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AUTOSPORT

International and national rallying reviewed



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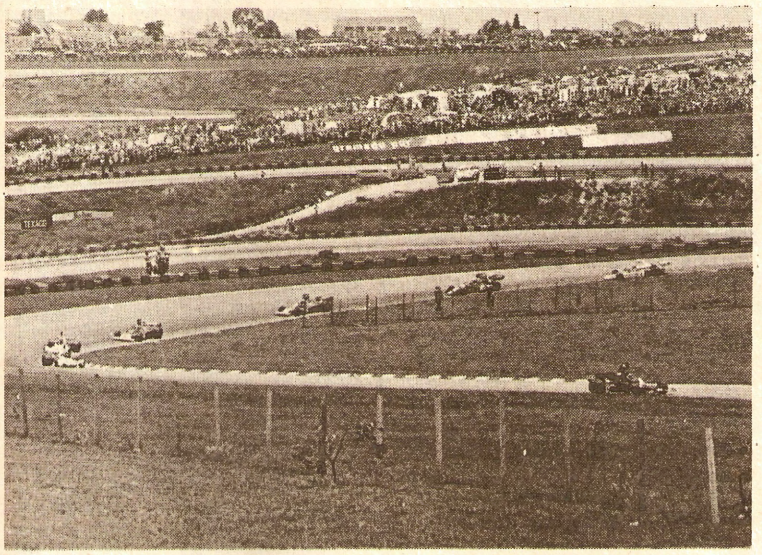
AUTOSPORT

BRITAIN'S MOTOR SPORTING WEEKLY

CONTENTS

2 Pit and Paddock
7 Private Ear
10 New Zealand Grand Prix: Smith's opener
11 Correspondence
12 Hull in Brazil
18 Profile: Eddie Cheever
22 Offshore Power Boating
25 Seasonal survey: Rallying
42 Road Test: Reliant Kitten
44 Special Stage
46 Cockpit Cameo: Pierre Dieudonne
48 Shellsport Dean: No room at the top
52 Sports Extra

The changing face of Brazil, Interlagos in 1975. On page 12, Peter Hull remembers this circuit and others five years ago.



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EDITORIAL

Racing can start at Donington Park. This was the tremendous news which Tom Wheatcroft had for the motor sport world on Tuesday morning. After ten long months of waiting Whitehall bureaucracy finally undid all its knots and presented him with a 40 page legal document. In fact actual planning permission has been refused on a technicality but the report has said there is no reason why racing should not recommence at the Park on any circuit that Wheatcroft chooses.

It was six years ago that Wheatcroft first decided that he wanted racing again at Donington Park which was the scene of some of the finest racing in Britain prior to the last war. Tom Wheatcroft, as every racing fan knows, is a tremendous enthusiast for motor sport and has dedicated himself to the battle of reopening the famous racing circuit. It has been a very tough and sometimes depressing struggle but his love of the sport has seen obstacle after obstacle overcome and finally the good news.

A recent visit to the circuit, which is complete except for the final tarmac surface, and talking to Wheatcroft himself showed that Britain is going to have a circuit to be proud of.

So far only the 'club" circuit has been laid out but once the planning technicality has been resolved (it concerns the widening of an access road which will be used for transporters only and, according to Wheatcroft, will be quickly overcome) the looped section for the Grand Prix circuit will be under way. The plans for the pits and spectators will probably make it the finest circuit in the world. Every complaint which is usually laid against the major circuit owners by disgruntled spectators has been considered and when the complex is finished (which obviously won't be overnight) there will be facilities there for almost every kind of motor sport.

The Donington Park circuit itself is one of the most beautiful we have ever seen and has been constructed in conjunction with the RAC, CSI and GPDA and will be a demanding but safe and spectacular track.

The reopening of Donington, whenever it might be, must be good for British motor sport. Requirements of drivers and safety committees in recent years have meant that a number of our circuits have not been able to hold their prestige races and the northern part of the country has been totally devoid of any top class racing since Formula One cars stopped going to Oulton Park some four years ago. Donington is ideally situated just off the M1 between Derby and Leicester. Its reopening should not alarm other circuit promoters — in fact it should spur them to better things. Let us hope that there will be no internal quarrelling between the various rival circuit owners. With Brands Hatch, Thruxton, Silverstone and Donington, we have four circuits capable of holding the best in motor sport. Now must be the time for a real rationalisation of the calendar to provide the best racing for each part of the country. We need to do this anyway, and what could be a better time?

We offer our sincere congratulations to Tom Wheatcroft for his victory. Let's hope that the only piece of red tape left to be cut is that which will officially open the circuit.

our cover picture

The Lombard RAC provides regular British competitors with their one chance throughout the year of pitting their skills against the elite of the international rally world. This picture captures some of the atmosphere of the UK's premier sporting event, and the Mk1 Escort, seen on last year's RAC, belongs to Bob Bean. Our rally review begins on page 25. *Photo: Hugh Bishop.*

Stewart scores

Australians and Brian Redman collected the lion's share of the money in second race of the Peter Stuyvesant series on the rain-soaked Manfield circuit on Sunday. Max Stewart (Lola T400) won by 11.8s from Redman's F2 Chevron-BMW B29, averaging about 75 mph for 50 laps of the 1.5-mile circuit. Third and fourth were Australians Bruce Allison (Lola T332) and Paul Bernasconi (Lola T400), one and two laps down respectively.

Fifth was Christchurch's Graham Baker (Begg FM5) and he was followed in by Australian Kevin Bartlett (Lola T400).

The race was run in heavy rain during the early stages but the track dried out towards the finish. Fastest qualifier Graeme Lawrence (Lola T332) led until a broken rocker arm delayed him after 17 laps. He resumed, although out of contention. Second fastest qualifier Ken Smith (Lola T332) was running 3rd when he stopped to replace chunking rain tyres with slicks after 30 laps.

A first lap spin dropped Redman from 2nd to 6th place and he was 19s behind Stewart when Lawrence stopped. However another spin on lap 21 dropped him back to 42s. But Stewart was slowed by a deflating rear tyre in the later stages of the race and Redman was able to gather him in spectacularly in a tail-out driving exhibition that won the hearts of the rain-sodden crowd of about 15,000.

Allison's 3rd place moves him into the lead of the Stuyvesant series from Smith, Redman and Stewart.

Very brave!

The World closed course speed record, currently held by the late Mark Donohue in the turbo Penske Porsche 917 at around 221 mph, is being challenged. It's not by the previous record holder A. J. Foyt but current TransAm champion and IMSA ace John Greenwood. He reckons his thunderous "Batmobile" Corvette can lap the Talledega circuit at around 225 mph.

VDS to US

Chris Pook, originator of the Californian Long Beach circuit, has been informed by Count van der Straten's Dutch VDS F5000 team that they *will* be going to the United States this year. Drivers once again will be Teddy Pilette and Peter Gethin and they intended to compete in the US F5000 series, probably with Lolas.

● Ladbrokes have announced their odds for this year's World Driver's championship and there are a couple of surprises. Niki Lauda, 9-4; James Hunt, 3-1; Emerson Fittipaldi, 4-1; Clay Regazzoni, 8-1; Carlos Pace, 10-1; Carlos Reutemann, 12-1; Jochen Mass, Tom Pryce and Jody Scheckter, 14-1 and 25-1 bar.

Racing can start at Donington Park

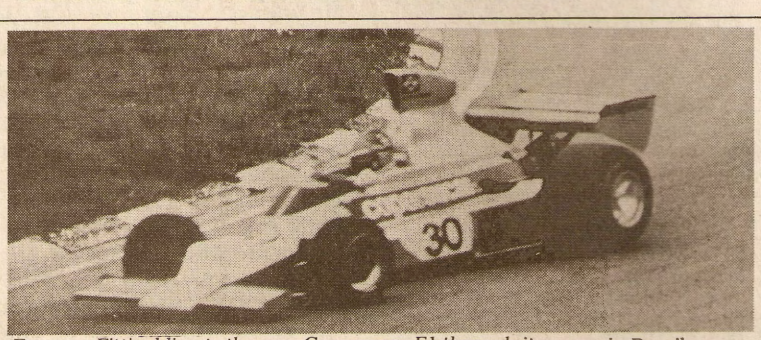
Just as we were going to press on Tuesday morning we had a phone call from Tom Wheatcroft to tell us the news we have all been waiting for . . . racing can start at Donington Park.

