

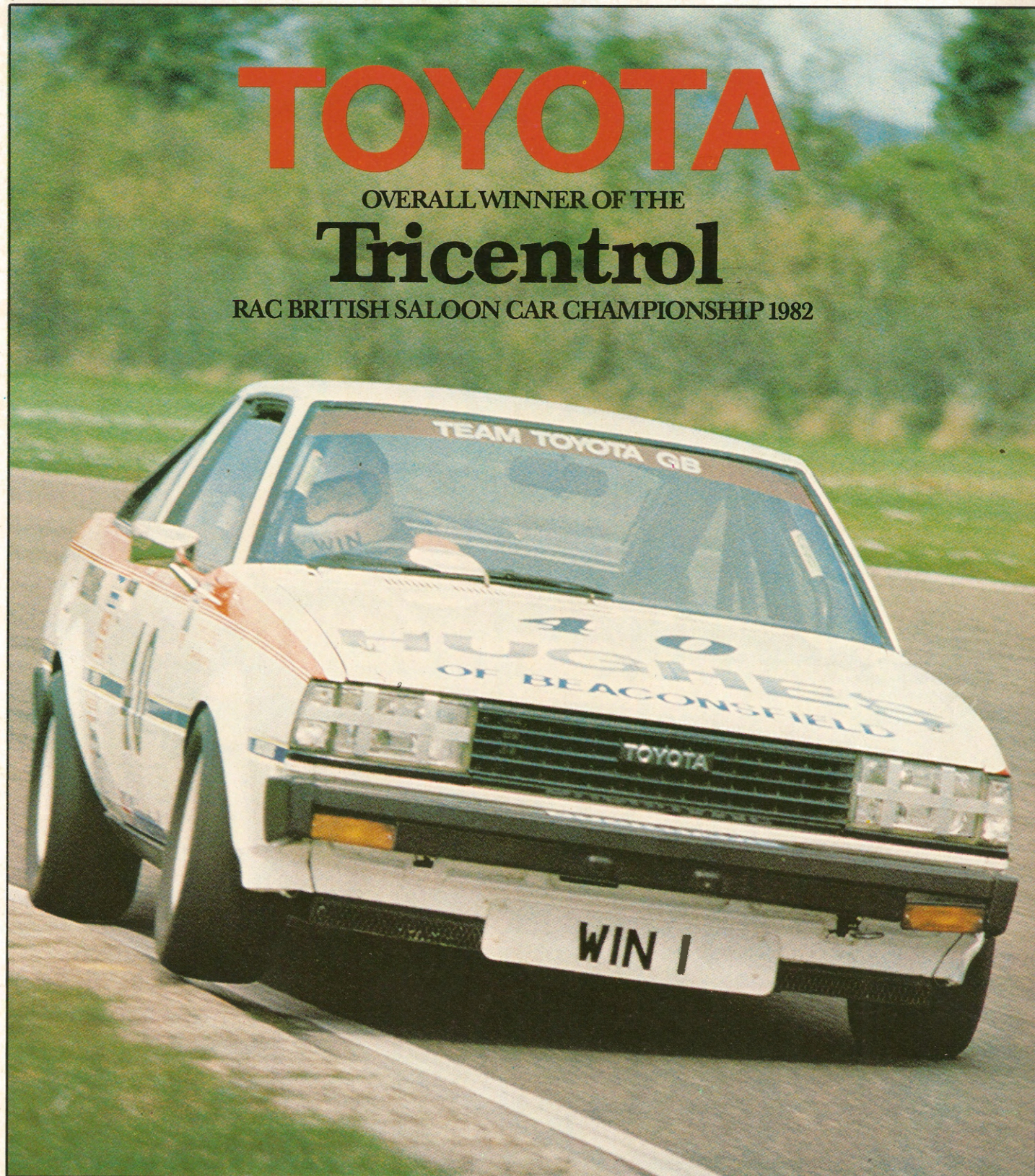
Autosport

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Tricentrol

RAC BRITISH SALOON CAR CHAMPIONSHIP 1982





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Saloon Car Championship*

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* Results to be confirmed. Photo: J. Gaisford, Chippenham.

Seasonal Survey



Win Percy took the British Saloon Car Championship for the third year running, this year driving the Hughes of Beaconsfield-entered Toyota Corolla.

Three in a row

MATTHEW CARTER rounds up the last season of Group 1 racing, which also sees the departure of the Tricentrol name.

It was better than we might have hoped. As 1982 marked Group 1's — and Tricentrol's — final fling before Group A arrives in '83, some teams might have been excused for opting out. A few did, but the vast majority stayed. And the racing at the front was the best seen for many years.

Minor rule changes allowed the Capri to get back in touch with the Rover and the outcome of every race was invariably in doubt until the flag had finally fallen. With the early demise of the British Formula 1 championship — it could never make up its mind if it was an historic championship or not, and certainly the public didn't care — the British Saloon Car Championship shared top billing with the national Formula 3 series.

And it was a position it thoroughly deserved. Although the racing purist might regard saloons as little more than an expensive form of banger racing,

there can be no denying he makes damn sure he stays to watch their antics. Entertainment is what the series offers and provides.

The story at the front this year was of two cars — the Rover V8 and the Ford Capri — and ultimately of two men, Jeff Allam and Vince Woodman. The racing was always fiercely competitive and in the best traditions both arrived at the final round with the same number of points. What more could a promoter want? The overall championship was not so much of a struggle as Win Percy had it sewn up from fairly early days. But even then there was interest, as Percy was going for a hat-trick . . . and everybody loves a winner.

Now Group 1 is dead. Long live Group A. Judging by the interest in the European championship and the rumours flying around regarding the number of manufacturers interested in running cars next year, it looks as if the RAC British Saloon Car Championship can only get better.

Runners and riders

Although grids were down this year — for the first time split races at Donington were abandoned as all the starters only just managed to fill one grid let alone two — there was still a great variety of men and machines taking part.

There were, in total, 11 different marques represented and 19 different types of car making up the field. No fewer than six manufacturers were directly involved with cars on the grid and the prospects seem to indicate there will be even more next year.

A grand total of 47 drivers took part in races with another practising but not racing. Of those, only seven failed to score points. And this year there were no unseemly protests and counter protests that marred the 1981 season. It was an excellent swansong.

2501–3500cc

Although the top class provided quite excellent, close racing between half a dozen or so front runners, when it came to the crunch there were only two men who had really stamped their authority on the results.

The pair — close friends off the track, deadly rivals on it — came to the final round level pegging, both looking for their first ever championship class win. And they left that final race meeting still level on points, the winner taking his spoils after a tie-break decision the following day.

He was **Jeff Allam**, who at 28-years-old is one of the younger drivers in the series.

He first started racing in the Group 1 championship in 1977 in a Vauxhall Magnum switching the following year to a top class contender in the shape of a Ford Capri. It was in 1980 that he first sat behind the wheel of a Rover V8, gradually developing the car into a winner. Last season he so nearly won the class outright, his chances being scuppered by a tyre contract that saw his car tied to Michelin tyres while his teammate was winning on Dunlops. As soon as Jeff switched rubber, he was doing the winning.

It is all the more unfathomable, therefore, that the powers-that-be at BL elected to lumber Jeff's TWR-prepared Sanyo Rover with a similar restrictive tyre contract this year . . . a contract that nearly cost him the class.

For the early part of the season his Rover had to use Avon tyres. Although the first couple of races saw Jeff's car winning on Avons, when the Capri's got their act together so the Rover started slipping its way both all over the track and down the leader board.

This is not to say that the Avon is an inherently bad tyre, just that it didn't suit the racing Rover. No doubt the testing of new compound after new compound would have come up with a solution, but there was barely time for that. The only answer was for Avon to release the Rovers from their contract and quietly forget the deal. No sooner was the Rover back on Dunlops than it was winning again.

In total Jeff scored four wins, with five fastest laps. Indeed so dominant were his

AUTOSPORT TOURING CAR SUPPLEMENT

SEASONAL SURVEY

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The Tricentrol RAC British Touring Car Championship has had a splendid final year, with intense competition at the top of the field between Rover and Ford, and a third overall title in succession for Win Percy. Matthew Carter has seen every round to bring you this expert analysis of the last season of racing to the present Group 1 rules.

TRACK TEST

13

Steve Soper is the latest hot property in saloon car racing. He came straight from Metro Challenge success in 1981 to the Tricentrol Championship, only just losing out in the class honours to the seasoned Richard Longman, and now looks set for an exciting ride next year. Tiff Needell drove the Group 1 Metro with which he made such an impact this year.

CLASS WINNERS

14

The overall champion, Win Percy, and the two smaller class winners, Hamish Irvine and Richard Longman, talk to Matthew Carter about their successful seasons.

JEFF ALLAM

18

. . . but the winner of the largest capacity class, Jeff Allam, drew the most attention with his spectacular driving of a Rover at the front of the field. Robin Bradford talks to the Epsom garage owner after his best season yet.

WHAT IS GROUP A?

23

You have probably read a great deal about how saloon car racing's future is swinging to the new Group A regulations. In this feature we attempt to answer the question, 'What is Group A?'

CRYSTAL BALL

24

This change to Group A rules means that the prospects for next season's Trimoco Championship are very open. Matthew Carter has dusted off his crystal ball to offer some prophecies.

SEASONAL SURVEY

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Bob Constanduros recalls the Jaguar versus BMW confrontation in this year's European Touring Car Championship.

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Seasonal Survey

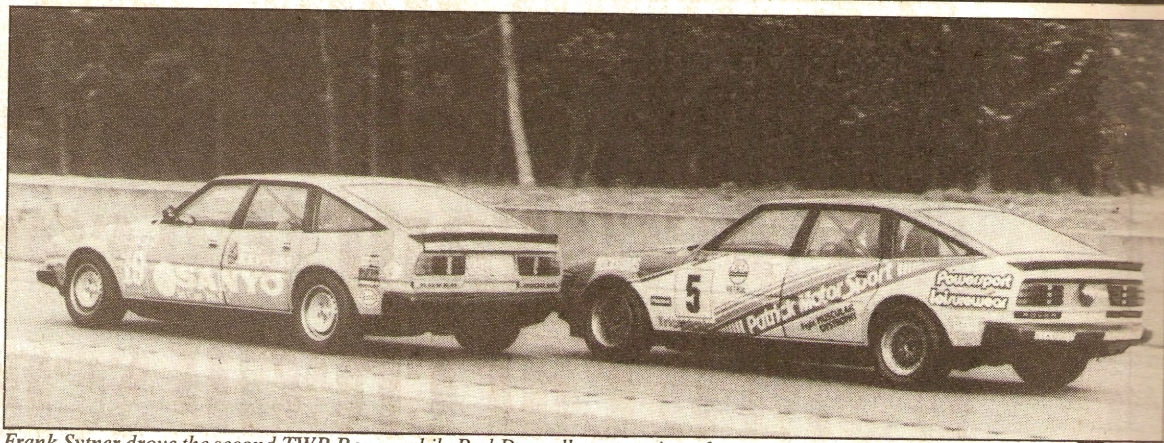
Three in a row continued

performances at the opening rounds that Gordon Spice Racing team manager Keith Greene was heard to say after round 2 at Mallory Park: "If the Rover can win here, it can win anywhere."

In truth the outright competitiveness of the top class put paid to that, although his one retirement was due to tyres rather than mechanical mayhem or accident damage. It was a far cry from the early days of the racing Rover when the car was dogged with mechanical problems. His was an excellent season, marred by just one mistake. It was the penultimate round at Brands Hatch when the heavens opened.

The Rover, on slicks, was out front and about to lap a couple of Metros. But as the little front wheel drive hatchbacks simply drove around the treacherous Druids, so did Allam try to emulate their feat. And went straight off into a bank . . . there are times when power can be an embarrassment. He did recover to finish third.

His season-long rival was Vince Woodman, a 44-year-old veteran of the series. At the end of last season Vince and other



Frank Sytner drove the second TWR Rover, while Rad Dougall was a serious threat to the works examples.

Ford Capri front runners could have been forgiven for thinking about abandoning their steeds, so strong were the end of season performances from the Rover. Not Vince. A Ford main dealer from Bristol, Vince had an allegiance to the marque but his decision to stay faithful to the Ford had deeper roots than mere loyalty. He believed — and proved — the car was still a winner.

Some close season regulation changes

did help the Capri, but the real reason behind Woodman's win was simple, old-fashioned team work. Not just team work at the race track, but in the preparation and presentation of the Esso Capri. The 1981 season had seen Vince team up with CC Developments for the first time. As the driver got to know his preparation experts and trust their work, so the results started coming. There was one win last year. And no fewer than four

this year.

The season started well with a third at Silverstone (one that had been a second until the closing stages), and a strong second at Mallory. Tyre problems intervened at Oulton's round 3, but then came two consecutive wins at Thruxton in April and May and proof that Woodman was a force to be reckoned with.

His season was completed with two further wins, four fastest laps and two second places. There was just one retirement, when the Neil Brown 'screamer' screamed its last at Donington, while his only other non-scoring event was the final when he was elbowed down the order to run in seventh.

Inevitably such fierce competition at the front means body contact from time to time but aside from that final round and the Grand Prix supporter, Vince came out remarkably free of body damage. Both Vince and Jeff had super seasons providing excellent dices and interest right up until the end. It's a pity that there can only be one winner.

For Andy Rouse and Gordon Spice — back together under the Gordon Spice Racing Shell banner — it was a terrible season. Just one win from Spice, as Allam and Woodman succumbed to tyre problems, gave the team any reason for rejoicing. More often than not it was a case of silly faults robbing the pair of results, things like driveshaft failure, tyre failure, even gear lever failure. True, when they were running both men were quick at the front, but so often that did not last the full distance, and as the old saying goes: 'To finish first you've got to finish.'

Spice and Rouse were the only true team in the early part of the season, both men in evenly matched cars and with evenly matched abilities. Allam had little support until four races had gone and that could be put down to Frank Sytner finding the championship — and the Rover — harder work than he had imagined. Frank is a competitive driver in single-seaters and Sports 2000 machines. But his performances in the Rover — granted with little in the way of testing — proved that saloons are quite a different kettle of fish. A quick single-seat driver can flounder in a saloon, and vice versa. Frank, for all his skill, floundered.

