutch.

To enter a race costs £85, although you have to pay £20 annual membership, while a mere £600 provides you with a full season's racing.

The man behind the initiative is Martin Howell, who has raced in the

Renault 5TS series, as well as the Slick 50s and three Willhire 24 Hours. So he knows a thing or two not only about racing, but also how to do it on a tight budget.



Howell: man behind club

'When I came up with the idea for Club 100, two-stroke karting was and probably still is the pinnacle category,' says Howell.

'The idea was to provide an opportunity for those who had already tried and enjoyed indoor karting and prokarting, to try something as close to real karting as viably possible.'

'Drivers are split into two weight categories, above and below twelve and a half stone. They compete in three heats and *repocharge* finals at each event, with trophies and a £75 voucher to put towards your next race.'

Howell also points out that Club 100 members do not need an RAC competition licence, although the RAC MSA is in full support of the idea.

To be eligible you have to be more than 17 years old and fit enough to hold a current driving licence, but that's about it. Even the race suits are provided if you don't already own one.

Playscape provides test days for anybody who wants to enter the series without prior experience, and this is recommended. For further information on Club 100 and Playscape, call Howell 0171-498 0916.

# A tough nut to crack



NICK

Special projects engineer, Benetton

ou couldn't possibly imagine how much I learned from all of the things that we went through at Simtek, on a technical level, on a business level and on a human level. I'm not yet 30, and I've been through almost a lifetime in terms of things like that. It's made me a much better person, and I'm going to use that experience to do what I can to help Benetton retain its championship in 1996, and be part of the team that does it.

My role is Special Projects Engineer, and currently my main area of concern is the new wind tunnel that we're constructing at Enstone.

It's made me realise how difficult Simtek's task was. Benetton is an incredible team, well organised and full of very able people in all areas. It has tremendous resources – personnel, equipment and financial. It's how one dreams of doing it properly, and it's a pleasure to work in that environment.

People ask me whether I miss being my own boss. Sure, in certain respects I do, but it's not an overriding concern. What I've always enjoyed is the engineering side of F1, the

technical challenge. As long as I can satisfy my curiosity and am able to express myself technically, then I'll be happy.

It was obviously disappointing that Simtek ended the way it did; disappointing for the people who worked there, disappointing for the people who helped us, our suppliers, sponsors and investors, and disappointing for the many people who enjoyed watching our progress.

And disappointing for the drivers as well, particularly Jos Verstappen, while Hideki Noda suffered quite badly. It's especially sad in the light of what's happened to Pacific as well, as we came in together.

I know where it went wrong; it went wrong with people saying they wouldn't pay us after signing contracts and saying they would.

Like everyone at the back of the grid, we were scrambling around to find money where we could. I tried to speak to everybody who was serious, and everyone involved in the team on the commercial side chased down absolutely every lead tirelessly. We went to all corners of the globe in search of money.

You can reflect on possible different strategies that may have achieved a slightly different result. But, judging by the way things are going at the moment, possibly all that could have happened was that we could have put it all together to make it to the end of the season rather than stopping in the middle. It wouldn't have been satisfying to do that; indeed, I think we would have ended up in the same financial situation, or possibly worse, with more disappointed people.

I believe that it is now very difficult for a new team to come into Formula 1 and succeed

I was numb to it all by the time of the auction. It's a bit like the way you deal with a death in the family. You just don't think about it, because the thought is too painful.

I believe it is very difficult for a new team to come in to F1 and succeed. The only way to do it is as a 10-year programme, which is what I told anyone who asked me how long it would take for Simtek to reach the top.

You have to find the supply of money and be prepared to invest that amount of money come hell or high water, and take the rough with the smooth. Sometimes you have to invest because you've made a mistake in the design and you have to rebuild things. You can't pull back and try to make money rather than invest all your spare capital. You have to invest, invest, in equipment, R&D facilities and testing.

To come in now, the only way you can do it is to have someone who's prepared to back you to the financial level required for a minimum of five years, otherwise it just wouldn't be worth the risk. That doesn't happen anymore, short of someone like the Sultan of Brunei deciding to back you. You can't say it's impossible, but doing it the way Pacific or we did it, you've got no chance. You can't do it on merit. It's just luck in finding the right people who are prepared to invest at the right time.

The job all our people did in giving Simtek the spirit that it had was fantastic. They were an outstanding crew, and they really pulled together, which is what enabled us to make the leap from nothing to our first car in '94, and from '94 to what was clearly quite a reasonable car in '95, all done with the lack of testing and resources that we had to contend with.

If I had to choose one outstanding memory, it would be Jos's performance in Argentina last year. Brazil was a complete nightmare, and we were at the end of our tether. We had a glimmer of hope in the race when Jos was tucked up behind one of the Saubers for a long time, and blew away all the other Ford ED cars.

In Argentina the nightmare continued; we had engine trouble, gearbox trouble, car trouble. It was just horrendous. Then we put it all together and Jos qualified 14th, ahead of one of the McLarens, which is something I'll have etched on my brain forever! I had great satisfaction walking past that particular car on the grid. Then seeing Jos making his way up, fighting with Gerhard (Berger) in the Ferrari, and ending up sixth before we dropped out - I was just in heaven on the pitwall. It's a feeling I will never forget for the rest of my life. That



After the collapse of Simtek, Nick Wirth took his skills to world champions Benetton

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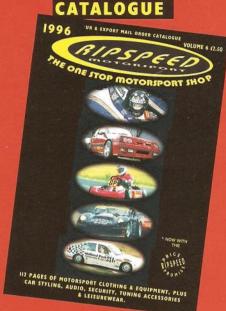
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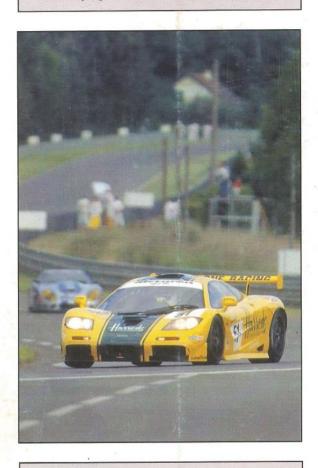
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