After ten months of waiting to hear the result of his planning permission appeal, he received "a 40 page document full of legal stuff' on Tuesday morning.

In fact actual planning permission has been withheld until an access road is widened ("we are only going to use it for transporters. It wasn't actually part of the appeal but they weren't sure who owned the land. It's just a technicality and I've spoken with the council already about a meeting to get it put right.")

Everything that went to the appeal regarding the positions of Rolls Royce and the East Midlands Airport was sat upon heavily and the report concludes by saying "we see no reason why racing shouldn't recommence at Donington Park."

Wheatcroft hopes to have the access road situation in hand next week and the plans for finishing off the circuit and a racing programme will then be put together. More details next week.



Emerson Fittipaldi puts the new Copersucar F1 through its paces in Brazil.

Emerson at Interlagos

If the present spate of rain showers at Interlagos are anything to go by then the Brazilian Grand Prix, scheduled to take place there on Sunday week, may well be a wet one.

Incessant rain showers have forced the Copersucar Fittipaldi team to only 800 miles testing with their new FD04 F1 car in the last three weeks. Naturally Emerson Fittipaldi has been doing all of the driving and his lap times have come down consistently.

Watched by crowds of thousands, Emerson's best lap to date was set last Sunday, the team only being able to test at weekends as the circuit is being worked on. Team manager Jo Ramirez told us that Emerson had in fact recorded an encouraging 2m 33.6s lap which is under Jean-Pierre Jarier's lap record set last year at 2m 34.16s. However Jarier's pole time was 2m 29.88s while Wilson Fittipaldi, in the original Copersucar, qualified at 2m 36.47s.

We are told that the two fast 5th gear corners after the pits have been tightened so an indication as exactly how much slower per lap the 4-mile circuit is difficult to ascertain at this point.

Due to start testing there later this week are Ferrari and Brabham, the latter with one of their Alfa-powered BT45s.

Kauhsen's F2 March team

Former German sports car driver Willi Kauhsen is turning his attentions to Formula 2 for this coming season. Kauhsen, of course, ran the Alfa Romeo sports car team last season, winning the World sports car championship for the Italian marque.

Kauhsen's decision to move into F2, as an entrant, is indeed a little surprising as many reckoned he would continue his association with sports cars having had dealings with Alpine-Renault.

Driving for the Kauhsen-run team will be Brazilian Ingo Hoffmann and German Klaus Ludwig. The team has ordered three brand new chassis from March and it is anticipated that they will use the Hart 420R 2-litre alloy block as Ludwig, a contracted Ford driver, cannot very well be seen with a BMW engine.

Hoffmann, who is also a member of the Copersucar Fittipaldi F1 team, is in for a very busy season while Ludwig, on the other hand, has never even raced a single-seater before.

Ludwig, who is 26 years old, hails from Roisdorf near Bonn and has been a member of the Ford Cologne works touring car team. Last season he drove an Escort Mk 2 and a Capri RS3100 in German championship rounds, narrowly being beaten for the title.

Ludwig's presence in the team indicates that unofficial support will come from Cologne who are thought to be supplying engineering expertise when required.



Vern Schuppan – joins the men

Vern goes NASCAR

Vern Schuppan makes his NASCAR debut this coming weekend at the Riverside 500, the annual season opener of the Winston-sponsored Grand National trial.

Schuppan's drive has been organised by his American F5000 entrant Dan Gurney who has won the event several times before. The car is a brand new '76 series Dodge Charger and is owned and prepared by Ed Negre of Orange County.

Schuppan thus joins Britain's David Hobbs as interlopers into this elite world of racing.



Loris Kessel – F1 with RAM

RAM and F1

Although John MacDonald was unavailable for comment earlier this week and his partner at RAM, Mick Ralph, preferred not to comment, sources from the continent suggest that a large financial agreement has virtually been reached whereby the RAM equipe will run a pair of Ford-powered Brabham BT44Bs in the 1976 European Grand Prix season, starting off at the Brands Hatch Race of Champions in March.

Driving one of the cars is Swiss F2 exponent Loris Kessel while the second chassis is, at the moment, undecided, although it could well be filled by an Italian in the Gabriele Serblin mould.

Shellsport back a new Silverstone F3 series

A lucrative new Formula 3 Championship run at five of Silverstone's major 1976 race meetings by the BRDC heralds the return of Shellsport as sponsors of the formula. This signifies a new venture for Silverstone and the BRDC, but marks the return to international Formula 3 racing for Shell, who sponsored the premier European F3 Championship four years ago.

Prize money of £3000, race incentive awards worth £500, and Shellsport bonus scheme awards make this a particularly attractive championship for the leading F3 teams and manufacturers. In addition, one of the qualifying rounds is a significant attraction at the prestigious *Daily Express* Formula 1 International Trophy on April 10/11.

Ray Cunningham, Motor Sport Manager of Shell, explained: "We welcome this opportunity to renew our links with top-level Formula 3 racing. Without question the formula is one of the most exciting and competitive in Europe."

Shellsport have arranged a novel added involvement for the championship by giving a bottle of vodka to the lap leader at each championship round, to the fastest driver in official practice, and to the chief mechanic of the three cars in each championship round.

Commenting on the announcement of the Shellsport championship, Max Mosley, whose March cars won 30 major F3 races in 1975 said, "This is indeed very good news as Formula 3 has now definitely become the leading formula for up-and-coming driver."

The prize money scale will be as follows for the International Trophy meeting: £250, £200, £150, £120, £90, £70, £45, £30, £25, £20; while the other rounds will be £150, £120, £90, £70, £45 and £25. Points scoring will cover the first ten finishers with the usual 20, 15, 12, 10 . . . 3, 2 and 1 system.

The qualifying rounds are: March 14, 15 laps club circuit; April 11, 20 laps Grand Prix circuit; June 20, 12 laps club circuit; August 30, 20 laps club circuit and October 2, 15 laps Grand Prix circuit.

Texaco back the Tour

The Tour of Britain will be bigger and better than ever this year and it will be sponsored by Texaco.

The international oil company, well known for its sporting sponsorships, have reached agreement with the BRSCC to back the Tour which is a unique event for G1 cars and pits rally stars against race drivers on a combination of race tracks and special stages.

Announcing the news last weekend, Peter Browning, director of the BRSCC who organise the event, said: "We are naturally delighted that the Tour, which is the club's premier promotion of the year, is to continue. At the meetings which have taken place so far our organising committee has been inspired by Texaco's exciting ideas for promoting the event, and already plans for a new-look, tougher Tour are well advanced."

Already Texaco have promised to improve the prize fund to a total of £4250 for the Tour, which will take place on the weekend preceding the John Player Grand Prix of Great Britain in July.

Commenting on Texaco's involvement and their backing of the Tour, Tom Cottrell, their managing director, said: "The main appeal of the event as far as we were concerned is that ordinary family cars, using everyday fuel and lubricants, will be put through their paces by some of the world's most competitive drivers."

● Bobby and Donnie Allison have been entered to drive a Chevrolet Nova stocker in the forthcoming Daytona 24 Hour race on January 31/February 1. Because the Americans have allowed NASCAR variants into the event, it has lost its status with the CSI as a world championship qualifier.



Danny Sullivan – flying high?

Sullivan's Eagle test?

Danny Sullivan, the young American driver who impressed last season by his driving of the works F3 Modus, may well be given a test drive by Dan Gurney's All American Racers team in Santa Ana, California.

"Yes, there's a good chance," said Gurney's former PR man Peter Brio, "we've been watching him for some time."

Sullivan has been on a whistle stop tour of America but Gurney may well give the Kentuckian a try out in his revised F5000 Eagle which is nearing completion. Vern Schuppan, the team's regular F5000 driver, is also expected to give the new car its first trials runs starting this week. Commenting on the possibility that Sullivan would test the updated 75 spec at Riverside, Gurney has made it clear that the young American would only get a run providing the car, in Schuppan's hands was functioning well. Gurney didn't want Sullivan to look bad in it, so we understand, if things weren't going well.