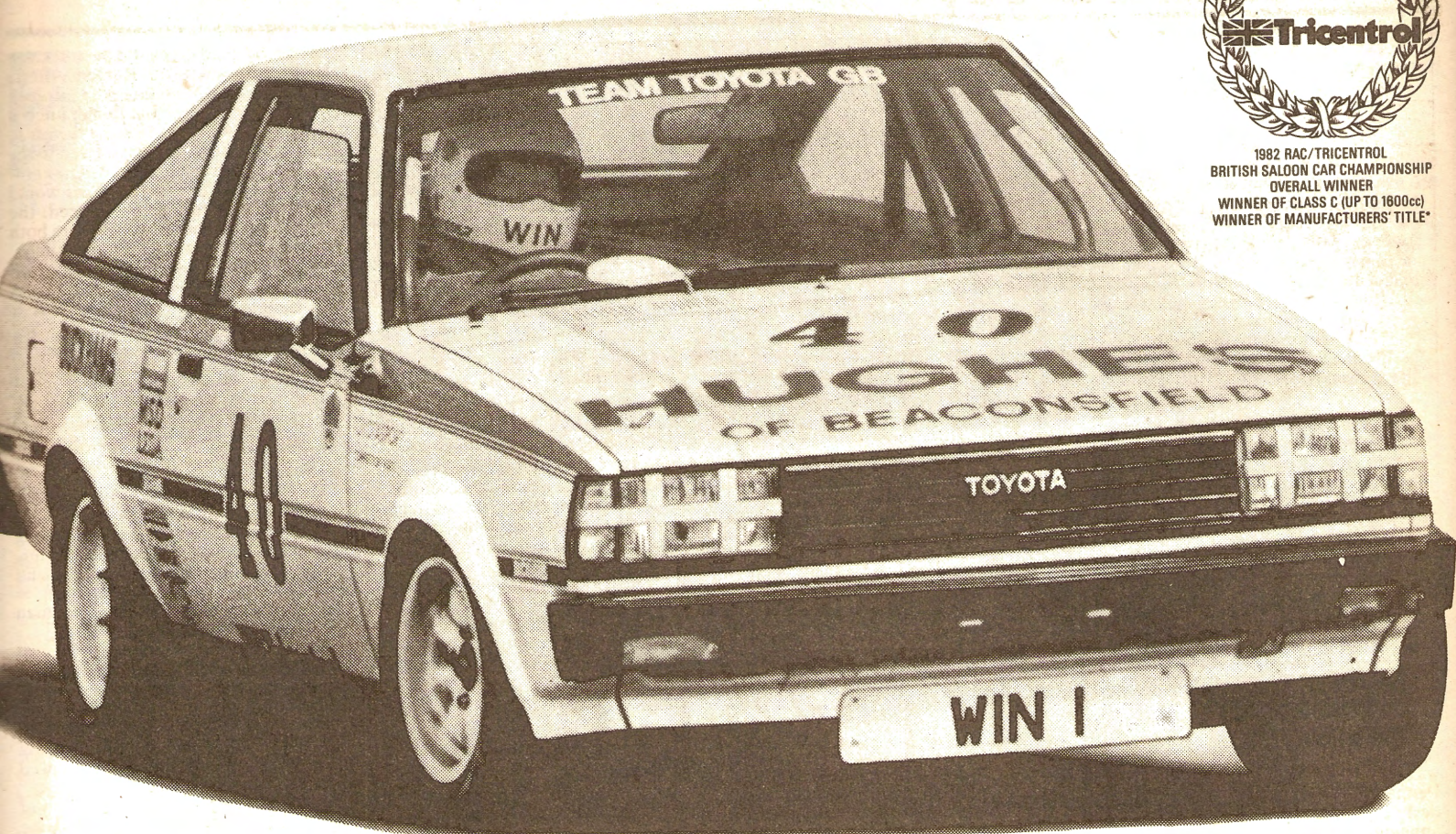
So last year's winning team was recreated. After four rounds, Peter Lovett was invited back into the seat of the second Rover scoring two wins before the season was out. Other good showings were thwarted by an unusual amount of body contact with others — unusual for Lovett, that is. Often a sport of door handle rubbing only resulted in the valves being ripped out of Lovett's wheels, a stop for fresh rubber ensuing.

The only other man who drove a Sanyo Rover was team boss Tom Walkinshaw himself — and that was only in practice at Thruxton — but there were other Rovers

1982 TRICENTROL RAC BRITISH SALOON CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

		Mar 21, Silverstone	Mar 28, Mallory Park	Apr 9, Oulton Park	Apr 12, Thruxton	May 31, Thruxton	Jun 13, Silverstone	Jul 4, Donington	Jul 18, Brands Hatch	Aug 15, Donington	Aug 30, Brands Hatch	Oct 3, Silverstone	Total
Overall													
1 Win Percy	1.6 Toyota Corolla	10*	10*	10*	10*	10*	10*	10*	10*	10*	(10*)	(10*)	90
2 Richard Longman	1.3 Austin Metro	9	(5*)	10*	7*	9	9	—	10*	6	6	6	72
3 Steve Soper	1.3 Austin Metro	4	—	6	9	—	—	10*	6	10*	10*	10	65
4 Jeff Allam	3.5 Rover V8	10*	10*	2	3	—	10*	6	4	10*	5*	(2)	62**
5 Vince Woodman	3.0 Ford Capri	4	7*	2*	9	10*	6	10*	3	—	9	—	59
6 Hamish Irvine	2.0 Triumph Dolomite Sprint	—	6	10*	6	9	—	4	6	4	10*	4	59
Class A: 2501-3500cc													
1 Jeff Allam	3.5 Rover V8	10*	10*	2	3	—	10*	6	4	10*	5*	(2)	62**
2 Vince Woodman	3.0 Ford Capri	4	7*	2*	9	10*	6	10*	3	—	9	—	60
3 Andy Rouse	3.0 Ford Capri	6	3	4	4	6	4	4	—	6	—	4	41
4 Gordon Spice	3.0 Ford Capri	2	4	9	7*	4	3	—	6	4	—	—	39
5 Peter Lovett	3.5 Rover V8	—	—	—	—	—	3	10*	2	3	9	—	27
6 Rad Dougall	3.5 Rover V8	3	—	6	2	3	1	2	1	—	—	—	18
7 Brian Muir	3.5 Rover V8	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	2	—	6	7*	17
8 Dennis Leech	3.5 Rover V8	1	—	3	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	6
9 Graham Goode	3.0 Ford Capri	—	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	3	—	—	5
10 Charles Sawyer-Hoare	3.0 Ford Capri	—	2	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	4
11 Jonathan Buncombe	3.0 Ford Capri	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	3
Class B: 1601-2500cc													
1 Hamish Irvine	2.0 Triumph Dolomite Sprint	—	6	10*	6	9	—	4	6	4	10*	4	59
2 Jon Dooley	2.5 Alfa Romeo Alfetta GTV6	—	—	6	10*	5*	—	1*	7*	10*	1*	—	49
3 Tony Dickenson	2.0 Ford Escort RS2000	—	—	2	—	—	9	9	2	6	6	6	40
4 Terry Nightingale	2.3 Mazda RX-7	10*	10	4	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	1*	29
5 Mike Buckley	2.0 Ford Escort RS2000	6	—	3	—	6	—	—	—	—	—	—	15
6 James Burrows	2.0 Toyota Celica	—	4	—	3	—	—	—	1	—	4	—	12
7 Mike Kimpton	2.3 Mazda RX-7	—	—	—	—	—	6	3	—	—	—	—	9
8 Erik Hoyer	2.0 Ford Escort RS2000	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—	4
Class C: 1301-1600cc													
1 Win Percy	1.6 Toyota Corolla	10*	10*	10*	10*	10*	10*	10*	10*	10*	(10*)	(10*)	90
2 John Morris	1.6 Volkswagen Golf GTI	6	6	6	6	6	6	4	6	—	—	6	90
3 Tony Lanfranchi	1.6 Volkswagen Scirocco GTI	4	4	4	4	4	—	6	—	—	6	4	36
4 Jock Robertson	1.6 Ford Fiesta	3	—	—	—	3	—	3	—	—	4	3	16
5 Andrew Thorpe	1.5 Alfa Romeo Alfasud Sprint	2	—	2	2	2	—	—	6	1	—	—	15
6 Robin Brundle	1.6 Audi 80GLE	—	3	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	12
7 John Spiller	1.6 Talbot Sunbeam ti	1	—	1	—	1	—	2	3	—	—	1	9
8 Robin Brundsle	1.6 Toyota Celica	—	—	—	—	—	4	—	4	—	—	—	8
9 Alan Greenhalgh	1.6 Volkswagen Golf GTI	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	2	—	—	6
10 Tony Crudgington	1.6 Toyota Corolla	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	2	5
11 John Tait	1.6 Toyota Corolla	—	2	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3
12 Terry Waitts	1.6 Talbot Sunbeam ti	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	2
Class D: Up to 1300cc													
1 Richard Longman	1.3 Austin Metro	9	(5*)	10*	7*	9	9	—	10*	6	6	6	72
2 Steve Soper	1.3 Austin Metro	4	—	6	9	—	—	10*	6	10*	10*	10*	65
3 Roger Saunders	1.3 Austin Metro	2	6	4	4	4	—	4	3	—	4	3	34
4 Alan Curnow	1.3 Austin Metro	7*	—	—	—	7*	6	6	—	—	2	—	28
5 Neil McGrath	1.3 Austin Metro	3	—	—	—	3	5*	—	4	4	—	4	23
6 Jon Dooley	1.3 Alfa Romeo Alfasud ti	—	9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	9
David da Costa	1.3 Vauxhall Astra	—	—	—	—	2	—	2	—	—	3	2	9
8 Rob Kirby	1.3 Alfa Romeo Alfasud ti	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	4
9 Richard Hurdwell	1.3 Austin Metro	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	3

*Key: *Includes point for fastest lap ()Dropped score †Deceased **Dropped score reinstated as tie breaker



1982 RAC/TRICENTROL
BRITISH SALOON CAR CHAMPIONSHIP
OVERALL WINNER
WINNER OF CLASS C (UP TO 1600cc)
WINNER OF MANUFACTURERS' TITLE*

WIN 1 WON 11.

Win Percy, driving a 1600cc Toyota Corolla, has won the 1982 Tricentrol RAC British Saloon Car Championship.

Not only have Win and his Corolla won their class in all 11 races of the season, they've also scored extra points every time by recording the fastest lap in their class.

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Seasonal Survey



Jeff Allam is the meat in a Capri sandwich led by arch-rival Vince Woodman and followed by Jonathan Buncombe.

Three in a row continued

at, or near, the front. The most successful belonged to the Patrick Motor Sport team initially with **Rad Dougall** as sole driver, before **Brian Muir** joined him and eventually took over completely. No wins were scored by the team, though Yogi did get close twice and Rad once. The cars were never as quick as the works examples, but gave them a scare on more than one occasion. The remaining Rover was the sinister black device of Devonian **Dennis Leech**. So tall is Leech that despite the size of the Rover, he appeared to be driving from the back seat of a car that someone nick-named 'the coffin'. Invariably spectacular, the car was hampered by a lack of finance, though Leech's long drawl and sense of humour belied the comparative lack of success.

The remaining point scorers were Capri mounted. **Charles Sawyer-Hoare's**

Andy Rouse-prepared **Ebel Watches** car promised much but seldom managed to bring forth results, while **Graham Goode** restricted his appearances to his local tracks — Donington and Silverstone — and completed nowhere near a full season as a result.

Finally, **Jonathan Buncombe** made but a single appearance this year — in Vince Woodman's spare Capri naturally — at the final round, where Vince needed team support if he was going to win the class. Alas, Vince ran foul of rivals and finished down the order with a bent car, though Buncombe did his bit heading Allam to the flag. It was not quite enough.

1601-2500cc

In recent times the 2500cc class has often been the weak link in the Tricentrol package. True, it provided the overall champion in both 1980 and '81, but it

failed miserably in providing either inter-class competition or for that matter class runners.

This year the numbers were still down, but the competition was much better... even if it did take place rather nearer the Metros than the Rovers and Capris. The class also provided one of the two new cars to run this year.

Although the class wins were shared by four men, at the end of the day comfortably in command was **Scot Hamish Irvine**... whose car was one of the oldest in the series! Taking over Terry Nightingale's Triumph Dolomite Sprint, Hamish took three victories, four seconds and two thirds on his way to a handsome 10 point class cushion. Had there been enough starters in all rounds, that points margin would have been greater.

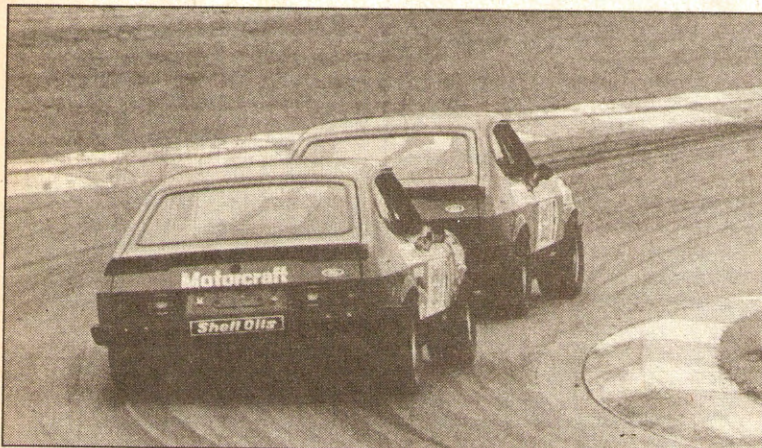
The progress of the black and green Dolomite was never outstandingly quick but it was always steady and reliable, Irvine being well pleased by his achieve-

ments. The quickest car on the track was usually the new Alfa Romeo Alfetta GTV6 of the Napolina/Alfa Romeo Dealer Team. Driver **Jon Dooley** knew it would be a tall order to expect the car to be a winner from the outset. Even so, he must have been disappointed at just how long it did take to ensure the car would lead from start to finish — indeed, the final round was the only one where both practice and race went without a hitch.

Dooley managed three wins and no fewer than six fastest laps which augers well for next year. Problems this year were caused by a variety of niggles. While the chassis was a known quantity, the V6 engine was all-new and the lack of parts forthcoming from Autodelta in Italy crippled the early-season efforts. Then a batch of faulty valves ensured that every round was an expensive engine blowing exercise until different valves were fitted.

Still the team has had a learning season and are looking forward to next year's Group A championship. Judging by the way the ETC Autodelta and Jolly Club GTV6s go in Europe, Dooley will be a happier man next year.

A close third to Dooley came another make of car — Ford's old-style **Escort RS2000** — with former Skoda Superloot driver **Tony Dickinson** at the wheel. Always immaculately presented, the Escort would have finished second in the class had it not been for a disqualification at Thruxton following a win. After the race the car was weighed as usual and found to be underweight. It was not a deliberate cheat by any means, just that the team had never thought to check the car's weight as they were positive it was well over the limit! Tony was 'robbed' of more points after a win at Donington when the lack of starters that has plagued the class for the past two seasons struck again. With just three starters you only get six points for a win. His was a noble effort, run with outdated machinery and



Above: It simply wasn't the Spice team's year, although they finished third and fourth in class. Below: Gordon Spice leads the fastest Capri of the year, that of Vince Woodman.



FOR THE RECORD (PART ONE)

This year the top class runners could breathe a sigh of relief. Win Percy had forsaken the Mazda RX-7 and gone down a class... and that meant no more humbling performances from the rotary racer. Instead, for 1982, every pole position would go to a top class car.

There were five different pole sitters in the 11 round series with Vince Woodman and Jeff Allam coming out on top with four poles apiece. Others to end up fastest in practice included Peter Lovett, Gordon Spice and Andy Rouse, who each managed the feat the once. In the marquee battle the score-line read Capri, 6; Rover, 5.

The results scored by the top men are a virtual mirror-image of practice feats, too. Wins were scored by Allam, Woodman, Lovett and Spice — Rouse missed out here — and again the majority of the laurels went to Allam and Woodman who scored four wins each. Lovett managed two (at the Grand Prix meeting and the final round), with Spice taking a solitary victory. Here the scoreline was reversed, with Rover taking six wins to Ford's five.

The ultimate feat is, perhaps, to take pole and victory at the same meeting. In this battle it was Allam who came up trumps putting his name at the head of the practice times and results sheets on three occasions. Woodman managed it once, and the rest not at all.

As ever Tricentrol runners gained an extra point for recording the fastest lap. Once again it was the Allam/Woodman duo who topped that chart, Allam's Rover recording five fastest laps (four of them records) with Woodman not far behind, managing four fastest laps and three records. Joining them were Spice, Lovett and Brian Muir who took one fastest lap each, those of Spice and Lovett being records. Readers with enough fingers and toes will have added up 12 fastest laps. That's right, at Mallory Park both Allam and Woodman turned in identical record times in their fight to the flag.

Last season the 2500cc class was the domain of Win Percy and virtually no-one else. This year it was different — and much slower. Gone were the giant killing acts of 1981 when Percy took the Mazda to outright poles and wins, replaced by a motley selection of largely elderly cars run by privateers. Nevertheless it did mean a far more competitive class... competitive relative to each other. Not once did the fastest Class B man beat Win Percy's 1600cc Toyota in practice, and only once was the Toyota beaten in the results. And on many an occasion the 2500cc cars were humbled by the 1300cc Metros, too.

Fastest in practice more often than not, was the only new car in the class, the Alfa Romeo GTV6 of Jon Dooley which was on pole for four or five races... the confusion being caused by David Palmer who was fastest in his Mazda on his one outing but who wasn't registered for the series! Dooley was followed by Tony Dickinson's Escort RS2000 (three 'poles') with Terry Nightingale's Mazda taking two and Hamish Irvine's class winning Dolomite managing to be fastest in practice once.

Unsurprisingly, class fastest laps were nowhere near Win Percy's Mazda-set records, though Dooley tried his best. The GTV6 took a point for fastest lap on six occasions, with Nightingale taking three and Irvine two.

On the winners' rostrum were four men. Dooley, Irvine and Dickinson had three laps of honour each, with Nightingale winning the two opening rounds. In the marques, therefore, Triumph, Alfa Romeo and Ford took three victories with Mazda picking up two. Nightingale, Dooley and Dickinson each had two class wins from 'pole' position.