David Purley – down under

Tasman Purley

Following a decision taken by Lella Lombardi that she will not now be contesting the Australian part of the unofficial Tasman series, David Purley has taken over the vacant seat in the Richard Oaten Racing Lola T330 which has already been shipped down under for the four race series which starts at Oran Park on February 1.

Purley, who originally intended to go and race there until the Australian organisers vetoed the use of the Cosworth Ford V6 engine, will receive support from Lec Refrigeration in Australia.

Dick quits

At a very pleasant informal party at the RAC last Thursday Dick Jeffrey officially announced his retirement from the competitions department of Dunlop which he has served for so many years, latterly, of course, as their competitions manager.

Many of representatives of the teams who scored great successes using Dunlop tyres in Dick's era were present and both Colin Chapman and Ken Tyrrell paid tribute to the work that Dick had done both on and off the track.

In reply Dick paid tribute to the many people who had made his reign at Dunlop a success and in particular mentioned Gregor Grant, the founder of AUTOSPORT, with whom he'd many a good time. Generations young and old will be sorry to see him leave the company he served for over 30 years but will welcome him back in his second career as motor sport advisor to another large sponsor.

F2 Migault?

Frenchman Francois Migault, who has driven for the BRM, Embassy Hill and Frank Williams Grand Prix teams in recent years, is reported to be making a move into Formula 2 this year.

Migault may run a brand new Italian-built Osella with power coming from a Schnitzer BMW engine. His last appearance in F2 was a couple of seasons back in a Pygmee although he did have the honour of winning the French national F2 series in 1971 driving a LIRA Lotus and a March.

Thompson for Broad?

Although British Leyland and Broadspeed have yet to announce who will partner Andy Rouse in their two car attack on this season's RAC British Touring Car Championship, we are led to believe that the man landing this plum job is none other than Steve Thompson, the reigning *Penthouse* Escort champion.

Thompson, the former F5000 and single-seater ace, hadn't been regarded as a saloon exponent until last season when, in Martin Hone's Opposite Lock Escort, he proved virtually unbeatable in the club series. The success of his business interests has restricted his ambitions in racing somewhat although a saloon drive, in one of Ralph Broad's Triumph Dolomite Sprints, is ideal as far as this 27-year-old Midlander is concerned.

Ardmore's F2 Lola

Team Ardmore, a five man syndicate headed by clubman's exponent Creighton Brown, are continuing their association by backing Ray Mallock in Formula 2 this coming season.

Following an encouraging test season a couple of months ago in the prototype F2 Lola, the team have purchased one of the new T450s from the Huntingdon factory and intend to run it in all the European Championship races and, according to Creighton, "several of the MCD G8 races which don't conflict."

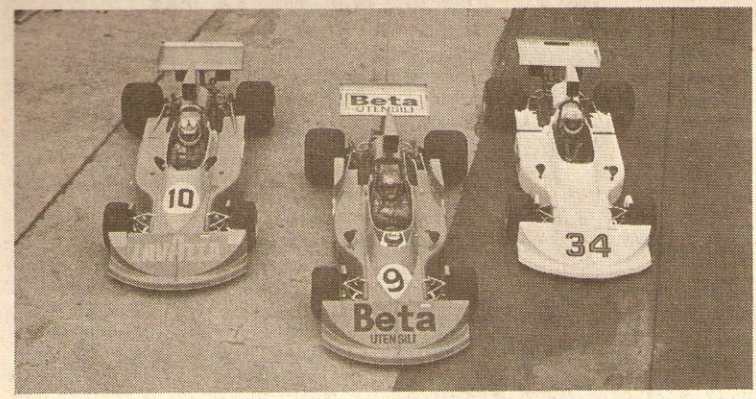
Although the team is still negotiating for a main sponsor, support is still forthcoming from Offenbaufritz, a German industrialist who once bought a road going U2 from the Mallock family and still lends annual support. The new Lola will be propelled by one of John Dunn's Swindon Ford BDX engines and the team intend "to really put our backs into F2 this year."

Incentive

An interesting prize for the top finishers in the Indylantic series this year will be a guaranteed Formula One test drives. Indylantic director Steve Prior said this week that agreement had been reached with three Grand Prix teams so far and negotiations were in hand with a further three. One manufacturer who, surprisingly, had not been approached said, "if they're quick enough or have enough sponsorship we'll give them a test drive anyway." So that presumably makes seven F1 test rides – quite an incentive.

● Pepsi-Cola, the world renowned soft drink, is to sponsor Lennie Pond in this year's Grand National NASCAR series.

● Mike Mosley, the 28-year-old USAC ace who retired towards the end of last year, is making a comeback. He will race for the Sugaripe Prune USAC team this season.



Lella Lombardi (left), Vittorio Brambilla (centre) and Hans-Joachim Stuck sit in their respective F1 Marches at Silverstone last week.

March modify their F1

Although in no way a closely guarded secret, March Engineering undertook to announce their new revised Grand Prix challenger for this coming Formula 1 season last week and, at the same time, they confirmed their intentions to run a pair of two-car Formula 1 teams from their separate bases at Bicester and at Reading where they have an engineering facility.

Quite naturally the new March type 761 is a suitably modified version of their existing machine. However, as is a designer's want, there are many detailed changes which have necessitated the building of four, and what will eventually be five, brand new cars, the fifth being kept at Reading as a development car.

Herd has taken four areas: aerodynamics, chassis, weight together with safety and incorporated modifications which give the completed car an extremely purposeful and solid look about it.

Taking the aerodynamics, a completely new nosecone, cockpit and roll hoop cover are fitted while the airbox, although based on their existing one, will naturally have to give way to a newer and much lower form of ducting when the new regulations came into force on April 1.

The monocoque section at the front of the car has been enlarged noticeably in order to improve the overall rigidity of the chassis giving the car a distinct tub like appearance around the footwell. The leading edges of the tub are encased in fibreglass which helps deflect the air from underneath the hollow and all enveloping shovel-type nosecone around the sides of the monocoque. The rear anti-roll bar has been relocated nearer the rear of the car while the suspension geometry has been modified, and the wide track retained.

Trying the narrower (by 3in front and rear) track in the middle of last season, Herd found it an advantage although the fundamental problem with the system was getting the car to handle. Herd reckoned they've sorted it out by recent testing down at Ricard and a narrow track version could reappear on the cars by the South African Grand Prix.

However at the moment the 761 has a 54in front track, a 56in rear track and a 99in wheelbase.

Lockheed calipers are fitted to the rear of the car as well as to the front while the oil radiators, which have been hung on either side of the rear wing support in the past, have been relocated as an integral part of the side and flush mounted water radiators. In fact the 751 first appeared with this configuration last year but the idea was discarded in South Africa.

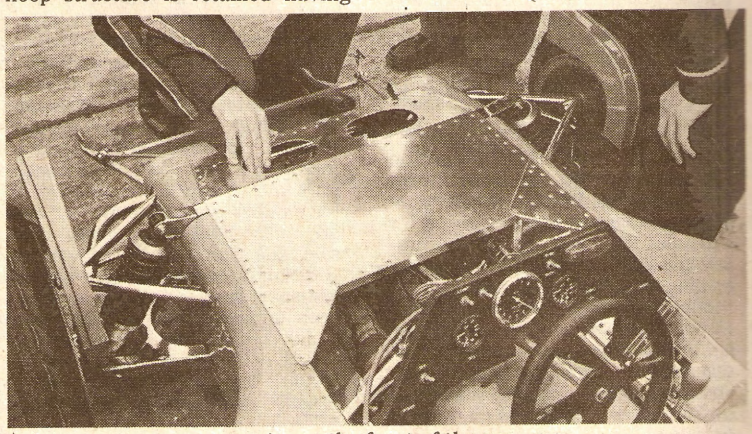
Herd explained that they have now found a much stronger radiator core which enables them to run this type of combination, the oil rads sitting flush in the airstream wrapped in neat air deflectors/extractors.