Seasonal Survey



One of the most significant of the new cars was the Alfa Romeo Alfetta GTV6 of Jon Dooley. The Alfa specialist finished second in the 1600-2500cc class to Hamish Irvine.

Three in a row

continued

limited funds.

Terry Nightingale took a gamble at the beginning of the season . . . and lost. Having sold his Dolomite, Terry organised himself a Metro to be built by Richard Longman and run with sponsorship from his backers Stratstone. Then he decided to go for the overall championship taking the route chosen by Win Percy in 1980 and '81. He bought one of the ex-works Mazda RX-7s, lost the BL Dealer backing and promptly won his class in the first two races at a canter. Then the problems arose, and Terry realised that the car needed a great deal of money and experience to be run properly. The following two races saw the Mazda finish third in class, with assorted mechanical ailments, and then the funds ran out.

The car was hired to Mike Kimpton later in the season giving him a second and a fourth, while another RX-7 appeared twice in the season, once in a tasteful shade of grey primer for former

motoring journalist Gordon Bruce, and once for Mazda PR and ETC racer David Palmer. Palmer finishing fourth in his race but scoring no points as he was not registered for the championship. The great days of Mazda class domination were over.

Of the rest only Mike Buckley made an impression. And not a particularly good one at that. His brightly coloured Escort RS2000 was wheeled out once again, his high points being two second places. The low spot came at Silverstone in June when he contrived to have a huge roll-over accident that took out a couple of other innocent competitors. And it wasn't as if he was going that quickly. The accident put him out of the running for the remainder of the season.

Bringing up the rear came James Burrows, again struggling with his 2-litre Toyota Celica, while foreign interest was supplied by Scandinavians Erik Hoyer and Arne Riss in Escort and Dolomite respectively.

1301-1600cc

A white-wash. Once again Win Percy got hold of the right car and demoralised the

opposition, only unlike his days in the Mazda, this time there was some opposition. But suggest to Win that it was nothing more than the car and he will rush to defend himself.

"I know it looked all too easy, but let no-one say that I wasn't trying," he says pointing to the string of lap records achieved in the Hughes of Beaconsfield Toyota. It is more that just a car and driver that makes a team. This year the Hughes outfit seconded two mechanics from their garage retail outlet to work full time on the race car. Their preparation was near faultless . . . at the end of the season the team had had one tooth stripped in the gearbox, changed one engine between practice sessions as Win had felt it tighten, while a faulty fuel pump at the final found made Win look hard in his mirror to find his closest rival as the Toyota gradually developed a misfire. He needn't have worried. There was no-one in sight.

Win has expressed a desire to move up to the front of the field for next year. If he does the last three years will be a hard act to follow.

The appearance of Win in the Toyota

and the lack of a promised new Scirocco from Volkswagen contrived to push John Morris to the role of runner-up from the outset. Led to believe that Volkswagen were going to smile on him, John was slightly miffed when just one new shape Scirocco appeared on the tracks, and without him behind the wheel. At the last minute, therefore, he had to resort to his faithful Golf and he knew there was no way he was going to be able to beat Win, unless something drastic happened to the Toyota.

But the sight of the new-shape Scirocco going to rival Tony Lanfranchi spurred Morris on. There was no way the white Scirocco was going to beat the black Morris (no relation) Vulcan Golf. It almost worked. John scored no fewer than eight second places, one third (beaten by Lanfranchi) and two retirements caused by accidents.

Morris, always cheerful and philosophical about his racing, accepts the season with a shrug of the shoulders. In some ways the accidents — one a nasty roll-over affair — were inevitable, as Morris was going all out, all season long and margins of error get smaller. But it is

FOR THE RECORD (PART TWO)

What would we do without Win Percy? In 1982 he emulated his 1980 run in the Mazda RX-7 by totally dominating the results sheets. In his ever-immaculate Toyota Corolla, Win started every race fastest in his class. He also finished every race ahead of his rivals and took fastest laps at each round, too. He scored a maximum 110 points (before dropping results) winning both the class and the championship and securing the manufacturer's title for Toyota.

But he did fail in one area! Yes, he only managed to break lap records on seven occasions. Only . . . There are many runners who would be more than happy to break a record just the once, let alone enough times to hold the record at each of the six circuits the series visits. It might be worth mentioning here that Win holds the lap record at each of those six circuits in the 2500cc class, too.

Perhaps the team's only disappointment was that Win was able to score just two outright wins in the split races at Mallory and Oulton. Smaller grids this year meant that the Donington rounds could be held with but one race each. Every race goer, enthusiast and non-enthusiast alike, can pick out a race leader. Class leaders are sometimes more difficult to spot, thus Win's achievements were missed by many.

In the smallest class there was competition, thank goodness. Three men, all driving Austin Metros, shared the honours for taking the fastest practice lap. Richard Longman managed the feat no fewer than seven times with young pretender Steve Soper managing 'pole' three times. Longman's team-mate Alan Curnow was the interloper on the remaining occasion.

But while the class was the province of the Metro, things are never that simple. Both Longman and Soper scored five wins each in their respective machines, but last year's class winner Jon Dooley dusted off his trusty Alfa Romeo Alfasud and gave it a win at Mallory Park, thus robbing the Metro of the chance of retaining its manufacturers' title.

Broadly speaking the smallest class season can be split in two, with Longman doing most of the winning in the early part, and Soper taking over as the season drew to its close. As well as sharing the same number of wins, the pair both took four fastest laps all four being records for Longman, while Soper managed three.

The remaining three fastest laps also went to Metros, with Curnow taking two and Neil McGrath breaking the Datapost/Hepolite monopoly with one. Curnow's opening race at Silverstone where he finished second to Longman, also saw him break the lap record. But that won't go in the history books as the fastest 1300cc Group 1 lap ever . . . Soper knocked more than 1sec off Curnow's time at the championship finale.

Three times Longman managed to win the class from 'pole', a feat managed by Soper twice. And no-one else got close.

Hamish Irvine secured his class with his aged but reliable Triumph Dolomite Sprint.





Above: Robin Brundle followed in brother Martin's successful footsteps with his Audi 80. Below: Championship winner Percy leads class challenger John Morris and Jon Dooley.

no small mark of the man's dedication and sense of responsibility that after the roll-over shunt at the penultimate championship round, he was back at the final with a completely re-shelled car.

That is some considerable expense to go to for one race. "But," says Morris, "I had a duty to my sponsors. I had to be there." There are many others who would not have seen it that way.

Lanfranchi had a puzzling season. In all he managed six third places and two seconds in a car that should have been considerably quicker than Morris's brick-like device. In the early part of the season the 'Third Man', as he liked to call himself, had his car prepared by John Maguire who also prepared the Golf, but at half distance preferred to go his own way. Tony as a driver is a formidable opponent. Maybe his weakness comes in his inability to set up a car.

These three men took the vast majority of the points, leaving the other 11 runners to fight for the scraps. Most successful of the others were Jock Robertson, Andrew Thorpe and Robin



Brundle. Although Brundle, the younger brother of last year's works Audi 80 driver Martin, scored fewer points than the other two, he was the more successful! The reason? He scored points in two cars . . . add them together and he wins. His first mount was just the sort of car his brother ran last year. Unloved, the front drive Audi 80 was generally regarded as too unwieldy to make a racer. Robin let none of this bother him and ran the car privately as much for fun and experience as anything else. He recorded four fourth places.

His second mount immediately went quicker — he managed two thirds — but was more unreliable. It was the Toyota Celica used by the Hughes team to win the class in 1980. While the rear wheel drive suited his style of driving better than the Audi, it was to the German car that he returned when the Toyota blew its twin cam to pieces . . . and he started driving that as if it had rwd. A man to watch.

Robertson, once the protégé of

Irvine and Dooley battle out the 1600-2500cc class while chasing Tony Lanfranchi's VW Scirocco, a car which had been expected to figure prominently this season.



Seasonal Survey

Three in a row

continued

Gerry Marshall and the man at the wheel of a production Mazda RX3, joined the Julian May Ford Fiesta team and put in workmanlike performances in an uncompetitive car. Run this year with a 1600cc motor — largely because it was the only way to get in front of some of the Metros — the Pegasus car never stood a chance of winning, or even coming second. But add some rain, and that only happened once, and it was a different story. At Brands in the pouring August rain the orange Fiesta was way up the leader board. Robertson is a talented driver who never got dispirited with his lot. Maybe next year?

Thorpe, another newcomer to the series, had a wretched year with the Napolina Alfasud Sprint. Another uncompetitive car, this one had the expensive habit of going through engines. But Thorpe, an enthusiast of the marque, never allowed such problems to get on top of him. If an engine blew it was simply a case of fitting another! His reward after a season of fifth places or retirements came at Donington in August where he finished second in class to Percy... albeit some way down the depleted field.

Of the others, John Spiller steadily picked up points in his Standfield and White Talbot Sunbeam ti but both his and Terry Watts's similar car were hopelessly uncompetitive. Alan Greenhalgh joined the fray in a tired Golf backed by a time sharing sponsorship plan that would have proved terrible value for money had anybody taken it up. Certainly in the early part of the season he spent more time in the pits than

anywhere else, though towards the end of the year some results were forthcoming. He does receive the unofficial AUTOSPORT award for the best-looking camp followers however.

Like Robin Brundle, production saloon expert Pete Hall tried the Group 1 trail in an ex-Hughes Toyota, but was robbed of the chance of any good showings when he became involved in Mike Buckley's Silverstone accident. The shunt was severe enough to put him off racing for the bulk of the season, but it is hoped he will reappear in the Group A championship next season.

The only other car to appear on the tracks was driven by no fewer than three people. Privateer John Tait bought a new Toyota Corolla at the beginning of the season with the sole intention of having fun. Never one to be disillusioned about his skill, he once told me: "I believe I am

the only man who leaves a Tricentrol round truly happy. I am the only one who can honestly say he went 10secs quicker in the race than he managed in practice!"

Shortly after retiring from his airline pilot's job, John died of a heart attack, and the car passed into the hands of Richard Zuchi, who ran it first for Chris Hodgetts and then Tony Crudginton. Although superficially similar to the machine run by Percy, the red Toyota lacked many of the tweaks of the works car and, as a result, was never competitive.

Up to 1300cc

Universally known as the Metro class, there were, however, other cars that competed — and won — in the baby class. But it was the Metro that dominated filling the top five places at the end of

the day. Top Metro-gnome was Datapost team leader Richard Longman, but he had to work for it.

His season long rival was former Metro Challenge champion Steve Soper in an identical, Hepolite-backed car. Both men ended up with five wins, though a careful spot of points gathering by Longman gave him the edge. Perhaps the most impressive facet of Longman's year was the way he managed to humble virtually every runner in all but the top class. And there were times that the likes of Percy and Morris looked over their shoulders to find either Richard's red car or Steve's yellow machine too close for comfort. Both Metro drivers were surprisingly evenly matched, Soper not giving a hoot for any of Longman's experience, and Richard not being the slightest bit worried by Steve's youth. Their's was a fascinating struggle that kept many a mid-field dice alive. Only at Donington

A Metro battle between Steve Soper and class winner Richard Longman.



1982 Tricentrol RAC British Saloon Car Championship Manufacturers' Award

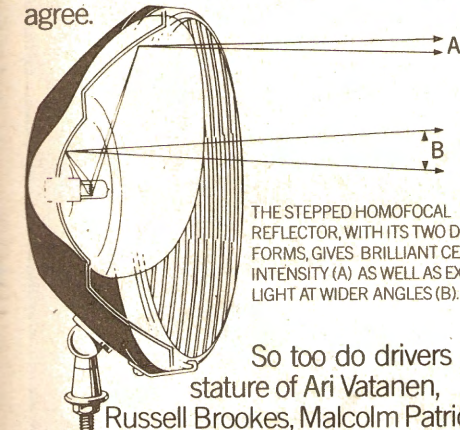
1	1.6 Toyota Corolla	90
2	1.3 Austin Metro	81
3	3.5 Rover V8	72
4	3.0 Ford Capri	69
5	2.0 Triumph Dolomite Sprint	57
6	2.0 Ford Escort RS2000	55
7	1.6 Volkswagen Golf GTI	52
8	2.5 Alfa Romeo Alfetta GTV6	44
9	2.3 Mazda RX-7	38
10	1.6 Volkswagen Scirocco GTI	36
11	1.6 Ford Fiesta	16
12	1.3 Alfa Romeo Alfasud ti	13
13	1.5 Alfa Romeo Alfasud Sprint	13
14	2.0 Toyota Celica	12
15	1.6 Audi 80 GLE	12
16	1.6 Talbot Sunbeam ti	10
17	1.3 Vauxhall Astra	9
18	1.6 Toyota Celica	8

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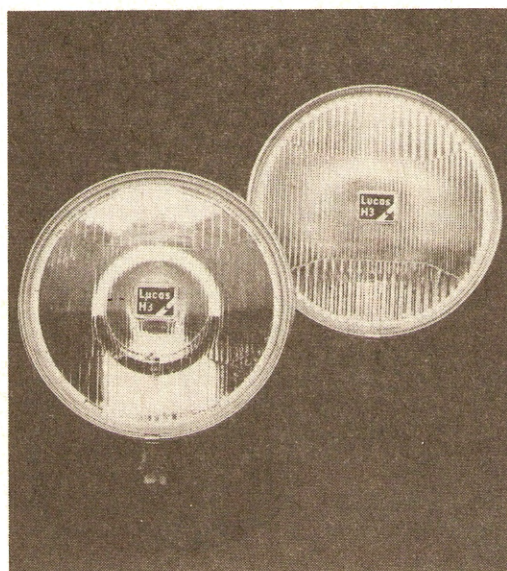


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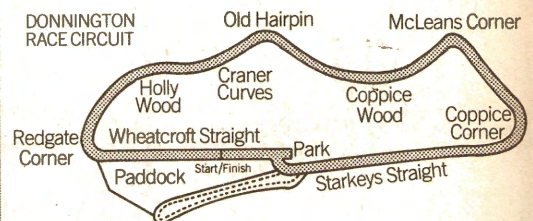


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in July did it go wrong when a demon spot of Datapost late braking gave Soper the race and Longman a headache as he barrelled into the Club chicane barriers.

Their domination of the results sheets was nearly complete . . . and would have been had it not been for one **Jon Dooley** who, frustrated by the lack of immediate success with the GTV6, dusted down (literally) his last year's Alfasud and took it along to the two split races at Mallory and Oulton. At Oulton it retired but Mallory saw a win, and incredulous Metro men wondering how on earth an elderly 'Sud, that hadn't turned a wheel since the previous season, could manage it.

The 'Sud win was the only hiccough in a Metro dominated class. Third overall was a delighted **Roger Saunders**, whose Wadham Stringer-backed car managed one second place and a string of thirds to give the unassuming Saunders a fine end of term result. It is worth remembering that this car is not one of the most highly modified Group 1 Metros around and neither is his budget bottomless. Behind him came **Alan Curnow**, the second Datapost man, who suffered a terrible season.

Curnow, class winner in 1980, finished just five races, four of them in second place. The major reason for retirement were silly mechanical faults — fuel pumps that refused to pick up two laps into a race after working fine all weekend, and so on. Perhaps his greatest blow, however, came at the Grand Prix meeting when, while comfortably in the lead of the class, he was tipped on his roof by an errant larger class car. Some of his problems were down to the team preparation . . . most were sheer bad luck. But whatever the cause there is no denying



Above: An unfortunate end to Alan Curnow's Metro at the Brands GP meeting after being punted off by one of the bigger cars. Below: David da Costa's Vauxhall Astra — the slowest car in the series?



Proposed 1983 RAC British Saloon Car Championship Calendar

Mar 19/20	Silverstone (BRDC)
Mar 31/Apr 1	Oulton Park (BARC)
Apr 2/4	Thruxton (BARC)
Apr 9/10	Brands Hatch (BRSCC)
May 30	Thruxton (BARC)
Jun 11/12	Silverstone (BRDC)
Jun 25/26	Donington (DRC)
Jul 14-16	Silverstone (RAC)
Aug 13/14	Donington (DRC)
Aug 28/29	Brands Hatch (BRSCC)
Oct 1/2	Silverstone (BRDC)

they affected his attitude to the series — he seemed to expect a disaster at every round.