Pruning off the weight from various areas has seen a reduction in 41 lbs from the previous 751 and the use of lighter materials and the repositioning of the battery from the front to the base of the rear wing support has seen a better weight distribution as well. Herd reckons the 761 now weighs around 1262 lbs.

Moving back to the monocoque extension at the front of the car, a new 2in thick cast bulkhead is fitted ahead of the drivers feet while a 4in thick section around the driver's feet replaces the previous single skin assembly. This is probably the weakest area on most current Grand Prix cars.

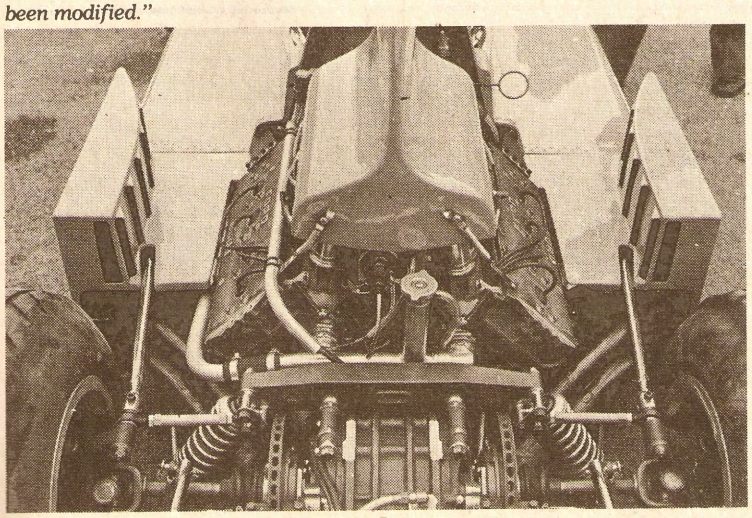
The familiar forward facing roll hoop structure is retained having proved its worth according to March records in over 500 "write-off" accidents. However March hope that a recent CSI decision to prohibit this device from May 1 onwards will be reversed.

There is no evidence of a forward roll hoop which will also become mandatory in the next couple of months. However, Herd stated that it would be no real problem to install one behind the dashboard although he did point out that his monocoque was much taller and deeper than most, especially when compared with the height of Harvey Postlethwaite's new Williams (*nee* Hesketh 308C).



The new monocoque extension at the front of the car.

"The rear anti-roll has been relocated . . . while the suspension geometry has been modified."



The USAC trail for Carl Haas?

An article in the *New York Times* recently reported that Carl Haas, the US Lola importer and co-entrant of Brian Redman's all conquering F5000 car, together with Jim Hall, are planning on running the USAC trail this season.

Both Hall and Redman have expressed interest in such a project to our American correspondent. Haas inferred in the article that sponsorship was close and he had been talking to Lola, although he wasn't sure what chassis they'd use. Haas did confirm that he'd be running American Super Vee champion Eddie Miller in a Formula Atlantic Lola this coming year.

Briefly . . .

● The new Page & Moy brochure is out this week and contains details of 35 different tour itineraries to 14 major race meetings. As always they represent excellent value for money and prices start as low as £25 for a weekend visit to Le Mans and reach £1,320 for an 11 day visit to the Brazilian GP returning by Air France Concorde. As usual there are plenty of trips to Monaco to suit all pockets.

For a copy of the brochure contact Page & Moy Ltd, 136-138 London Road, Leicester LE2 1EN (tel: Leicester 552521).

● Lamberto Leoni, last year's Formula Italia champion who moved into F2 this season with an Everest-backed March 752, has visited several British manufacturers recently, including Chevron and March, inquiring after a F5000 chassis for this season. Leoni, accompanied by his Italian sponsor, wants to race the car in Britain.

● Super Vee ace Manfred Trint could possibly be seen in F2 this year driving an F2 Lola.

New M3 Modus

Modus Cars in Watton, Norfolk, have announced their 1976 range of production cars. Known as the Modus M3 will be the '76 series Formula 3, Atlantic, Super Vee, Super Renault and Libre (G8) monocoque chassis.

A small number of new Modus Formula 2 cars are being built for the team's own efforts in 1976. Cars will be available for purchase at a later date. It is anticipated by Modus that one or two 2-litre sports cars will once again be built for delivery to Germany where they will run under the name "Toj" as in 1975.

Although ready and able to design and produce a full Formula 1 team, the company does not anticipate entering this class in 1976 without a very substantial sponsorship arrangement.

Indylantic diary

Two extra firm dates have been added to the Indylantic schedule for this year. Ingliston will host a round on July 25 while Knockhill will play host the following weekend Aug 1/2. The Concours D'Elegance at the Croft meeting on Whit Monday will be held in the centre of Darlington and the cars will be allowed to travel on the public highway to the circuit by kind permission of the Co. Durham police. The final 400 yards of the journey is still under negotiation with the Yorkshire police. A further provisional date is being negotiated with Aintree for the end of the year.

● A chicane or similar artificial corner, is expected to be erected at the Osterreichring, Hellalicht Kurve. This was the high speed curve where Mark Donohue had his fatal accident last August.

Insurance rates go up

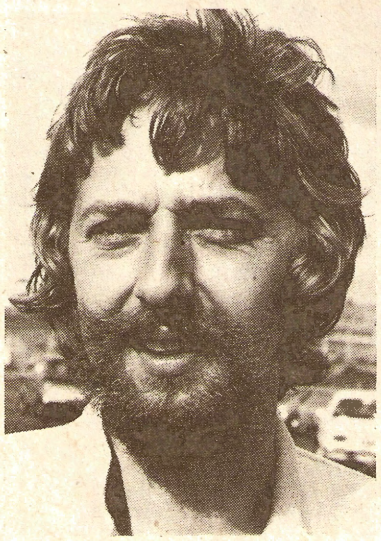
After making an enormous loss in 1975, Ian Bracey's Chandler Ibec insurance scheme for racing cars, parts and transportation has been completely revitalised and reorganised. The scheme started in 1970 and in its first three years, made a marginal, viable profit. But in 1974 the scheme made a loss of £10,000-£15,000 which absorbed all previous profits, and last year made a staggering loss of £50,000. Bracey partially blames the F1 situation, and also Atlantic where every competitor was insured through the scheme which made a formidable loss. However, in the latter, it must be pointed out that considerably fewer cars were on the grids than expected.

However, after this staggering loss, the underwriters put forward new terms to Bracey which were unacceptable to agents working for Chandler Ibec, and regretfully, Bracey was forced to find another leading underwriter to handle the scheme. In this, he found Brian Chick of A. S.-Harrison and Others who has come up with terms that will mean higher rates (the first rate rise since the scheme started) and also a higher excess, but this is negotiated in terms of closeness of racing, which is obviously only fair.

The new terms mean that each excess is calculated at 10 per cent, plus £50, and rates have gone up a maximum of 20 per cent, in the case of F1, from three per cent to five per cent FF2000, Formula Ford, Super Renault, SuperVee rates increase from 2.75 per cent to 3.25 per cent. The Atlantic terms have been substantially increased to not quite double the previous rate. The new rates, if implemented last year, would have covered the loss, so that it is hoped that this will be the only rate increase for some years.

On the general subject of insurance, Bracey pointed out that many clients had come to him in order to fulfill a sponsorship agreement, in that it meant that their car would always be on the grid no matter what the damage in the previous race. "The maxim 'I can't afford to insure' means that you can't afford not to, for I know many of our clients who have pulled out of racing. But there are many who aren't, who have," said the tongue-twisting Bracey. Amazingly, despite the fantastic loss last year, Bracey's new contract has been underwritten by 170 per cent which is more than last year.

Bracey himself said that due to the £50,000 loss, he felt it was not possible for the Dorset Racing Lola to continue to be sponsored by Lloyds, and thus other arrangements would have to be made. However, much to the sorrow of his rivals, Bracey has not decided to hang up his hat.



Hartwig Bertrams – G4 to F2?

Bertrams looks to F2 in 1976

German European GT Champion Hartwig Bertrams is looking to compete in Formula 2 this year. Bertrams, who lost his licence late last year following an incident at the Norising with Dutch driver Cee Siewerdson, intends to appeal and sources from his native Germany reckon his chances of having his licence restored fairly soon are good.