Fifth Metro man was **Neil McGrath** who was another to have a puzzling season. His performances in the TT in a Datapost Metro showed he had lost none of his speed, but behind the wheel of his Group 1 Everest Double Glazing car he was off the pace. And that must mean the car was at fault.

The remaining four to take part included **Rob Kirby** who picks up another unofficial AUTOSPORT award for completing the largest number of engine rebuilds in the shortest possible time, usually between practice and the race in his Napolina 'Sud, while **David da Costa** freely admitted his Vauxhall Astra was the slowest car on the course whenever it appeared. **Richard Hurdwell**, BL Motorsport's chassis wizard, had one outing in his Challenge Metro, converted to G1 spec, while **Stewart Fowler** decided the series was not for him at all. He bought Colin Hawker's 1.3 Fiesta at the end of last season, had one race (and retired) at the start of this season before disappearing altogether. ■

WIN THE CAR



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Track Test

The yellow soap box

TIFF NEEDELL discovered the peculiarities of hot property Steve Soper's Metro.



A major feature of this year's Tricentrol RAC British Saloon Car Championship has been the entertaining battles for the 'baby' class between the Metros of Steve Soper and Richard Longman. A Metro just has to be the last thing I ever thought I would drive on a race track but when Mr Super offered me the chance I figured it had to be fun.

"But Steve, it's front-wheel-drive, so it *must* understeer." He insists that I will like driving his Metro because it oversteers — but the trouble with these tin-top boys is that they don't know the difference between understeer and oversteer . . .

Steve Soper was at Donington before me, whirling the immaculately turned out yellow 'soap box' around. Steve has cleaned up a total of seven club racing championship titles in the last four years like the best of detergents . . . I hope you're getting these 'Soaper' jokes. He is mainly remembered as a front-wheel-drive specialist, having taken two Leyland 1275GT titles, the Fiesta Challenge and last year the Metro Series, but he is quick to point out his Modsport class titles, driving the Radbourne Fiat X1/9 as sideways as the best of us. He is ambitious enough to look ahead with sights set on big saloons, and hopefully even Group C Endurance racing.

After these successes Steve just *had* to get into international racing so, when offered a Metro shell by British Leyland, he jumped at the chance. With nothing but the shell, Steve, Melvyn Johnson, Brian Walsh and Michael Jones set out to construct their Longman beater at Meltune's Watford premises. The first piece of good fortune was the offer of engines from Howley Engine Developments, and then Steve was introduced to Hepolite Glacier — who manufacture all Leyland pistons, rings and bearings — to forge a deal to cover some of the season's running costs.

Soper was ready to take on the big boys, albeit with a very modest budget compared to the Datapost Team (whose Metro was track tested by John Rhodes, AUTOSPORT, February 25) which also had the advantage of a year's Metroing behind them. Hepolite Glacier have proved to be enthusiastic backers and Steve has received encouraging assistance from British Leyland despite their prior commitment to the official works Datapost Team.

This year Steve won five of the 11 rounds (like Longman) but had been in the lead at some time during several others. Longman won the class, but Steve had shown his instant competitiveness at the higher level. For 1983 the baby class is no more and Steve will *have* to move up again . . . but before the Metro gets pensioned off let's see just how bad the understeer is.

I had previously tested Tony Lanfranchi's Scirocco (AUTOSPORT, July 29) around Donington and found it to be pleasantly smooth and precise, going from neutral to understeer when pushed. But oversteer? No chance!

AUTOSPORT SUPPLEMENT, OCTOBER 21, 1982



Left: Tiff finds his feet in the Hepolite Metro. Above: With the team. Right: Searching for the limits of Metro adhesion round the Donington Park circuit.

Unfortunately, Steve is not the tallest of drivers, and with his seat firmly bolted to the floor it was a bit of a squeeze and I began to feel a bit silly. My elbows were out at a quarter to three and my knees were wrapped round the steering column. More important, there was *no* car in front of me! I began to think of excuses. I couldn't drive this. "Off you go," says Steve. "Don't forget it oversteers." Bloody idiot!

The driving controls are all standard Metro, apart from the rev counter replacing the speedometer plus the usual oil pressure/water temperature gauge addition, and the normal key ignition is used to start up. I had been asked to restrain to 7500rpm although Steve stretches it to 8000rpm in times of need. Out of the pits, the steering immediately felt heavy and dead, the slick racing tyres and front-wheel-drive combining to persuade the car to go in one direction only — straight on!

A few laps later and the only impressive thing is the effectiveness of the brakes: a really nice solid pedal — slightly awkwardly placed being too high off the floor — and just the right pressure to gain maximum braking before the fronts show signs of locking up. All my previous braking marks disappeared behind me with the throttle still buried to the floor. Only when it seemed time to turn in did it seem time to brake!

The handling was dull, however, the heavy dead steering with the usual self-centring pull making this little car quite tiring to drive. As expected there was nothing but understeer. I was being my usual neat self (!) turning in gently and gradually adding more and more lock as the power was fed in. The little 1300cc engine pushing out some 120bhp but feeling a little out of breath pulling the last 500revs up to 7500rpm in third gear up the hill from Old Hairpin. Steve insists it's better to hang on rather than change up early and he should know.



The Hepolite Metro has the standard Hydrogas suspension replaced by coil springs all round with the addition of gas-filled dampers. The brakes are disc front and drum rear with a proper single-seater style dual master cylinder set-up complete with balance bar and the option of servo assistance on the fronts. Tyres are from Dunlop, who are such an important and highly competitive part of Tricentrol racing.

So there we were, cruising round. I was 4secs off the pace *but* I had only done half a dozen laps — enough for 'quick shot Colley' to get a few snaps to prove that I did drive the thing. One more lap and it's time to go home. Let's just push it through Old Hairpin a little quicker . . . how come I'm looking up the road out of the passenger's side window?

Now we're into a different dimension. If I can do that at the Old Hairpin, why not everywhere? Next corner McLeans, a little less braking, a little less subtle with the first application of lock and . . . away we go again 'bunny-hopping' through the corner, steering neutral, in what used to be known as a four wheel drift.

Soper isn't going to get me out of his car now. Memories of John Rhodes flooded back. The tyres don't throw off plumes of burning smoke these days because the slick tyres just don't do that sort of thing, but a brave photographer — they don't make them like they used to, or at least they don't let them go where they used to — could easily repeat those classic shots of the car facing straight into the lens as it drifts across frame.

The change in the handling comes from pushing what is still a basically understeering car through that understeer and to the other extreme — this is done by turning in very fast with a quick application of lock. Normally this sort of treatment will see you very shortly viewing the rubber marks you've just left behind you, but Steve has set his car up so that the oversteer can be caught and the car powered out of the corner with very little speed-scrubbing lock applied. It's amazing how quickly the dead heavy steering becomes light and responsive in your hands as the front wheels are relieved of the responsibility of providing the majority of the grip and the rears are left to do a bit of work.

My lap times tumbled by a couple of seconds and I began to get very busy with the steering wheel ready to take off the initial lock as soon as the steering lightened — you have to be quick or all the advantage is scrubbed off in a sideways waltz. With the circuit about to close, I finally undid myself before they could flag me off the track. No, I didn't fall off, but I did knock open the seat belt catch with my whirling elbows!

Still, the day ended after I had discovered the oversteer and before my new-found enthusiasm got the better of me. I was beginning to get really brutal with my turn-in flicks and lack of braking and I feel sure it would all have got the better of me before much longer. It's a shame there will be no Metros next year, but I feel sure that whatever Steve Soper turns his hand to (a BMW 635?) will be a winner. After all, anyone who can make a Metro oversteer . . .



WIN PERCY
Outright Champion
Winner: 1600cc class

At the final championship round at Silverstone, his title — the third in a row — safely in his pocket, Win Percy looked around and mused. After practice he had wound up on the third row sandwiched between two cars from the top class. "I think this time I'll have a go and see if I can stay with the Rovers and Capris. Give them a run for their money."

He said it in all seriousness. But come the race, he ignored the temptation and simply carried on doing the job he has done all year, namely keeping out of trouble and comfortably winning the 1600cc class in the Toyota, and taking the fastest lap for good measure.

In all he had 11 starts, 11 class 'poles', 11 wins and 11 fastest laps. He took records at each of the circuits visited, once again dominating the Tricentrol series as he did in 1980 and 1981.

Win is a professional. And that is one good reason why he was called in to join the Hughes of Beaconsfield/works-backed team. Last year Toyota should have won the championship. Their Celica was easily the quickest in the class as was their driver Chris Hodgetts . . . but too often did Hodgetts become involved in other people's dices rather than stay out of trouble. Add a couple of mechanical problems and the championship was lost.

This year the team tightened up on the reliability front and with Win at the helm were never threatened. "I really didn't think it was going to be this easy," said Win, "I was worried about John Morris who is always a strong competitor, and I was convinced that Tony Lanfranchi would be able to get his Scirocco along just as quickly as the Corolla.

"Many people came up to me and asked why I didn't make a race of it, but they failed to realise that I had a job to do. I did feel sorry for the spectators . . . I would have liked it more than anybody for there to have been some more opposition," he added.

Next year, however, there is a strong chance that Win could be seen dicing at the front of the field in a top class car. I am very grateful to Toyota for the season, of course, but next year I would dearly love to have a go at the front." Needless to say a three times champion is in demand and the current rumours suggest he is being wooed by at least three top manufacturers, probably representing drives in a Rover, BMW, and of course a Toyota.

It is worth pointing out that Win will find the going a great deal tougher at the front than he has this season, and that no-one has ever won the championship four times in a row, nor from the top class. But then Win is a professional.

HAMISH IRVINE

Winner:
1601-2500cc class

They say the Scots are canny . . . and that's a sentiment that can certainly be applied to Hamish Irvine. A stalwart of production saloon racing, Hamish looked at the cost of travelling south of the border to contest a series with anything up to 20 rounds and practice and racing crammed into a single day, and decided it wasn't worth the expense.

Then he looked at the Tricentrol series and came to the conclusion that just 11 rounds spread over two days each — invariably with either top billing or as a support to an international race — did make sense. "With the production saloon series I was spending too much time on the road. No sooner had I made it to a circuit than it was time to go home again. And that was virtually every weekend. The Group 1 championship offered more for less."

The next problem was to find a suitable car and class. "I had been racing a Dolomite Sprint in production races so that's where I started looking." It was also where he ended up. Terry Nightingale put his G1 Sprint up for sale at the end of the 1981 season and Hamish snapped it up. "I looked at the class and realised that although the Dolomite would not be the quickest it might do the trick. With the Mazdas in private hands I thought the expense might hinder them, while the Alfa GTV6 was too new. To be honest I thought we had a chance for the class from the outset."

And that's just what happened. Although his equipment ensured he was seldom the quickest man around — he was fastest in class in practice just once and managed only two fastest race laps — he was the most reliable, retiring just twice but otherwise never finishing lower than third in the admittedly poorly supported class.

Was his season a success? Ever cautious, Hamish stroked his ginger beard and thought carefully before answering. "Aye, it was. It perhaps wasn't as cheap as we thought it might be — tyres alone saw to that — but the racing was good and it did not take up much time that I neglected my business," he said.

As well as tyres, much of the team's private budget — no sponsorship here — was taken up by travelling and two engine rebuilds. Costs were pared to the bone by the use of a small motor home to house the three man team at each meeting and by raiding Dolomite parts from scrapped examples at the family breaker's yard business.

"And they say the Alfa team are run on a shoestring," said Hamish ruefully.



RICHARD LONGMAN
Championship runner-up
Winner: Up to 1300cc class

Back where he belongs, that's Richard Longman. Outright championship winner in 1978 and '79, he spent a year in the Ford Fiesta wilderness in 1980 before being tempted back to BL and the Metro last year.

Then, despite helping to win the manufacturers' award for BL, Longman was pipped to the class by the irritatingly quick Alfasud ti. This year that Alfasud driver went elsewhere and the Metros looked towards an untroubled year. The best laid plans . . .

True, Longman won the class — and Metros filled the top five places — but any hope that the Metro would repeat its manufacturers' award were dashed when that Alfasud driver, Jon Dooley, returned to his trusty steed on two occasions, winning once. And any hope that Longman himself would win the championship were dashed not only by Dooley, but also by one Steve Soper.

"Yes, he was quite quick wasn't he?" said the BL tuning wizard. "But I'm happy with my own performances. After all, there was no way we were going to beat Percy for the championship really. A win and a fastest lap at every round is never going to happen in a competitive class.

"But we won the right races and won our class in the Donington ETC round, so I reckon we've got nothing to complain about. Steve had much the same equipment as we did so there was no doubt that he was going to be a threat," added Longman.

The only eligibility wrangle that arose during the year concerned the rear suspension of Soper's Metro. And although Soper was about to join forces with Longman in a car for that Donington Group A race, Longman took the step to protest the Hepolite car. In the end there was a typical British compromise. Longman was told he was right, but Soper was given the benefit of ill-worded regulations and kept his points.

"Once we got that out of the way, Steve and I were closely matched and we had a good season. I was a little surprised that Neil (McGrath) was not with us as in the TT he was as quick as myself, Steve and Alan Curnow, but once in his own car he was 3secs off the pace. Alan had a dreadful year.

"I was lucky. All my mechanical problems happened during practice! All the same, I think we have made the Metro a racer. I'm happy with the way things have gone."

There is no doubting that Richard Longman is still no mean driver. Does he regard his racing as a weekend relaxation after the pressures of a full business week? "I enjoy the racing, that's for sure. But as soon as you stick a sponsor's name on the side of a car you are working for him. It's business and pleasure really."

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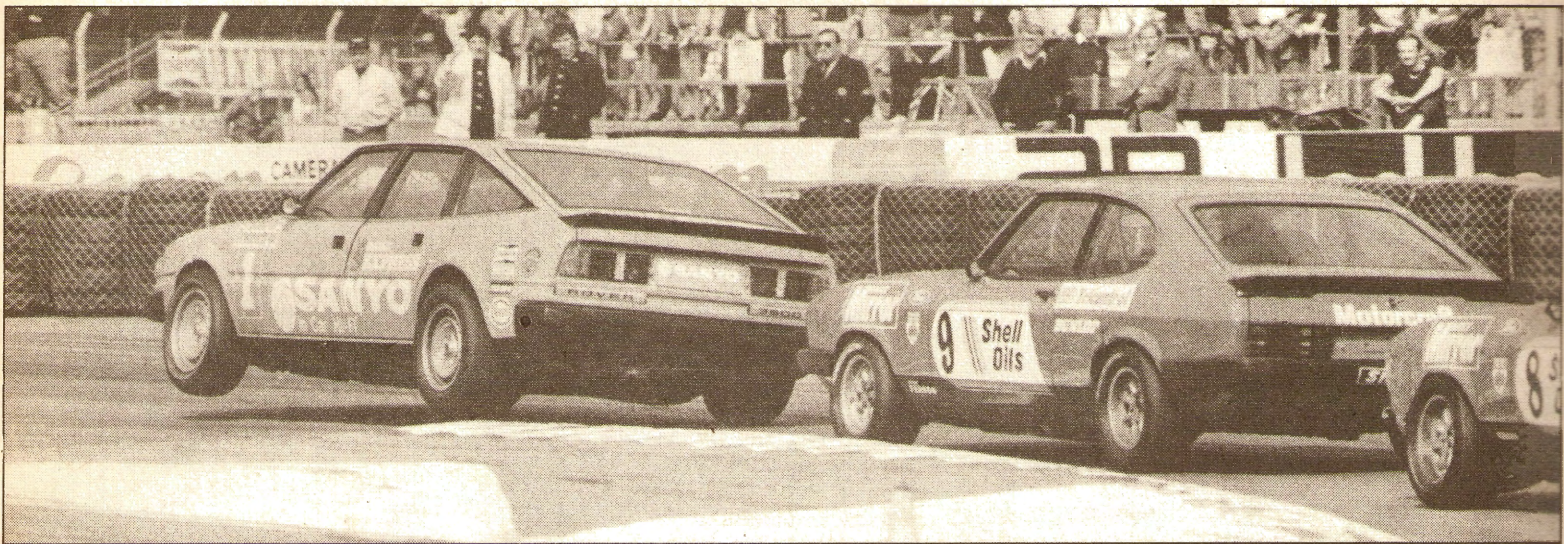


Jeff Allam

A tooth and nail battle throughout the season with Vince Woodman saw Jeff Allam take the honours in the big class of the Tricentrol G1 Championship by the finest margin.

ROBIN BRADFORD finds out how he achieved this first class win after several years of trying . . .





Jeff Allam cocks a couple of wheels at Silverstone in June attempting to keep ahead of the Rouse and Spice Capris, before going on to win the 3500cc class.

“Someone once told me that John Fitzpatrick only raced a single-seater a couple of times. That’s a great encouragement to me; just look at the success he’s had.”

So says Jeff Allam, at 27 years of age one of the youngest competitors in the Tricentral RAC British Saloon Car Championship, and winner this year of the top capacity class in the Tom Walkinshaw Racing Sanyo Rover.

Only once has Jeff raced a single-seater — in a soaking wet Formula 3 race at Thruxton two years ago — and he harbours no ambitions to do so again. He says: “I just love saloon cars; I work with them all day and race them as much as I can.”

His experience and successes, both considerable for one of his age, are not, however, a ticket to instant stardom; it is Jeff’s contention that things would be different if he raced open-wheelers. But, with John Fitzpatrick as an example, he is determined to succeed.

Jeff’s motor sport career started in karting, a section of the sport from which many Grand Prix drivers have emerged; unusually, when Jeff got his road driving licence, he immediately went for saloons and not what many would have expected of him, Formula Ford.

He explained: “I was racing karts before I had a licence, so I had to rely on a mate with a van to take me to and from the circuit. Then a friend of mine was badly hurt in an accident, which put me right off it. When I got my licence, I never even thought about Formula Ford, I just went straight for the saloon.”

That saloon was a 2-litre Vauxhall Viva GT, built ‘in-house’ at the family garage — needless to say, a Vauxhall dealership — in Epsom, with help from ace fabricator Mike Barney, now a familiar ‘spanner-man’ in Grand Prix and Endurance racing.

Jeff has remarkable recall for races, and he remembers his first circuit race well — a special saloon event at Brands Hatch in 1973: “I’d watched it all go on and it looked pretty easy. Then this bloke passed me at great speed and I thought ‘Whew . . . he was moving’. So I realised I had a lot to learn.”

That was the era of Gerry Marshall’s ‘Old Nail’ OTV Vauxhall Firenza and Nick Whiting’s All Car Equipé Ford Escort. Between them, they won most of the special saloon events, so Jeff started to go racing where Marshall and Whiting weren’t, “otherwise I came third all the time.”

Following Marshall, however, did start Jeff on the right road. He quite openly admits his indebtedness to Gerry, who took him under his wing in those early days when he realised there was a talent worth fostering. Jeff: “A lot of the skills I’ve got on the track I learned from Gerry. He got to know the family well and always helped me a lot.”

“One of the most important things I learned from him was to drive the race from the word go. I used to start slowly, sort myself out and then pick a few cars off

“When I see single-seater drivers getting runs in events like the Shell Oils 1000, I wonder why it’s not me. I’ve just got to get out there and show people that saloon car racing produces top quality drivers, too.”



Early racing days saw Alam in a Vauxhall.

towards the end of the race, finishing about seventh. He taught me to go for it, right from the start.

“I remember one classic example, at a Boxing Day Brands meeting, when Gerry turned up in a virtually standard Viva 1800, the Capital Motors car. He went for it from the start and lead all the special saloons for the first few laps. Just go for it and you can do it.”

Tricentral in 1977

Jeff continued to race alongside Gerry as the pair moved over to production saloons, Jeff proving the worth of Gerry’s advice by finishing runner-up in the BBC Radio 1 series in 1975 in a Vauxhall Magnum and winning the Britax series outright in the same car the following year.

Staying-faithful to Vauxhall, Jeff moved into the Tricentral series in 1977, making a name for himself by winning the class twice — despite tough opposition from the works Magnum (Marshall) and the works Dolomite (Tony Dron) — and finishing runner-up to Dron at the season’s end.

His exploits also attracted the attention of one Stuart Patterson, who provided a Ford Capri for Jeff to run the following year. Patterson, you may remember, carted his cars to circuits in a vast blue articulated truck with Nuluxe Foam written on the side, starting a fashion trend which is now *de rigueur* in Tricentral.

In this Capri, Jeff consolidated his position in Group 1 racing, finishing runner-up again, this time in the top capacity class to Gordon Spice, winning two races outright — including the Brands Hatch Grand Prix round — which resulted in him receiving a Grovewood Award, a rare accolade for a saloon racer.

The Grovewood Award was followed by works assistance from Ford for his second Capri season, in which he finished runner-up for the third time in a row, and for the second time behind Gordon Spice.

The winter of 1979 provided Jeff with his biggest break so far, the chance to join the BL Motorsport team to race the new V8-engined Rover. And the names of BL Motorsport boss John Davenport and the department’s publicity consultant John Foden, joined Gerry Marshall on the list of people for whose assistance Jeff is grateful.

Jeff says: “What happened with the BL approach was a very big breakthrough . . . and I appreciate that. I have become much more professional since joining BL and I enjoy it. A lot of people slag John Davenport off, but I’ve really never had a cross word with him. If I’ve said the wrong thing to the press or damaged a car or something, we talk it through. I’ve got complete faith in him and he has in me.”

His first Rover season in 1980 was Jeff’s worst to date in the Tricentral series, as the car was undergoing development throughout. Fourth in the class with just one win was the outcome — the win at the Brands Hatch Grand Prix round again — but Jeff had impressed BL enough to be kept on. Preparation of the cars transferred from Dave Price Racing to Tom Walkinshaw Racing and Peter Lovett replaced Rex Green-slade as Jeff’s team-mate.

Runner-up in the class (what, again!) to Lovett last year, Jeff was beginning to wonder if he could ever win. After a run of wins at the end of last year, however, the team started 1982 confidently. But then things began to go wrong, and Jeff’s close friend Vince Woodman started winning in his Esso Capri.

Jeff said: “What Tom says is true: when you are winning, a momentum builds up and carries you forward; when you are losing it takes a long time to climb back up again.”

“When we started to have problems with the tyres and the change over from Avon to Dunlop, we were changing suspension settings and messing about with the car trying to improve it and losing out. We had been floating on the crest of a wave, fired up with everything being done really well. Suddenly everything went wrong after Mallory Park.”

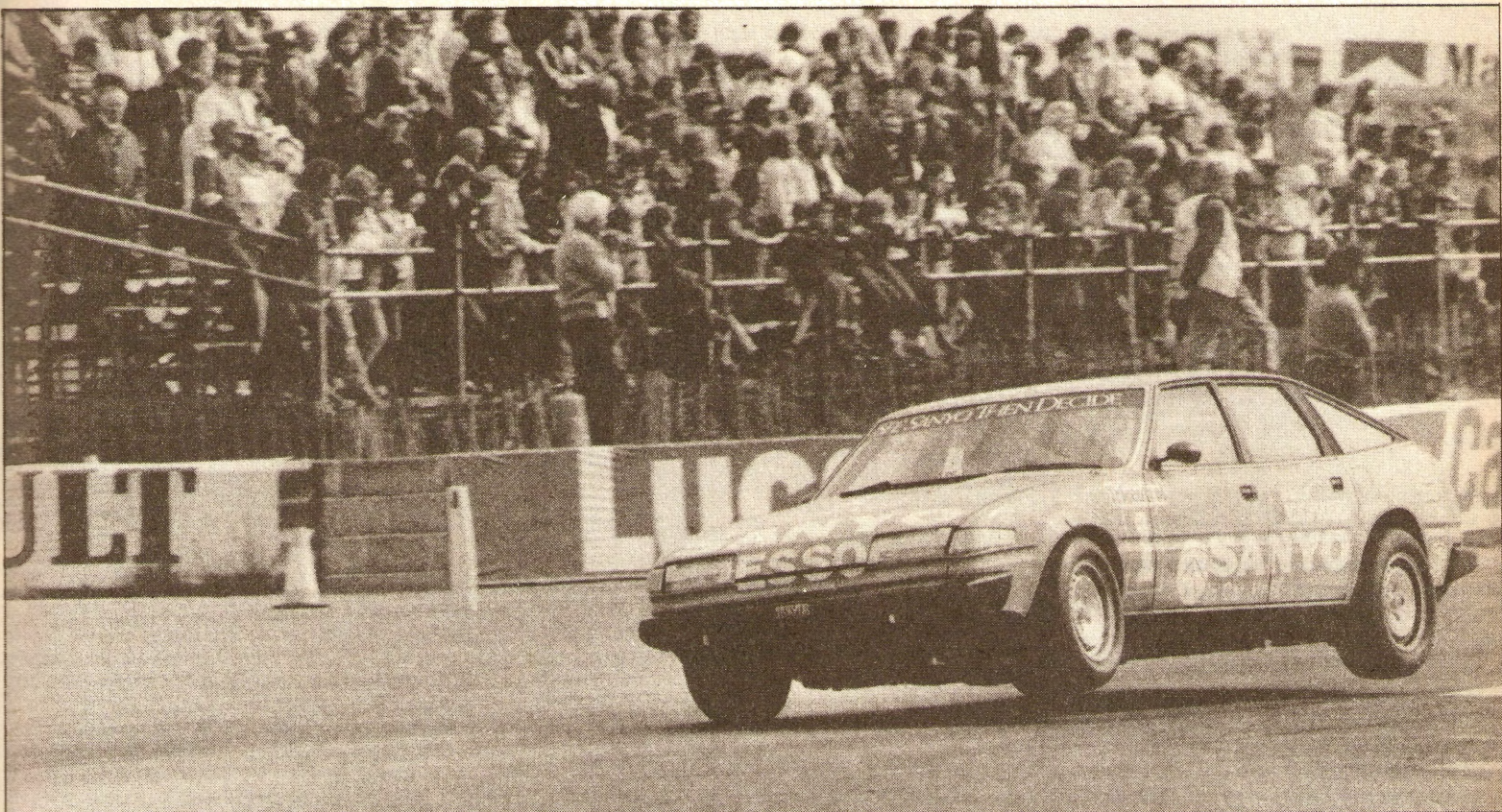
While there was a lull in the BL camp, Vince Woodman made the best of it and built up sufficient points to run with Jeff right up to the final round; a number of body bending incidents in that race at Silverstone resulted in neither winning, and Jeff winning the class title on a tie break.

Of the Rover, Jeff says: “Those cars are the original ones from 1980, my race car and my T-car — Rex’s race car was sold to Rene Metge in France — and they still look good, you know.”

“They’ve done a lot of miles, and a lot of testing. Tom’s the only Group 1 man who goes testing regularly. There’s rarely a Tuesday that you go to Silverstone and TWR aren’t there doing something. It keeps the drivers in trim, too.”

Jeff is something of a keep fit fanatic: squash two or three times a week, half a dozen or so runs a month and exercises at home: “I think that if I’m working at keeping myself fit, it gives me a bit more of an edge over

Interview



Allam learned from Gerry Marshall that the trick was to drive hard from the outset of the race — six lap records testify to this being put into practice.

Jeff Allam continued

the rest. Vince and Gordy and Yogi Muir aren't out their getting fit all the time. It's worth it, and I enjoy it."

So, where does he go from here? In the immediate future, a further season with Rover seems likely, now with the new Group A specification car, which has already started to take shape at TWR's Kidlington workshops.

Jeff is looking forward to that: "Group A will represent a new challenge, and we all need something new in Tricentrol. People keep moaning about the stricter rules on engine preparation, but they forget about the freer regs on things like bigger brakes, bigger wheels and suspension."

Loyalty to Rover comes over, too. "I'm sure that we have helped sell Rovers. You used to see Granada after Granada, and now you see Rover after Rover. BL have worked hard on the follow-up, like ads in the papers when we've had a win. I find people who know me through work say 'Saw you in the paper again, Jeff; had another win, eh?'"

It seems, however, that Jeff will go into another season of Tricentrol partly because it is difficult to get enough recognition to move on. Oulton Park is the only circuit at which the Rover hasn't won, he holds lap records at six circuits, so there is little else for Jeff to do. Would he stay in the series as long as some of the others? After all, the average age of a Tricentrol field is in the late thirties.

"I enjoy long-distance racing, and obviously want to get into the World Endurance Championship, but it's difficult to get the recognition. Saloon car racing is not in the limelight like the single-seater categories. I've become one of the top saloon drivers in the country quite quickly, but where do I go from here?"

Jeff has raced in the Spa 24 Hours since 1977, his best result coming in 1979, finishing fourth with Chris Craft in a Capri. He remembers: "That was a hard drive and I learnt a lot about not trying to be a hero and proving to everyone how good I was. That's not the way in long-distance racing."

Craft was obviously happy, for he helped Jeff get a run in the Michael Cane BMW M1 in this year's Silverstone Six Hours. Jeff: "That was the first time I'd driven anything that fast. It was easy to get used to, and I

got down to 1m 30.9s, only 1sec slower than the best Derek Bell had done in the car. I was very naive, though; a couple of weeks after, I was discussing the car with Michael, and saying what I thought was wrong with it. For instance, it was a bit light at the front, which he told me could have been cured with a bit more wing — I hadn't even thought about having things like adjustable wings."

"What happened with the BL approach was a very big breakthrough . . . and I appreciate that. I have become much more professional since joining BL and I enjoy it. A lot of people slag John Davenport off, but I've really never had a cross word with him . . ."

Then Richard Lloyd has given Jeff two outings in the Canon Porsche 924 GTR Turbo, another first. "I'd never driven a turbo before, and I kept spinning it. It was just like a saloon: I'd get to a corner, turn in, set the car up and floor it. It would pick up speed — just like the Rover — and then suddenly there was a great injection

of speed and the front was over there, the back over there and I was grappling for another gear, because it had hit 6000 rpm. It took a few times before I realised what it was, then I was alright."

These outings have started Jeff along the path to a serious Endurance racing career, along with ETC drives in the TWR Jaguar XJS. Jeff says: "That's really what I call a physical car to drive; the first time I drove it, I was exhausted at the end, due to the sheer weight of pushing it through a curve, and the cornering forces. After the race, I had to reverse it up the pit lane, released my belts, turned to look over my shoulder and accelerated. Then I got cramp in my right leg: after driving for 1½ hours without putting a scratch on it, I was going to destroy it in the pit lane. Luckily, I got my foot off in time."

A further season with TWR will doubtless give Jeff further chances to run in the Jaguar, and perhaps even take a Rover to Europe, now that the Group A regulations are standardised worldwide.

Jeff: "I'm hoping to get more drives in Europe next season and get some recognition over there. When I see single-seater drivers getting runs in events like the TT and the Shell Oils 1000, I wonder why it's not me. I've just got to get out there and show people that saloon car racing produces top quality drivers, too." ■

Jeff Allam's 2-litre Vauxhall Viva GT at Lydden Hill, built 'in-house' with help from Mike Barney.