Bernie on Atlantic

Brabham boss Bernie Ecclestone said in a recent interview, according to the latest Indylantic News bulletin, that: "F2 and F3 have lost their relevance as an indicator of driver talent, as both are dependent on technical variations, particularly to engines, coupled with unrealistic costs. This has resulted in making it quite impossible for an F1 entrant to tell which combination of circumstances is allowing a driver to achieve his results, and that it is now only Formula Atlantic to which team managers can look for a reliable driver comparison due to tyre and engine regulations."

Gardner's school

Frank Gardner, who needs little introduction, and fellow Australian Bob Jane, have recently opened an elaborate race and road driving school which will operate out of the Calder Motor Raceway near Melbourne in Victoria, Australia.

Gardner will manage the school which is starting off with four locally built Elfin Formula Fords and a range of Australian Holden sedans.

● British Caledonian are reported to be sponsoring a two car team of Modus M3s in Formula Atlantic this year. The cars will be driven by Scots Norman Dickson and Andrew Jeffreys.

● Bill Gubelmann, having failed to sell his F2 March 742 to Stuart Chubb Racing, has decided to resurrect it and prepare it for the MCD G8 series. The car will be looked after by Bob Salisbury and it is thought a Ford engine, possibly a Swindon BDX, will be used in place of the car's original BMW.

●Vittorio Brambilla gave the March works F2 762 prototype a run on Silverstone's club circuit last week. Powered by a works BMW unit, times were reported to be fast and under the 51s mark.

Whither Andretti?

Mario Andretti was recently quoted in the American press as saying: "I have several options. I can stay with Team Lotus as team-mate to Ronnie Peterson on the Formula 1 circuit or go with other F1 teams. I also have an option of continuing in F5000 in this country for Vel's PJ as well as racing in the three USAC 500 milers."

Commenting on the Vel's Parnelli team's new Grand Prix which has been pencilled by John Barnard, Andretti added: "In tests at Riverside the car is 3½s per lap faster than it was a year ago this month. The car is like night and day compared to last year."

DFX fast

Al Unser has been running the new turbocharged DFX engined Vel's Parnelli USAC car at a Goodyear tyre test session recently at the Ontario Motor Speedway. Unser proved the fastest runner of those present and in 9 laps, he was able to lap around 192 mph.

Also present was Wally Dallenbach in the Sinmast Wildcat who posted a 189 mph lap, fractionally quicker than Johnny Rutherford's works McLaren.

It was also reported that a McLaren official handed Bob Fletcher of the Cobre USAC team his cheque back for the purchase of the team's ex-works 1975 McLarens.

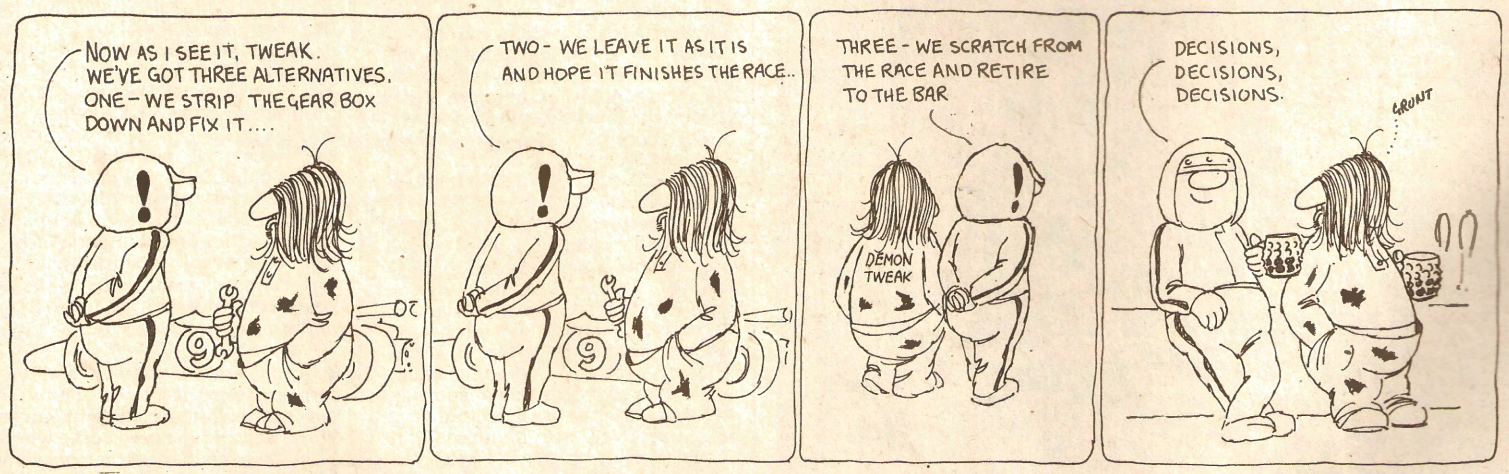
● David Purley is due to test an F1 Surtees this week.

Foyt to go back to LM?

A. J. Foyt to race at Le Mans this year? Perhaps. When Foyt picked up his Martini and Rossi Driver of the Year award in the USA recently, he expressed an interest in returning to the French circuit. "I won the Le Mans 24 Hours for Ford in 1967 when I drove with Dan Gurney and I am looking for a car for this year's race but so far Ford and Chevrolet are only interested in selling me the car and parts over the counter."

CATCHPOLE

By Barry Foley



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PRIVATE EAR



NICK BRITTAN

"Getting on"—at the RAC

Question. If you're eighteen and want a BMW car, a speedboat, accounts at fashionable West End clubs and eating houses and a chauffered Rolls to wheel you from one posh watering hole to the next what should you do?

Answer. Take a job as a messenger boy at the RAC Motor Sport Division's HQ at Belgrave Square. Does the job pay that well? Well, not exactly but there are (or were) opportunities for bright lads.

Trevor Collins (25) was one such bright lad. He started working in the hallowed halls of the sports government at the age of 18 and in seven years as a messenger boy he managed to fiddle the postal account for £28,000.

Mr Collins is now spending 18 months at Her Majesty's pleasure having answered 18 charges of orchestrating the books he asked for a further 27 offences to be taken into account.

Sad that when industry is crying out for bright inventive people lads like Collins should be locked away. When he started at Belgrave Square the monthly parcels bill at the post office was £7. By dint of creating ficticious accounts he cranked it up to an astounding £90 a day.

During the past year his weekly pay packet of £35 was being supplemented by a take home bonus of a further £250. During the week he led a normal life going home to his wife in the evenings.

But at weekends he kidded his wife that he had a moonlight job as a chauffeur and it was then that he took off and sampled the Dolce Vita of the West End.

Had not the RAC's accountant retired and been replaced by a man who queried the high postage bills Mr Collins might well have gone on to have been Managing Director and major shareholder of British Leyland or Slater Walker.

Will your licence fees go up as a result of the loss? Unlikely since it is thought that the RAC has insurance covering this sort of loss.

All that is needed now is for Mr Collins to hand-craft some sort of trophy while he's inside and present it to the BRSCC.

The BRSCC, always on the look-out for cheap publicity, and never feared to associate themselves with criminals, will in turn present it at the Annual Dinner. (To Roy James?) And in 18 months time Mr Collins will emerge to be lionised, feted and made a hero of. John Webb will offer him a course of lessons at the Brands racing school, David Mills will offer him a Formula Atlantic car to crash at Silverstone and William Hickey will record their every move.

Chairman's other seats

For the Chairman of a giant aglomerate public company APG's Peter Fatharly has an unusual series of three diary dates during the next month. Companies within the Group make products ranging from oil rig pipelines, yachting clothing and brake linings and Chairman Fatharly zips around the world keeping track of his companies on three Continents. He's the sort of man who doesn't do things by remote control. He likes to be involved.

His latest involvement is with junior Super Finn Ari Vatanen and the sponsorship of his works Ford Escort for the 1976 rally season. Hence the diary date for a morning ride through a forest stage in Surrey. "No point sponsoring a man and not knowing how he earns his living," says Fatharly.

But the high speed Chairman is unlikely to be too disturbed by the opposite locking tactics of Super Finn. He's not a complete stranger to racing cars.