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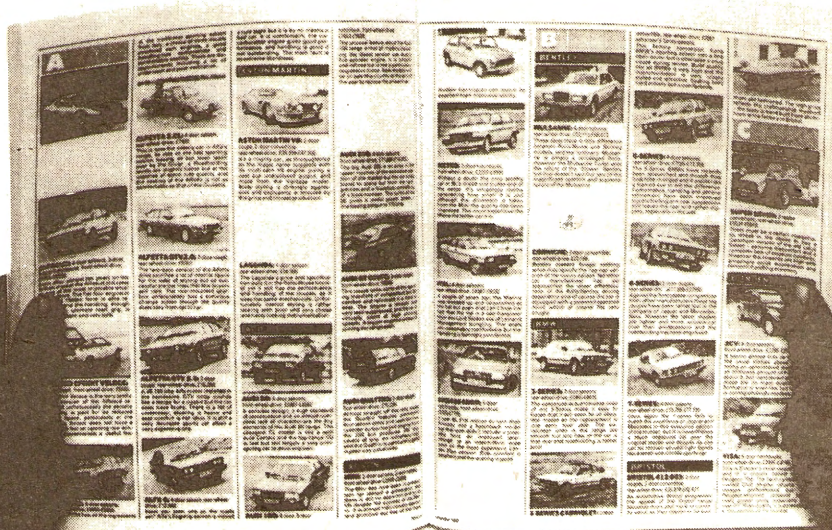
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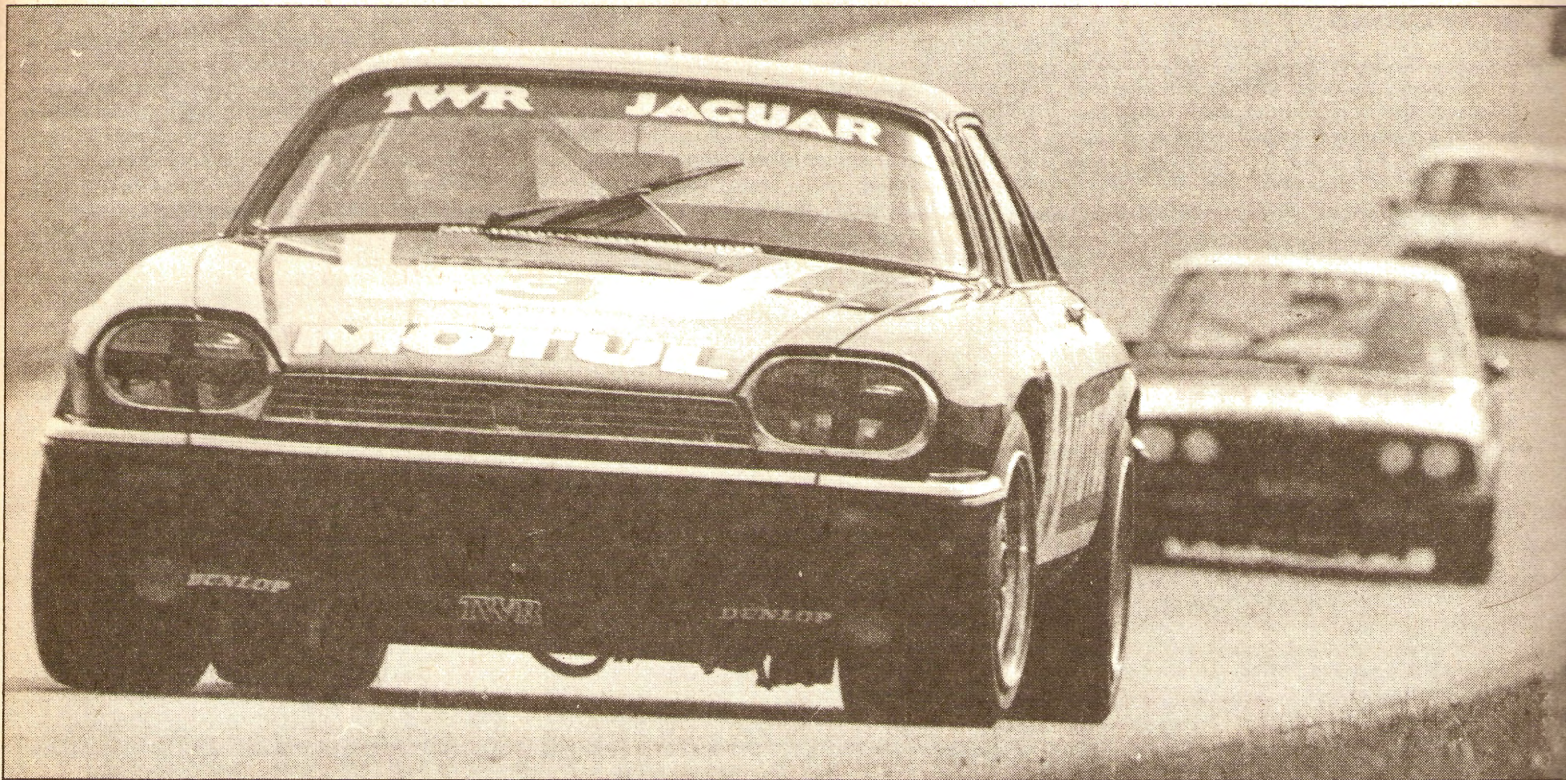
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Don't Miss It!





Although the Jaguar XJ-S had a successful year in the ETC it will not be eligible for the 1983 British championship.

What is Group A?

In 1983 Group A takes over from Group 1 for the British Saloon Car Championship. Here we try to explain the intricacies of the regulations.

It was in 1975 that the CSI introduced new rules in Appendix J to cover categories of car known as Groups 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. In those days, consultation with the people affected by those rules was minimal and, as with the Group 6 sports-prototype rules, the CSI often ignored the expert advice that was given. By the late 1970s, it was clear to FISA (as the CSI had now become) and to the car manufacturers that there were far too many groups for each of them to receive proper attention. In any case, Group 1 had mutated in all the participating countries to Group 1+, Group 1½ and what was popularly called Trans-Europe. Group 3 (standard sports cars) never got any entries to speak of, and Group 4 was full of saloon cars instead of tuned sports cars as was the original intention. As for Group 5 and 6, they had limited appeal and produced cars unrecognisable by the general public.

By 1980, there was already talk of cutting this bunch of six Groups down to just three, and for simplicity and non-confusion with the old, they were called Groups A, B and C. To start with, a clear distinction was made between racing and rallying in the technical rules but this was later scrapped when it was seen how close the two had become. Group C was, of course, for racing only and replaced both Group 5 and 6 for endurance sports car racing. Group B, as all rally fans will know, is for the 200-off specials which will top the rally results in the years to come, while many of them may also make their mark in endurance racing where they are eligible to compete alongside their big brothers in Group C. Group A, which concerns us here, is based on a 5000 production in any 12-month period and will provide cars for rallying and for major saloon car championships including the ETC.

Let us not waste time recalling the time spent mulling over the rules and FISA's disastrous rush to implement them that has left us short of properly homologated Group A cars and a strong desire by international rally organisers to prolong the life of Groups 2 and 4. The questions are: what is Group A, what does it allow you to do, and what sort of cars will it produce?

The main intentions in drawing up Group A technical regulations (which are, incidentally, identical to those for Group B) were to avoid the pitfalls of the old Group 2 — too much freedom on the engine with insufficient freedom on the brakes and running gear — and to allow freedom in those areas which cannot practicably be checked in scrutineering. Consequently, the engine is quite restricted in Group A while the brakes and moving suspension parts have greater freedom. The freedom is there to modify by removal of material any mechanical part and that is carefully defined in Article 251 (2), which comes right at the start of Appendix J. But, except where the regulations specifically permit it, you may not add anything.

Dealing specifically with the engine, you have to retain the original hardware on both the inlet manifold and the exhaust manifold and, although you can change jets or fit larger injectors, the devices controlling the amount of air that goes into the engine may not be altered or enlarged. The exhaust manifold must remain standard down to its first proper junction. The block, rods, crankshaft and flywheel can be treated or machined but the last three items may not go below the weight specified on the homologation form. Pistons are free and so is the compression ratio. The valve diameters and valve lift must remain standard as specified on the form, but the camshaft is free and so are the preparation of the rockers and tappets, provided that the valve lift is not exceeded. Bolts, nuts and springs are free within the engine.

One would expect an engine prepared like this to give some 40% to 60% more power than the standard engine and give it quite reliably. Certainly that has been the experience with this year's Group A racing in the ETC. Only one extra set of gear ratios can be homologated

over and above the standard ones but the homologation regulations do provide for the manufacturer to put them in a different casing. Only two extra final drive ratios can be homologated and they must fit the standard case without modification as must the limited slip differential which is free. Both items may be fitted with an oil pump and external oil cooler circuit, provided the oil cooler is fitted with the same restrictions as for that allowed for the engine. It is also open to the manufacturer to homologate new drive line components provided that the type of joints and the drive system remain the same. Different types of wheel fitment (such as centre-locks) can be homologated and drive line bearings changed. All this means that Group A transmissions can be built to deal with the extra power.

The manufacturer can homologate virtually any braking system, which means that all cars can run with disc brakes all round, but they must be of a type approved by the original manufacturer and specified on the form. Brake limiters and adjusters may also be homologated, but it is not permitted to add ABS type braking systems if the car is not fitted with them as standard. Still, no car should be underbraked for the task it is being set.

To accommodate the brakes and to allow the widest possible choice of wheels and tyres, Group A allows a 21mm increase over standard diameter. For the width, the limitation is on the total width of the inflated tyre/wheel assembly which varies according to the cylinder capacity of the car. In effect, this means the end of the expensive cantilever tyre, as a rim will now be able to be chosen to suit the tyre. However, the widths allowed are not generous and, although the rubber in contact with the ground is slightly more than in Group 1+, it will not quite give a Formula 1 feeling! Indeed, all the cars are going to weigh just a little more than they do at present, so they will need that extra grip to maintain present cornering speeds and spectacle.

The weights, again, are on a fixed scale according to cylinder capacity. And that reminds me of another

Preview

What is Group A?

continued

point: if you have a 2-litre car which is turbocharged, your effective capacity is 2.8-litres and it will be that capacity that is taken into account for your weight and tyre width.

The type of the suspension and the general arrangement including the chassis mounting points cannot be changed but you can alter the spring rates, fit other shock absorbers and homologated new anti-roll bars and strengthened suspension elements such as TCAs or wishbones. The material of the joints is free and it is clear that adjustment may be incorporated into the parts of the suspension, provided of course that the standard geometry may be achieved.

The outer dimensions of the car can only vary by 1% and this applies to the wheelbase as well (allowing of

course for any adjustments to the castor). The wheels and tyres must be covered by the bodywork but only vertically above the wheel centre and only in the upper part of the wheel. The body itself can be reinforced by adding material but only along the general line of the bodywork in that area. The sole exception is that you are allowed to fit a brace between turret tops or shock absorber mounting points. Taking weight off the body or changing materials is not allowed, but you are allowed to remove all extraneous accessories like radios, electric windows and sun roofs in line with a comprehensive list in the regulations. Always remember that if something is not specifically allowed, then it is forbidden.

I hope now that you are getting the picture. The Group A racers will be a little less powerful than Group 1+ since they will lose out on induction freedoms, valve lift and exhaust tuning. But they will have decent brakes

and probably better suspensions. They will be less fragile in mechanical terms and although the initial cost of preparation may well be higher, they should prove less demanding of maintenance and replacement during the season. They will be eminently suitable, as a result, to do long distance races which should mean a new lease of life for the ETC qualifiers in this country—the Donington 400 and the Silverstone Tourist Trophy—as well as ensuring a strong British presence at major European races such as the Spa 24 Hours. It will also be an excellent replacement for Group 1 in rallying where it should allow the private owner to build a strong, adequately braked car that will last him a long time.

Group 1 and its derivatives may be dead, but Group A promises to be a worthy technical successor giving considerable scope to engine tuners and chassis builder to ply their trade without running foul of those blasted regulations!



Who will win the 1983 championship?

There are going to be two big changes to the RAC British Saloon Car Championship next year. The first is a change of regulations to Group A... and the second is a change of name. Tricentrol who have backed the series for six seasons have changed their name to Trimoco. Same contents, different package.

With Group A the Trimoco series is reduced from four to three classes, which should at least make it easier for spectators to follow even if the tremendously competitive up to 1300cc class has been lost. For '83 the classes will mirror the European ones in most respects. Thus the smallest class will be for cars up to 1600cc, followed by the existing 1601-2500cc class. Unlike Europe, where there is an unlimited top class, in Britain the limit will be 3600cc.

Although there are pessimists who think that next year's series will be notably by non-existent grids and a total absence of privateers, the signs indicate the opposite. Already virtually confirmed are the successful BL Rover team, using the newly announced Rover Vitesse as their base, while there is a strong chance that the new MG Metro Turbo will also be in the hunt.

The Rover Vitesse is a fuel-injected version of the now familiar V8. Built in limited numbers—1000 or so are expected to be sold during the car's first year—the car gains its Group A homologation thanks to evolution. Although final deals have yet to be signed and sealed, expect TWR to again prepare two cars, one for Jeff Allam and the second possibly for an up-and-coming youngster.

The MG Turbo provides an interesting conundrum. With its 1.3-litre engine, the 1.4 turbo equivalency factor takes its 'capacity' to 1820cc—in other words into the 2500cc class. And that means it will have a

tough job on its hands. But think of the David and Goliath glory that could be reaped. Preparation and development will, no doubt, be in the hands of Richard Longman. Drivers? We will have to see.

There is also a case for BL to retain their existing 1300cc Metros to tackle the 1600cc class, giving newcomers experience of the series. Remember Steve Soper had his first season this year in a Metro and now seems to be hot property.

The top class will not just see Rovers, however. Frank Sytner is keen to run a BMW team and a rumoured extension of his BMW activities would certainly be in perfect harmony with that aim. But Sytner is not alone in wanting to see the BMW 635i on our tracks. While in Europe the unlimited top class might give BMW the opportunity of running the turbo-charged 745i saloons up against the TWR Jaguars, Britain's might be a chance for the 528i to do well, too. Although that won't have the power of the others, it will have a weight advantage.

That same weight advantage could see the 2.8-litre Toyota Celica Supra up at the front, too. Toyota are keen to run a car at the front and, presumably, happy with the way Win Percy has driven for them this year. Percy in a Supra? It's a strong possibility. Like BL, Toyota would do well to ensure their existing 1.6 Corolla remains in the hunt where, in the right hands, it could continue winning. Robin Brundle perhaps?

So already we have four *marques* taking a strong interest in the series with four new cars. Things are looking good already. Add certain runners in the shape of the Alfetta GTV6—Dooley's example and possibly others—the Alfasud ti and Sprint in 1.5 guise, a host of private Rovers (one run by a Tricentrol

stalwart moving up a couple of classes, perhaps?) and the series has taken shape.

There will be other privateers, too. The chance of having a car eligible for both the home and European championships will appeal to those racing mainly for fun. Their likely steeds come from Volkswagen stable with the 1.6 Scirocco as favourite... VW themselves are not too interested as the 1.6 injected motor no longer exists, having been replaced by a torquier 1.8-litre unit. Whether their Audi branch will be tempted into the fold with the 2.2-litre Coupe is debatable, as rallying seems to have taken their interest as present.

The biggest question mark hangs over Ford. Although the 2.8 Injection Capri is eligible for the series, there seems a marked reluctance from either the Spice or Woodman camps to take over the project. Ford themselves are not keen on promoting the vehicle as the Capri's life is limited. But development work on the 2.8-litre engine must be allowed to start if the Sierra XR4i is to have any hope of a competition life. Are C100 and R1700T taking up too much of their time?

The only firm new car from Ford to be seen on the tracks next season is the front drive Escort based RS1600i. Rumours suggest that Andy Rouse is already developing a car for one customer while the likes of Julian May, who ran a Fiesta this year, must be interested.

Last year it was quite an easy task to predict an overall win for the Toyota. Next year I'm not so sure, though depending on class opposition the Alfetta must be in with a chance. If the BMW challenge takes a long while to materialise though, the Rover must remain joint favourite.

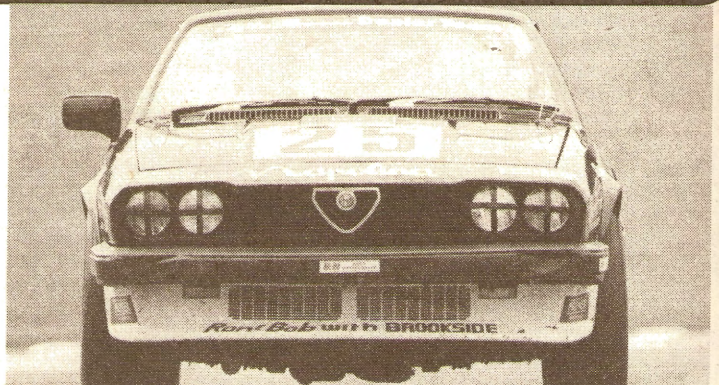


Napolina

Alfa Romeo Dealer Team



Alfa Sud TI Up To 1300cc Champion 1981
Class Winner Mallory Park 1982



Alfetta GTV6 Runner Up 2500cc Class Championship 1982,
3 Class Wins

Jon Dooley offers grateful thanks to his team for its hard work in a very demanding 1982:

Bob Dove and Ron Coleman for tireless, polished preparation. Sylvia Diable for timing, encouragement and bacon and eggs. Steve Colbourne (R&S Race Engineering) for engine builds. John Sismey (Lahoma Engineers) for design and machining. Michael Lindsay/Ruth Gilham for team management, and all the many suppliers who have dropped everything to help.