When he first brought his Group into racing sponsorship two years ago with Lella Lombardi in a Brabham at the British GP he had himself a whirl around Brands in an F5000 machine.

But back to those diary dates. There's one to take an FF2000 car around Brands. "We sponsor the championship, and at our end of season party one of the constructors offered . . . so why not."

Then there's a day at Paul Ricard and a run in one of the F1 McLaren's. An offer on Teddy Mayer's part that goes back to Peter's support of the Lloyd Ruby car at last year's Indy.

And then it's off to Switzerland for a run with the British Olympic Bobsleigh Team for which the Group is providing some support this year.

An amused Fatharly observed that as a sponsor he seemed to be getting his rear end into more exotic racing machinery than a lot of would-be professional drivers.

Rallying, racing, Bosleighing – where will APG's "being involved" sponsorship end. I think we can safely draw the line somewhere before bull fighting.

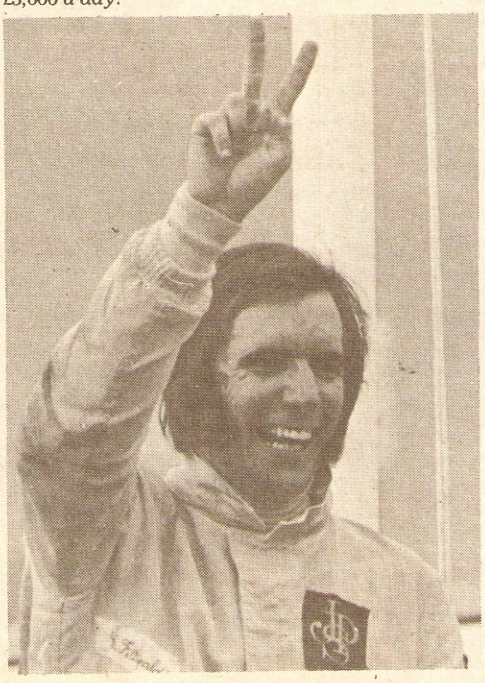
Not for the money

Just how much do the top racing drivers earn? *The Times*, from an unimpeachable source in Brazil, reports that Emerson Fittipaldi will earn £110,000 a month during 1976. No, not a misprint. That's the figure. Feed that into your handy computer and it comes to £1.32 million a year.

The monthly figure is broken down. From Copersucar he is to receive £60,000 and there is a further income from advertising and endorsements of £50,000.

Emerson is the man who left McLaren . . . "not for the money but for reasons of patriotism, so that I could run a Brazilian car". Just think how much he could have asked if he'd been making the move for pure financial reasons!

That "I'm alright, Jack" look – Who wouldn't at £3,666 a day?



Rubbing your marshals the wrong way

At one end of the motor racing spectrum you've got Emerson Fittipaldi earning £1.32 million a year, which breaks down to £3,666 a day, while at the other end you've got the circuit marshals who do their job for 50p a day.

And it's the lucky ones who get 50p a day. That's what you get if you flag wag for the BRSCC, the BRDC, or the BMRC. None of the regular devoted band of marshals who make our meetings possible regard this as "par". "It's just lunch money," says marshal Ray Darvill.

But it seems that for sometime the British Automobile Racing Club (BARC) have been stretching the goodwill of the volunteer marshals by giving them just half of the going rate paid by the other clubs.

Now, thinks Darvill, they've gone too far with their latest cheapskate penny pinching scheme. Not only do they stick at 25p in these times of inflation but they aren't going to actually give you the money during 1976. You'll get a BARC "stamp" for 25p when you sign on.

Save 'em all up like good lads and at the end of the year the BARC will add a generous 50% to the value of your golden hoard. Can you cash it in? Oh no.

The only thing you can do with it is use it to pay your annual sub. Which as Darvill says ain't much use if you're not a member and don't wish to be one.

And it seems that there are lots like Darvill. At the BARC's Mallory meetings over 50% of the marshals come from other clubs like the British Motor Racing Marshals Club.

So, is it all just a badly thought out half-baked scheme that has failed to take into account the non members who will never be able to cash their "stamps". Or is it a deliberate plot by the BARC to get half their marshalling chores done this year at no cost?

Either way I hope to see the problem resolved. There is a long list of people in motor racing who the BARC could rip-off, if they were rip-off merchants, and marshals aren't on that list.

More Lordly accolades

The City seemed hardly overjoyed at the news that Lord Hesketh was to join a consortium of businessmen whose noble, but misguided aim, was to save the already well wrecked and written-off Norton Villiers Triumph 'bike concern.

One senior partner with a leading City brokers said on hearing the news, "We've watched his performances in connection with motor racing; don't tell me we've got to put up with his *Boys Own Paper* routine in the City now."

Bike marketing men tell me that there is no way that British bikes can compete today with the Japanese models. They are overweight, underpowered, ill handling and archaic by comparison.

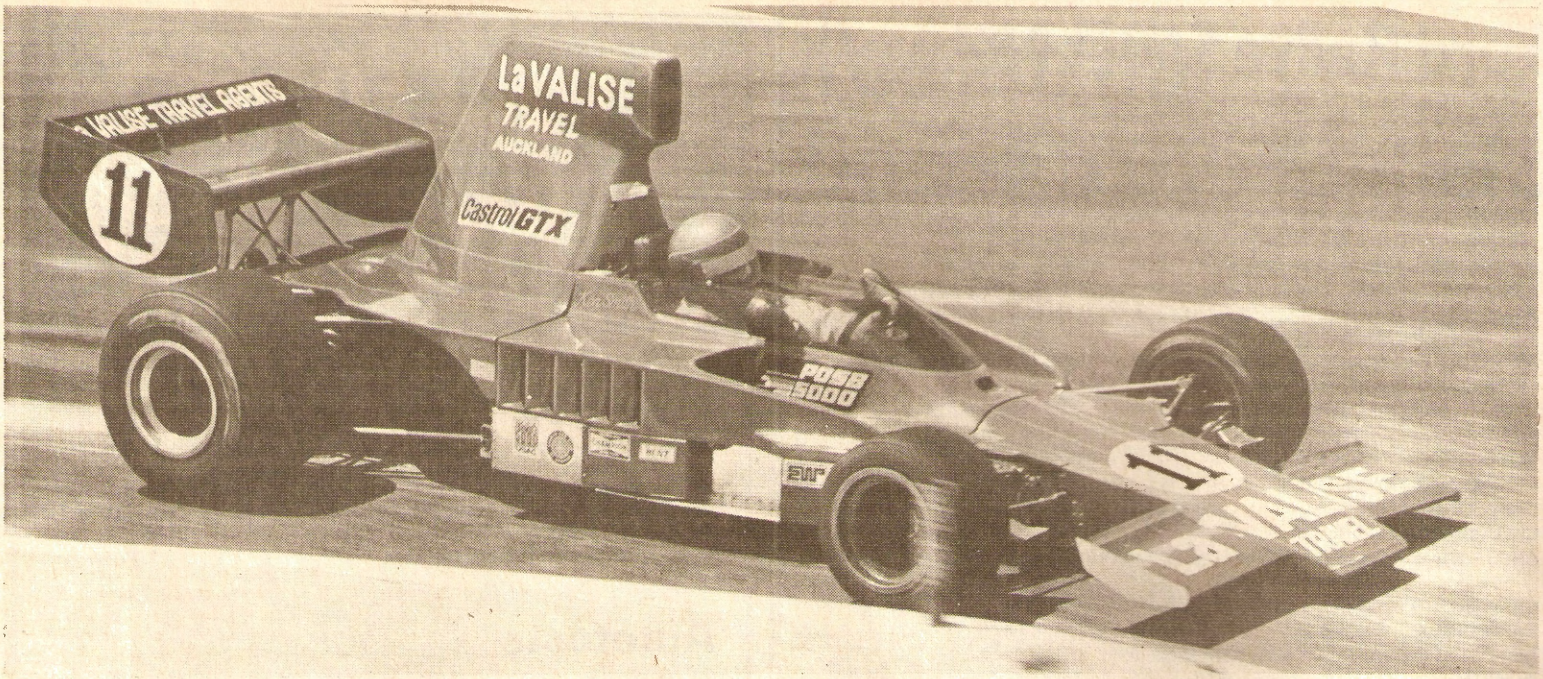
Doubtless the noble tycoon will use the same acumen and business expertise that enabled him to fold his financially non viable racing team, abort his plans to market an oil additive, wrap up his non-money-making fan club operation, liquidate his publishing interests and close his London offices in order to breathe new life into this two-wheeled white elephant.