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WHAT CAR "THE TRANSFORMATION WAS STAGGERING"

Seasonal Survey



The championship winning BMW 528i of Umberto Grano and Helmut Kelleners at Spa in the rain.

The year of the cat

BOB CONSTANDUROS looks at the first season of Group A European Touring Car racing.

Umberto Grano and Helmut Kelleners won the European Touring Car Championship in a BMW prepared by Ruedi Eggenberger — that could have been the opening sentence of last year's *Seasonal Survey*, but it also applies to this year. The German/Italian partnership won the ETC yet again, aided by super-efficient Swiss preparation, but this was not a championship won against meagre opposition in the top class of European saloon racing.

In 1982, new regulations came into force, and Grano and Kelleners had a great deal more opposition. Although they won the first five races of the year on the trot, it might have been a very different story if Tom Walkinshaw had his Jaguar team running as perfectly at the beginning of the season as it was at the end. The Oxford-based team won four out of the last six races, and came second in another. Five years after the first Jaguar onslaught on the championship, the TWR effort did a great deal better. Further down the field, Alfa Romeo defeated Mazdas, Audis and BMWs to win the up to 2500cc class, and the manufacturers' title.

The change to Group A from Group 2 certainly injected new life into the European Touring Car Championship.

After years in the Group 2 doldrums, the FIA revised the regulations of the championship in 1982 so that it would be run under Group A. The regs are fairly similar to G1, apart from rather tighter induction and exhaust rules which greatly handicap Ford's products. Due to homologation requirements, and also induction rules, BMW's ideal tool was a 528i, rather than a 530 or a 635.

The championship was also restructured, with just three classes: over 2500cc, 1600 to 2500cc and up to 1600cc. This cut out the 1300cc class altogether, which meant that there was no works participation from the faithful and 1981 class-winning Skoda team.

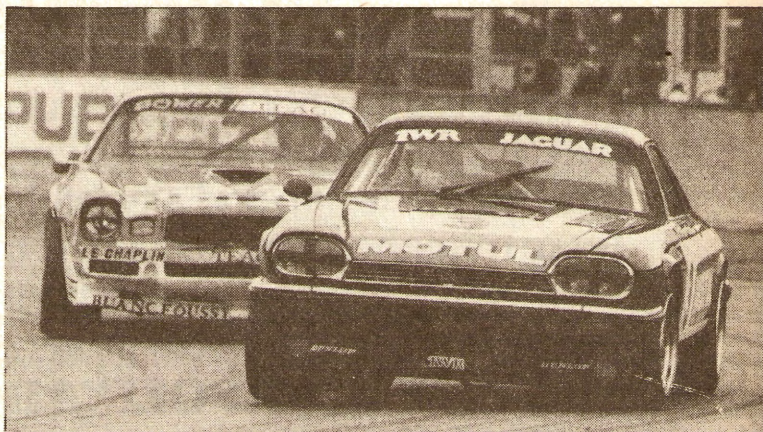
The one problem about the new regulations was that only Belgium actually ran a national championship for Group A cars, having taken the bold decision to adopt the new rules as they came into force. The British RAC had scheduled the rule change for the 1983 season, and no plans had been announced from other major saloon car racing countries such as Holland, France or Germany.

Thanks to the Belgians and BMW, this year's ETC Championship was a considerable improvement on the old G2

series. The Belgians provided a considerable number of regular runners, and BMW provided competitors with not only the right car but also the right bits with which to do the championship. Preparation expert Ruedi Eggenberger, a quiet but determined Swiss from near Bern, not only built, prepared and ran the champion's Enny-sponsored, BMW Italia-supported 528i, but had a hand in the cars of at least three other regular runners, and BMW provided competitors with not only the right car but also the right bits with which to do the championship.

Numerically, BMWs were by far the greater. It is this aspect of racing that BMW do so well. The parts are there to be used, so it isn't difficult for a team to build up its own car and run it. Michel Delcourt, for example, has been running BMWs in the series for some time, with varied results due to the age of his machinery. But with a new 528i, he frequently finished in the top six, including a good second in the rain at Brno.

Opel could provide similar back-up, but, as it was, only Herbert Harler had any success with a Monza. Ford, had they



The TWR-prepared Jaguars were the biggest challenge to the BMWs.

had the right homologated parts for the cars, might also have promoted a superb three-way battle for the championship, but this is only to be hoped-for in the future.

As it was, Tom Walkinshaw Racing's Jaguars came into their own towards the middle of the series. Although it was delightful to see this British team having such success, one can scarcely imagine privateers trying to run Jaguars in the same way that privateers run BMWs.

In the first year of this revised championship, however, thanks to BMW there were considerably more cars in the over 2500cc class than in the past, and these were the cars to fight for overall honours. As well as BMWs Jaguars and Opels, Mechel de Deyne and the occasional Dutchman came into the championship with Chevrolet Camaros, and, of course, Claude Bourgoignie's Mercedes 450SLC picked up a top ten placing in the Spa 24 hours. In 1981, there was a maximum of three BMW 635s and occasionally two Camaros.

The advent of Group A greatly increased the field in the top class. Another advantage that the new regulations had was that of opening up the field

in the up to 2500cc class. In its death throes the G2 regulations favoured BMW 320is, although both Audi and Mazda had their fair share of glory. Audi, Mazda and BMW were this year joined by a powerful adversary: Alfa Romeo. Luigi prepared a couple of cars for the championship and another one came from Autodelta and was privately run for Lella Lombardi. The tussle narrowed down to one between these three Alfas and the two Audi Coupés run by Peter Seikel and Willi Bergmeister, and Alfas won eight class wins to Audi's three.

It is a measure of the success of the new formula of regulations that a 1600cc car scarcely ever made it to finishing in the top ten. Various VW derivatives pushed the German marque to the class win and fourth overall in the championship, easily defeating second in class Talbot. This class used to be a real mainstay of the old G2, with Willi Bergmeister, Anton Stocker and Jorg Siegrist fielding immaculate Sciroccos against the 1600cc Audi 80s, but this is no longer the case.

The class has rather been pushed into the background by the struggle for the lead and the up to 2500cc class. This is no bad thing, but it wouldn't be difficult for a

Belgium Championship

Belgium's 8-race national saloon car championship for Group A and Group N cars was not a success in 1982. It was won by Alain Semoulin in a Ford Capri who was overall winner of 2 races while second in the series was Philippe Menage in a VW Golf. But few competitors did all the races and there were five different winners of the eight events, including Tom Walkinshaw (Jaguar XJS) Menage, and Georges Cremer (Alfa Romeo Alfetta) who only did one race.

In the past, the Belgium series has been tremendously successful with the likes of the Martin Brothers in their Gordon Spice racing Capris, Eddy Joosen's Juma BMWs, Luigi Cimarosti's Camaros, Serge Tower's Capris and sponsorship from Bastos, Marlborough, Gitanes and Belga, as well as numerous other Belgian concerns. But the championship got too big for itself. The budgets were large and the sponsors then diverted their money into rallying, endurance racing or behind individual drivers such as Thierry Boutsen, Thierry Tassin or Didier Theys. The change from Group 1 to Group A at the beginning of the year was costly: suspension from Eggenberger for a BMW costs £5000 for instance. It gives excellent but

unspectacular road holding. Equipment costs were one expense but so too were the two races held outside Belgium (one at Donington, the other in Luxembourg) and the third was the Spa 24 hour event, always an expensive undertaking. Only a couple of teams did all the races, but potential winners Hervé Regout and Alain Peltier, in the Waterloo Motors BMWs, had a great deal of mechanical trouble. Elsewhere, former mainstays of the national championship such as Jooson, Pierre Dieudonne, Jean Xhenceval and the Martin brothers preferred to do European championships to the detriment of the national series.

As with most country's economies, Belgium's touring car series is going through a recession. It needs, feels Belgium journalist Christian Lahaye, an organisation similar to France's NOSCART to liaise between sponsors, organisers and drivers. Otherwise it will be sometime before the series recovers. The countries new group N series was also poorly supported with only around 6 regular entrants. This was won by Alain Peltier's Alfetta. But in general after a period of success Belgium's saloon car championship can only get better.

manufacturer to clean up the 1600cc class with some regular participation.

This year's championship comprised 11 rounds against eight last year. It was significant that the new venues were all those that had held rounds in the past: the Nürburgring (back to the 6 hours format), Mugello and Spa. Even the circuits showed renewed confidence. For the past couple of years, regular competitors have numbered around 15, and it was no different with the new championship.

In some cases, however, entries were down, but this was only to be expected with new regulations that hadn't been totally adopted across Europe. However, there were 96 starters at the Nürburgring(!), 53 at Spa and 51 at Zolder. Only early season races at Monza, Vallelunga, Donington, Enna and Osterreichring had fewer than 30 starters.

The increased entry in the top class made for better racing. Only at Spa and Silverstone was the leader a lap ahead of

the second crew. After three and a half hours racing at the Osterreichring, the first five cars were all on the same lap, covered by around 2mins while at Enna, the first four were covered by 1½mins.

As previously mentioned, the championship was fought out principally by Jaguar and BMW. Grano and Kelleners won the first five races, and, although they didn't win any of the remaining six, it is to both their credit and Eggenberger's that they never finished lower than fourth. Consistency not only wins Grands Prix, but endurance races and championships as well.

Eggenberger also supplied the bits for the 528i driven by Marco Vanoli/Enzo Calderari. This pair has never won an ETC race, but for the first time they were running in the top class (having previously run BMW 320is). They scored three second places, and finished in the top six on another three occasions. On all the other occasions, apart from Spa, they finished in the top ten.

Like the previous two teams, Bretislav Enge and Zdenek Vojtech enjoyed BMW Italia backing and used Eggenberger parts. This Czechoslovakian pair made the jump from 1.3-litre Skodas to 2.8-litre BMWs with ease, but had a bad shunt at home at Brno. Enge was unable to join his team-mate for the following Austrian race, so Jo Gartner's help was enlisted, and the pair won the closest race of the season. However, the Czechs did lack the reliability of the other two BMW Italia cars.

The other BMW winner was Eddy Joosen. It was good to see him bring his Juma-prepared, Bastos-sponsored cars to ETC events, particularly with a co-driver of the calibre of Hans Heyer. Eddy scored three top six placings before winning at Spa in the 24 hours, which brought his score in the Belgian classic to five top two finishes in the past five years. Top six finishes at Silverstone and Zolder followed.

The other winners were Tom Walkinshaw and Chuck Nicholson in their Motul-sponsored Jaguar XJS. It was with some trepidation that one followed the progress of this team, following the debacle of 1977. But the programme was in Tom's capable and powerful hands, and although there were hiccups, they came out of the series with four wins, a third and a second, while a second car dutifully followed home the number one in both the final two races.

The Jaguar programme began at Monza where the single car led until half distance when it was pushed over a kerb

The Champions

Umberto Grano and Helmut Kelleners won their third European Touring Car Championship in 1982. For the German, Kelleners, it was for the third time in succession, while Grano won in 1978 and last year. Only Dieter Quester can rival their feat, but two of his title wins were class victories. But their winning performances over the last three years must be unrivalled, for between them they have won 17 of the 28 ETC races held since 1979, ten of them together.

Grano, now 42, began racing in 1956 and was soon trailing a Fiat 500 around the race tracks of Europe. He graduated to Alfa Romeos and Fords, although he has been faithful to BMW since 1976. It was in that year that he took the first of his 26 ETC Championship victories. He lives in Verona, and as well as having a leather shop in that city, he has responsibilities with both Enny, the handbag manufacturers, and BMW Italia, who are based in Verona.

Kelleners, now 43, started racing in 1965 in a BMW 1800 Ti, graduating to a Ford GT40 in 1979. In the early 1970s, he raced BMWs in the ETC series, but was better known for his Interserie races with both Marches and McLarens. In 1974, he had the occasional drive in one of the phenomenal 1000bhp Porsche 917s. The next year he did the German championship, and came second in the European GT series in 1976. Since then, he has concentrated on the ETC, first with a VW Scirocco shared with Willi Bergmeister, and later a BMW 320i in which he won his first ETC title with Sigi Muller in 1980. He has also recently driven Procars and also a Porsche at Le Mans. Kelleners runs his own BMW agency at Moers, north east of Dusseldorf.

and an oil union under the gearbox broke. Pole position, fastest lap and third place were gained at Vallelunga, but a holed radiator cut short the Donington round. The team gave Enna a miss, but started from pole position at Mugello, only to hit engine trouble. In the rain at Brno, Jaguar had its (first) finest hour of 1982. Two weeks later at the Osterreichring, Tom Walkinshaw drove a superb race on his own to overcome early difficulties and finish second. It was back to winning ways and a defeat of the BMWs on home ground at the Nürburgring. But just across the border at Spa, the Jaguars met their Waterloo in a disastrous and expensive 24 hours. Both cars were crashed, but they had performed appallingly on Dunlop's wet tyres. However, faith was restored in both England and Belgium with two



The Brancatelli/Micangeli Alfetta GTV6 at Donington.

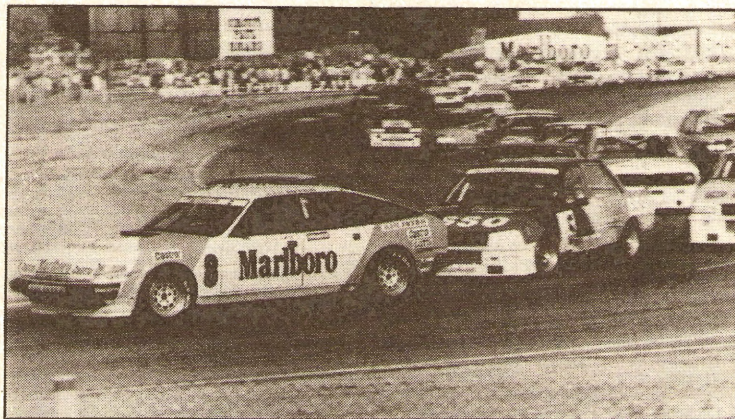
French Championship

France's oddly named Production Championship for saloon cars whittled itself down to a two man battle between René Metge (Rover 3500) and Jean-Pierre Malcher (BMW 528) (For the final result, see Pit & Paddock).

The french championship is still out on a limb. The 15 round, NOSCART promoted series is popular and well-supported, but like nothing else in Europe. No other championship is run to the same rules, and the cars are more like Group 2½ than the British concept of 'production'. However, this freedom of rules makes the cars unreliable and often scruffy.

The variety is considerable: it extends from the more usual BMW 528s and 530s, down through 323, 320 and even 318, and that's just from one manufacturer! The French are represented by the highly favoured Peugeot 505, and the less advantageous Renault Fuego. There are a few Alfa Romeo GTVs, Metge's Rover and Jean-Louis Bousquet's Volvo 242 turbo.

At mid-season, Xavier Lapeyre led the championship in his Georges Menoit-prepared BP-sponsored BMW 323i after a phenomenal record of three second places,



René Metge's Rover leads an assortment of French production saloons.

two thirds and two fourths in seven races. Second was Metge with a regular record including two wins and a second place. Third was Dany Snobeck in his self-prepared GTV with a couple of wins and a second place, but also three retirements. Fourth was Jean-Pierre Malcher in his Garage du Bac BMW 528i which had won one race, and finished

second once. Again, he had also retired three times.

The second half of the season, prior to the final, saw Lapeyre's results and reliability suffer, his best being a fourth place. Snobeck won another two races, but retired in four others. Malcher, meanwhile, won two races and took a second, while Metge won

another, and finished second once.

Metge, now 40, was using the ex-Rex Greenslade Rover 3500 which was completely rebuilt by Leyland in Abingdon during August, and although he started on Avon tyres, he ended the season on Dunlops. He found David Wood's engines ultra-reliable, but a puncture cost him the lead at Ledenon, a gearbox problem caused his first retirement at Nogaro, and there was more gearbox trouble at Rouen, Charade and Ricard, although only at the latter did he retire. Leyland gave him a lot of help, especially during the second half of the season, but the Parisian Leyland dealer got himself off to a good start earlier in the year and ran a very reliable car. Malcher, who won the championship last year, had a less reliable car than Metge's. The Rover man had retired twice before the last round; Malcher had retired four times.

The championship doesn't suffer from lack of entries, and they are varied, although it must be hard when a BMW 528i is led home by an Audi 80. It is only a shame that France doesn't fall into line with the rest of Europe and promote saloon car races via the ETC. Interest, however, is certainly increasing in France.

Seasonal Survey

The year of the cat continued

superb one-tuos in the final rounds. The Jaguars' rivals expected little else. They could only hope that something would break, accepting the British cars' superior speed, but the TWR preparation was excellent.

If TWR continue next year with the Jaguars, there will be formidable opposition in the shape of the 635s which have now been homologated. It seems a little unfortunate for the BMW men that after only one season they have to change cars, but then that's racing.

Such was the competition over 2500cc that the smaller cars sometimes didn't even get a look-in. At Enna, Mugello, Osterreichring, Nürburgring, Spa and Silverstone, up to 2500cc cars didn't finish in the top five (they won three races the previous year!). The battle was between Alfa Romeo and Audi, the former winning. Alfa's three-pronged attack was led, in terms of success, by Marco Micangeli in one of Luigi's two Alfa Romeos. He had four class wins, and was fastest of the Alfas on another occasion. Lella Lombardi had three class wins, two of them with Anna Cambiaghi until the Italian girl had a bad accident at Brno, and subsequently Lella had her other class win with Tony Palma.

Despite being on different tyres, the Audis were fairly evenly matched in terms of honours. They did, however,

Dutch Championship

The Dutch Championship, like that in Britain, is run to four classes and will be adopting Group A regulations in 1983. This may well weed out some of the older cars in the two smaller classes, but it will also take the sting out of the competitive up to 2500cc class where Berend Oberius Kapteyn's RS2000 and Hans van der Beek's Mazda RX-7 battled throughout the season.

The Dutch championship was decided in 6 races at Zandvoort during the season. In 1982, the entry was split at 1600cc and both pairs of two classes had a race to themselves. Next year, they will all be lumped together in one race.

The over 2500 cc class was won by Bert Moritz in a Camaro. He won three races and came second twice. His bad luck was usually Frank Frankenhoot's good luck; this Opel Monza driver won the other three races, although he was usually slower than Moritz.

Kapteyn and van der Beek had a tremendous battle in the 2500cc class. Both had a brace of wins going into the last race, but the sixth race turned into a damp squib as

the Mazda picked up sand in its carburettors on the warm-up lap and scarcely went any further, leaving the class win to Kapteyn.

Kees Kroesemeijer was dominant in the up to 1600cc class in his VW Scirocco, winning the class four times. His runner up was Egbert Top, who used both his own Audi 80 and a VW Golf hired from Kroesemeijer, but he was unable to get near the Scirocco driver.

Peter Fontijn only won a single race in the up to 1300cc class, but was the victor in that division. The reason for this was that Frans Derr started late in the season and, despite winning three times, could only finish second to the consistent Fontijn at the year's end. The class was dominated by Simca Rallye 3s but the car's homologation runs out at the end of next year.

Holland is only a small country, of course, but its saloon car scene is healthy although it is threatened by a legion of one-make championships that may be adopted next year. But the fact that Holland will be going Group A is at least encouraging for the future of the European Touring Car championship.

lose out to the Alfas, but Peter Seikel/Dieter Schorg had two class wins to the single win by Willi Bergmeister/Manfred Trint.

The rest of the opposition in this field was largely outclassed, although there

was some British interest. David Palmer/Holman Blackburn finally solved the induction problems on their Mazda RX-7, and in their eight races their best result was seventh at Monza, despite a puncture.

The ETC's future is now looking brighter than at any time in the past six years. Ford, no doubt, will be eager to do something about the fact that their cars are uncompetitive in the top class, and only one Ford made it into the top six in 11 races. Fords weren't very competitive in G2 either, but at least they figured in the top six four times last year.

It would also be nice to welcome more Opels to the championship, for the Monza was clearly competitive with the BMWs.

In general, Frenchmen continue to shun the ETC, although Messrs Bos and Duby did a number of races in the series from their base in the French Alps, and Messrs Jarier, Trintignant, Guitteny, Bleyne and Cudini all found out what the series was like and did well at Spa. With Britain's adoption of Group A in 1983, the home races should be well-supported.

The calibre of drivers in the ETC has also risen. Gianfranco Brancatelli, Lella Lombardi, Hans Heyer, Hans Stuck, Dieter Quester, Pierre Dieudonné and Tom Walkinshaw are all drivers who have made their names in other forms of racing, so it is excellent that they should, if only occasionally, revert to saloon car racing. It gives it status, and it was thoroughly welcomed.

Hopefully, this trend, as with the other encouraging signs, will in some way go towards raising the status of the ETC. Group A ETC has begun with promise. May that continue.

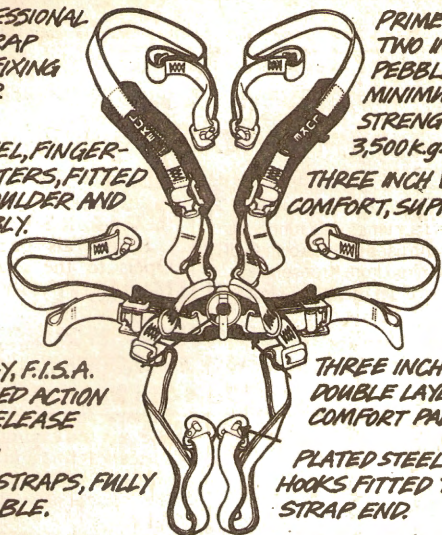
EUROPEAN TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP 1982

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
MONZA (I) Mar 21 500kms	Umberto Grano Helmut Kelleners 2.8 BMW 528i	Marco Vanoli Enzo Calderari 2.8 BMW 528i	Eddy Joosen Dirk Vermeersch Dieter Schon 2.8 BMW 528i	Willi Bergmeister Manfred Trint 2.2 Audi Coupé	Lella Lombardi Anna Cambiaghi 2.5 Alfa Romeo Alfetta GTV6	Gianfranco Brancatelli Maurizio Micangeli 2.5 Alfa Romeo Alfetta GTV6
VALLELUNGA (I) Apr 4 500kms	Umberto Grano Helmut Kelleners 2.8 BMW 528i	Eddy Joosen Hans Heyer 2.8 BMW 528i	Tom Walkinshaw Chuck Nicholson 5.3 Jaguar XJS	Jean Xhenceval Marco Micangeli 2.5 Alfa Romeo Alfetta GTV6	Peter Seikel Dieter Schorg 2.2 Audi Coupé	Gianfranco Brancatelli Maurizio Micangeli 2.5 Alfa Romeo Alfetta GTV6
DONINGTON (GB) May 2 500kms	Umberto Grano Helmut Kelleners 2.8 BMW 528i	Marco Vanoli Enzo Calderari 2.8 BMW 528i	Herbert Herler Helmut Doring 3.0 Opel Monza	Lella Lombardi Anna Cambiaghi 2.5 Alfa Romeo Alfetta GTV6	Willi Bergmeister Manfred Trint 2.2 Audi Coupé	Michel de Deyne "David" 5.7 Chevrolet Camaro
ENNA (I) May 16 500kms	Umberto Grano Helmut Kelleners 2.8 BMW 528i	Herbert Herler Helmut Doring 3.0 Opel Monza	Michel Delcourt Dany Swyssen Jean-Marie Baert 2.8 BMW 528i	Marco Vanoli Enzo Calderari 2.8 BMW 528i	Zdenek Vojtech Bretislav Enge 2.8 BMW 528i	Jean-Christian Duby Jean-Louis Bos 2.8 BMW 528i
MUGELLO (I) May 23 525kms	Umberto Grano Helmut Kelleners 2.8 BMW 528i	Michel Delcourt Enzo Calderari 2.8 BMW 528i	Michel Delcourt Dany Swyssen Jean-Marie Baert 2.8 BMW 528i	Michel de Deyne "David" 5.7 Chevrolet Camaro	Herbert Herler Helmut Doring 3.0 Opel Monza	Jean Xhenceval Marco Micangeli 2.5 Alfa Romeo Alfetta GTV6
BRNO (CZ) Jun 13 500kms	Tom Walkinshaw Chuck Nicholson 5.3 Jaguar XJS	Michel Delcourt Dany Swyssen Jean-Marie Baert 2.8 BMW 528i	Jean Xhenceval Marco Micangeli 2.5 Alfa Romeo Alfetta GTV6	Umberto Grano Helmut Kelleners 2.8 BMW 528i	Willi Bergmeister Manfred Trint 2.2 Audi Coupé	Herbert Herler Helmut Doring 3.0 Opel Monza
OSTERREICHRING Jun 27 3½ hours	Zdenek Vojtech Jo Gartner 2.8 BMW 528i	Tom Walkinshaw 5.3 Jaguar XJS	Umberto Grano Helmut Kelleners 2.8 BMW 528i	Michel Delcourt Dany Swyssen Jean-Marie Baert 2.8 BMW 528i	Marco Vanoli Enzo Calderari 2.8 BMW 528i	Gianfranco Brancatelli Maurizio Micangeli 2.5 Alfa Romeo Alfetta GTV6
NURBURGRING (D) Jul 4 6 hours	Tom Walkinshaw Chuck Nicholson 5.3 Jaguar XJS	Hans Stuck Dieter Quester 2.8 BMW 528i	Umberto Grano Helmut Kelleners 2.8 BMW 528i	Herbert Herler Helmut Doring 3.0 Opel Monza	Marco Vanoli Enzo Calderari Willy Sparetti 2.8 BMW 528i	Eddy Joosen Hans Heyer 2.8 BMW 528i
SPA (B) Jul 31-Aug 1 24 hours	Eddy Joosen Hans Heyer Armin Hahne 2.8 BMW 528i	Jean-Pierre Jarier Thierry Tassin Jean-Louis Trintignant 2.8 BMW 528i	Umberto Grano Helmut Kelleners Sigi Muller Jnr 2.8 BMW 528i	Lucien Guitteny Gerard Bleyne 2.8 BMW 528i	Alain Cudini Hervé Regout Alain Peltier 2.8 BMW 528i	Michel Delcourt Dany Swyssen Jean-Marie Baert 2.8 BMW 528i
SILVERSTONE (GB) Sep 12 500kms	Tom Walkinshaw Chuck Nicholson 5.3 Jaguar XJS	Peter Lovett Pierre Dieudonné 5.3 Jaguar XJS	Umberto Grano Helmut Kelleners 2.8 BMW 528i	Charles Sawyer-Hoare John Brindley 3.0 Ford Capri	Zdenek Vojtech Bretislav Enge 2.8 BMW 528i	Eddy Joosen Hans Heyer 2.8 BMW 528i
ZOLDER (B) Sep 26 3½ hours	Tom Walkinshaw Chuck Nicholson 5.3 Jaguar XJS	Pierre Dieudonné Jeff Allam 5.3 Jaguar XJS	Eddy Joosen Hans Heyer 2.8 BMW 528i	Umberto Grano Helmut Kelleners 2.8 BMW 528i	Marco Micangeli Giorgio Francia 2.5 Alfa Romeo Alfetta GTV6	Alain Semoulin Bernard de Dryver 3.0 Ford Capri

NB: Due to a mistake in the regulations, Chuck Nicholson did not have to race in Austria, so Tom Walkinshaw did the whole race.

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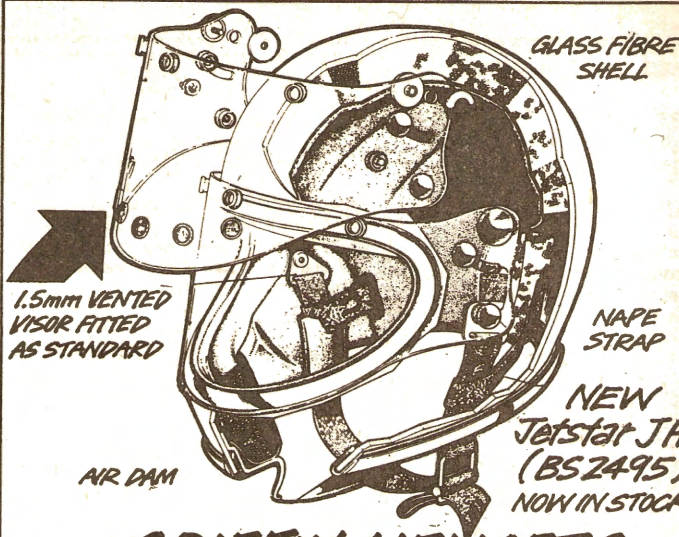
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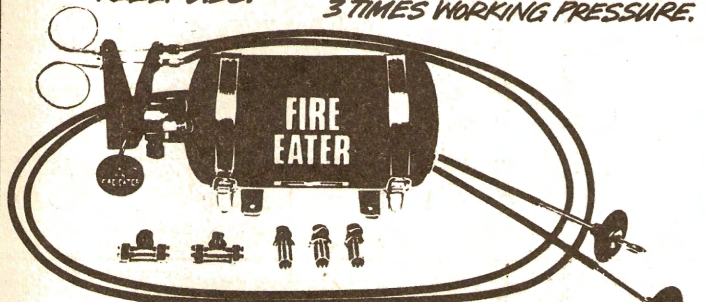
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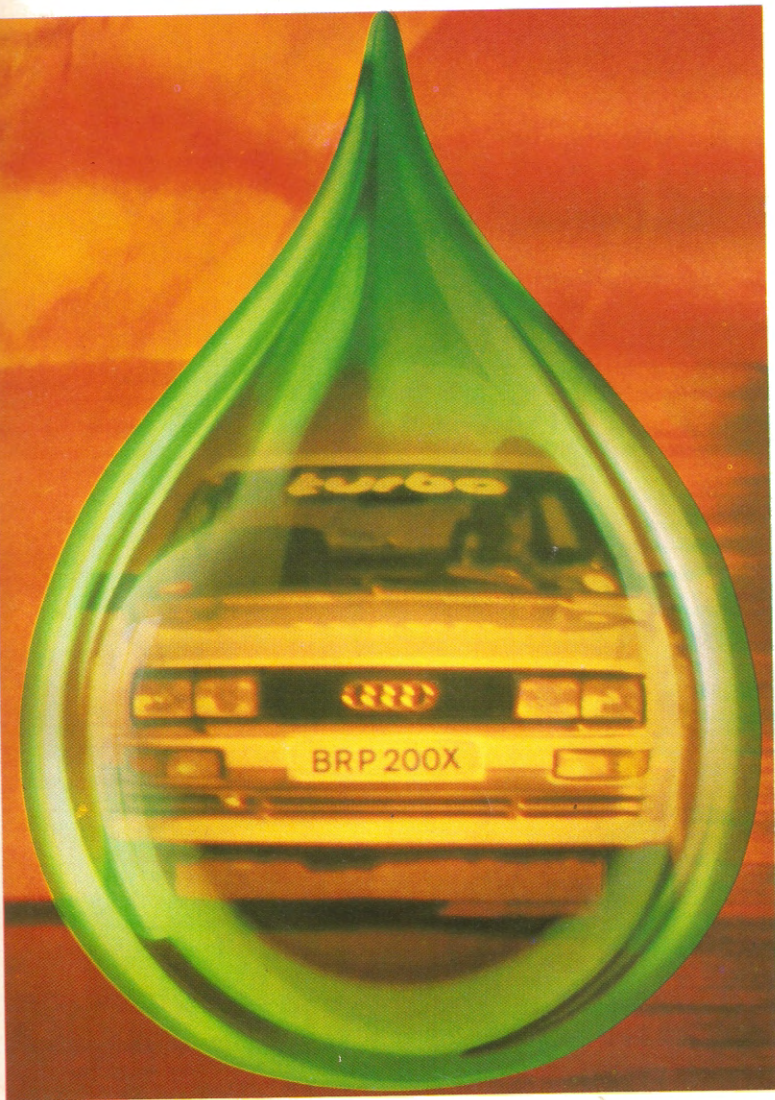
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