I notice that to cap an outstanding year of achievement the *Evening Standard* have singled out Lord Hesketh in order to bestow yet another accolade upon him. He joins Gary Glitter, Peter Shore and Rudolph Nureyev in that paper's list of the eleven worst dressed men of 1975.

The Ulcer Grand Prix

Which team manager gets his 1976 ulcer first? Is it going to be Harvey Postlethwaite as the result of watching Messrs Ickx and Zorzi trundle round well off the pace and well below the optimum speed of the car?

Or will it be Teddy Mayer standing on the pit counter watching Hunt and Mass drive themselves and their cars into the ground (or the wall) trying to prove which is the faster?



Aucklander Ken Smith became the first resident driver to win the New Zealand GP after inheriting an easy win.

TASMAN — NEW ZEALAND GP

Smith's Stuyvesant opener

By PETER GREENSLADE

The one-time Tasman Cup, the moderately prestigious Australasian Formula A/5000 eight-race series which finished last year with the parting of long-time estranged bedmates, the controlling bodies of Australian and New Zealand motor sport, individual promoters in each country, and to some extent, commercial interests, revealed the first stage of its two-part hangover when a small group of Australasian hardy annuals, who race in this neck of the woods, fronted up against the sole European visitor, Brian Redman, in the New Zealand Grand Prix at Pukokohe on Saturday, January 3, opening round of the local Peter Stuyvesant series.

Taken by and large, it was a dull argument. Redman, with a BMW-powered Chevron B29, tried all he knew to introduce some controversy into the event by giving the Australian veteran Kevin Bartlett (Lola T400) lots of 'hurry-up'. Bartlett finished 3rd and Redman 4th, both a lap down on diminutive Aucklander Ken Smith, the first resident driver to win the New Zealand GP.

An all-time low crowd of 15,000 saw Redman streak to the front when he overtook about six cars in the first lap by electing to forget about the chicane on the back straight and accept a 3s penalty. But after two laps Australian Max Stewart (Lola T400) hit the front and stayed there until he was taken on lap 23 by the 1970 Tasman champion Graeme Lawrence (Lola T332). Lawrence looked strong until he and Stewart dropped out of contention on lap 28, Lawrence with three broken valve springs and Stewart with a holed sump. Smith, who had never been farther back than 3rd, then hit the front and went away to win as he liked, worried in the final stages by fuel starvation, but beating up-and-coming Queenslander Bruce Allison (Lola T332) by 19.7s.

Lawrence had the somewhat questionable satisfaction of setting a new lap record of 61.4s — an improvement of 0.2s upon Graham McRae's figure with the GM2.

With Redman and his connections, Chevron and entrant Fred Opert, guaranteed £27,000 for the four-race series, New Zealand promoters found themselves with nothing left in the piggy bank to attract drivers who might have added some sting to the Stuyvesant series. Last season's Tasman champion, Warwick Brown, was dispiritedly spectating, Graham McRae was still in the USA and John "The Mouth" Goss, whose presence was needed to add colour and competition to the series, by virtue of himself and his good showing in Australia last year, was back home and, presumably preparing to pick up a reasonable snare of what money is offering in the four-race Rothmans Australian series which starts at Oran Park in Sydney on February 1. That's a race that does not look calculated to set the world on fire as the New Zealand Stuyvesant runners are all shipping their cars across the Tasman Sea and they will arrive a day too late to be on the Oran Park starting grid. The fact of the matter is that not one of them seems to care about that.

Australian talk is that Messrs Brabham junior, Schuppan and Miss Lombardi will front up for the four-race Rothmans series at Oran Park although the main opposition will come from Goss and John McCormack, who only ran his Repco-powered Elfin MR6 in the NZGP because a wad of money had coaxed him to run his Repco-charger tin-top at the Baypark semi-international meeting at Mount Maunganui six days prior to the GP. Two time NZ GP winner, McCormack told AUTOSPORT before the race that he thought he might just as well give the Elfin a "blow out" as he was coming to New Zealand anyway. In the race a flat tyre delayed him and he eventually finished well down in 8th place behind New Zealand's Baron Robertson (Elfin MR5).

On the Pukokoe showing, Australasian international single-seater racing looks pretty seedy and unless New Zealand and Australian interests can reconcile their differences, it won't even die graciously.

ENTRY

There were 16 entrants carded for the Grand Prix, but on the day only 12 lined up for the rolling start. Of the dozen Redman was, of course, the star of the show being the glamour boy as far as the news media were concerned. The Chevron was entered under the Fred Opert banner and Opert was on hand to oversee his charge. The B29 was neatly turned out, painted white and carrying a fair amount of local advertising, including that for a massage parlour as well as Jensen Motors, the New Zealand BMW Concessionaire, which is owned by Ross Jensen, a one-time New Zealand champion driver who ran a 250F Maserati and a number of sports cars in the early days of New Zealand international racing and also spent some time in Britain driving Lister-Jaguars.

Max Stewart and young Paul Bernasconi (the 1975 Australian FF champion) were teamed up under the Sharp Calculators banner in the Lola T400s but Kevin Bartlett, similarly equipped, had no sponsorship. The same applied to John Edmonds in the elderly Elfin MR5. John McCormack, with his Ansett Airlines sponsorship, was using the well-proven Repco V8 in his MR6, the Repco version of the ill-fated Leyland P76 apparently having been scrapped.

Bruce Allison, the 23 year-old Australian Driver of the Year for 1975 turned up with a Lola T332 finished in black and under the sponsorship of the family business, Hobby and Toyland. Allison, like Stewart and Bernasconi, had raced in the New Zealand v Australia Test series (won by Australia) at Levin and the new Manfield circuit in December.

Rigged out with suspension according to the set-up used in the USA by Mario Andretti, Graeme Lawrence's Singapore Airlines and Wix sponsored T332 appeared with 15in rear wheels but as he was short on tyres, he used them only for his final qualifying trial and the race itself.

Ken Smith, who had already clinched the national Gold Star Championship, had his T332 running again with sponsorship from La Valise Travel and, like Lawrence, had his father on hand to oversee the operation.

Jim Murdoch, who has shifted his headquarters from Southland to Auckland, was entered by Begg and Allen Ltd and constructor George Begg, who has forsaken his headquarters at Drummond, some 40 miles from Invarcargill, for Christchurch to control his widespread engineering interests, was also at Pukokohe to keep an eye on his brainchild, the lightweight 018.

Robbie Booth, a personable young man who has successfully overcome the handicap of driving with an artificial leg, turned up with yet another New Zealand based car, the Matich-Michigan, which has its cockpit offset to the right in the chassis and which started life a number of years ago as the Katipo, which is New Zealand's one and only poisonous spider.

PRACTICE

There was only one day allotted for official practice, Friday, but most of the GP hopefuls were testing at the circuit on the Thursday when Redman set some competitive times in the Chevron. He managed to put in a lap at 63.6s which was 2s outside McRae's record. In his efforts to match the V8s he clipped a marker in the Dunlop chicane and the fibreglass nose detached itself and clouted him on the head, but without dramatic results.

Most were contented with running in new engines, sorting out handling and trying tyres, so only Stewart was faster than Redman, recording a lap in 62.9s, allegedly aided by a new wing which is said to decrease drag on the straights while providing the same downthrust in the corners.

McCormack was using the lusty flat crank Repco V8 and had the Ansett MR6 set up with the radiators under the rear wing. Smith occupied his time running in a new engine and Lawrence did likewise, but encountered oil pressure problems.

There were two one-hour sessions on Friday. In the first Redman recorded 63.0s, third fastest for the morning session after spinning off the track and going up an earthbank at Railway, the sharp right-hander into the long back straight. The Chevron's nose was smashed and he drove back to the pits without it and, after a check, was running

once more as if nothing had happened.

Stewart indicated that he meant business by putting in his second timed lap at 62.9s and two laps later returned 62.6s. After another seven laps, during which he did not improve, Max packed it in for the rest of the morning. Smith ran out 21 laps and equalled Stewart's time on his 12th tour and used up all the track in the process, the Lola still not being completely right handling-wise. Barlett ran at 63.4s lap to head off Lawrence (63.5s) although private timers had clocked Graeme at 62.9s. McCormack and Murdoch recorded 63.1s, then came Robertson (67.2s), Bernasconi (69.8s) and Booth (71.6s). Allison did not appear for very long; he did three laps, the best being a 73.2s.

In the afternoon session Redman ran only four laps, the quickest being 64.6s, 1.6s slower than his morning's best, while Barlett's best was also 1s slower than his morning time. Stewart made two appearances, running a 62.1s in the first and improving to 61.7s in the second, and McCormack notched up a fair mileage to finally record 62.8s. Smith spent a great deal of time getting down to 61.4s, which gave him the outside of the front row for the start, for Lawrence really hit form in the afternoon, getting down to 60.9s and then sitting back to see if anyone could beat it. Allison had a fairly heavy session putting in 28 timed laps to achieve 62.8s, which put him on the inside of the third row with Redman for company, and Stewart and McCormack in front of them. Murdoch (63.1s) and Bartlett (63.4s) and Bernasconi (68.2s) row five, and at the rear were Booth (71.6s) and the remaining Australian, Edmunds (79.9s). With Lawrence and Smith sharing the front row, the prospects looked quite good for a resident driver to win the GP for the first time.

RACE

Race day dawned fine but overcast, and although the weather was such that it might have deterred people from going to beaches, they certainly did not flood into Pukekohe. The crowd was definitely smaller than it had been in many a year, and by the time the field lined up behind the pace car late in the afternoon the official estimate was 15,000. After a couple of warm-up laps, in which Stewart did not participate, most cars were topped up with fuel because it was realised that no one was going to have much left after fractionally more than 163 kilometres.

With Lawrence and Smith leading the way, the field came round to the start-finish line in perfect formation and starter Laurie Powell let them away first time. Smith beat Lawrence into Champion curve, the fast right-hand sweeper out of the pit straight, and then came Stewart, Redman and Allison. By the time they entered the back straight, Redman had dropped a couple of places, but as Smith and Lawrence led into the chicane, Redman, unconcerned about the imminent 3s penalty, elected to go straight ahead and he came out some 50 yards ahead of the rest of the bunch, much to the amazement of most onlookers who in the excitement of the start did not realise what had happened. So it was Redman who completed the first lap in the lead with Smith, Stewart, McCormack, Allison and Lawrence next, followed by Bartlett, Murdoch, Robertson, Bernasconi, Booth and Edmonds.

Stewart took Smith on the second lap and Redman on the third. Therefore with five laps gone the order was Stewart with 2s in hand over Smith, McCormack, Lawrence, Redman (whose 2-litre engine obviously could not foot it with the V8s) and Allison. Then came Bartlett, Murdoch, Robertson, Bernasconi and Edmonds on top of one another and Booth trailing along at the rear. Allison soon overhauled Redman and Bartlett detached himself from his group to close in behind the Chevron.

Led by Stewart, the race now settled down for a while with Stewart and Smith in front and Lawrence trying to get by McCormack, who appeared to be using up a lot of the road. Meanwhile, Bartlett was glued to Redman's rear wheels. In the meantime, Edmonds had become the first defector. He stopped out on the circuit and then made a long pit call. Soon afterwards Booth also paid a visit in an effort to cure an overheating problem in the Matich-Michigan.

On lap 11 Lawrence got by McCormack and proceeded to crack on the pace in an effort to gather in Smith and Stewart. It was now that he set a new 61.4s lap record and moved in on Smith, who seemed to be flagging a little as Stewart had drawn out an 11s lead over the New Zealander. On the 15th tour Lawrence took Smith and moved in to be 5s behind Stewart, who was now experiencing a slow puncture. McCormack pitted with a puncture on lap 18 and by then Stewart, Lawrence and Smith were at least 14s clear of Allison, who was comfortably ahead of Bartlett and Redman, both of them still nose to tail and well ahead of Murdoch who led the rest. McCormack had resumed behind Bernasconi who, in turn, was behind the Begg.

Lawrence hit the front on lap 23 and three laps later, he was 7s clear of the ailing Stewart with Smith and Allison next. Lawrence now lapped Murdoch, who was running 7th, but then it all happened at the end of lap 27. Lawrence came into the pits with three broken valve springs and rejoined the race briefly some 26 minutes later. Hot on Lawrence's heels, Stewart also pitted with his puncture but then retired with a holed sump in the T400 when the car fell off the jack. That left Smith in the box seat, some 20s clear of Allison and with only 30 laps gone it was obvious that Smith only had to keep going to run out the winner. This he did although in the concluding laps he slowed appreciably as his fuel level dropped and he encountered a little fuel starvation.

Now most interest centred on the Bartlett v Redman duel. On lap 39 the Englishman took the Australian, but on lap 41 Bartlett regained his 3rd place and held it to the finish. Smith lapped this pair on his 54th tour and from then on it was all over bar the shouting.

A highly partisan crowd gave Smith a standing ovation as he crossed the line, but it was also appreciative of Redman's brilliant drive and they were equally enthusiastic when he finally got out of the Chevron to join Smith, Allison and Bartlett on the victor's stand.

This certainly was not New Zealand's greatest Grand Prix, but it wasn't the dullest either.

New Zealand Grand Prix
Pukekohe — January 3
58 laps — 163.30 kms
Peter Stuyvesant series — round 1

1, Ken Smith (Lola-Chaparral Chevrolet T332), 1hr 01m 42.5s, 162.78 kph;
2, Bruce Allison (Lola-Molloy Chevrolet T332), 1hr 02m 02.2s;
3, Kevin Bartlett (Lola-Abbey Chevrolet T400), 57 laps;
4, Brian Redman (Chevron-GmbH BMW B29), 57 laps;
5, Jim Murdoch (Begg-Bartz Chevrolet 018), 56 laps;
6, Paul Bernasconi (Lola-Smith Chevrolet T400), 55 laps.
7, Baron Robertson (Elfin-Holden Repco MR5), 54 laps; 8, John McCormack (Elfin-Holden Repco MR6), 51 laps.
Fastest lap: Graeme Lawrence (Lola-Molloy Chevrolet T332) 61.4s, 165.16 kph **(record)**.

Correspondence

The editor is not bound to agree with readers' opinions

The show goes on...

I am forced to put pen to paper regarding the present grave situation of motor-racing. I am a devoted fan of this sport and have been since I could first say the words "Jim Clark", but I cannot stand by and see motor-racing degenerate into something akin to speedway.

I am continually reading comments in motor-racing magazines and papers which say something along the lines of "Whether you like it or not motor-racing is entertainment". Well, sure it's entertainment, but it is not, or should not, be *just* entertainment. It seems to me that we have lost sight of what motor-racing is all about.

One of the most important questions we must ask is "Why are there no *manufacturers* in Grand Prix racing?" (with the exception of Ferrari and Lotus).

Answer: the major car firms can get nothing out of the sport, but this only poses another question – why not? The answer is that the Grand Prix cars of nowadays have no connection with road-going cars. The spectator just cannot associate a freaky, winged projectile with great fat tyres to his own road car. Surely this is where motor-cycling has succeeded in bringing in the crowds and the major manufacturers. The spectator can identify the bikes he sees with those he can purchase.

If motor racing is to flourish the car manufacturers must be brought back in. I read with alarm that Viceroy, Universal Oil Products and Texaco are all pulling out of sponsorship. If the oil companies can get nothing from the sport then it is only a matter of time before the other sponsors go. Without the financial backing of cigarette, cosmetic firms, etc, motor-racing as we know it will collapse. To prevent this (and pull in the spectators) we must entice the manufacturers back to the sport and this can only be done by making the Grand Prix cars bear some relation to the road-going machines.

This can be done by allowing full-width bodywork for instance. Open-wheeled bodywork serves little practical function and there would be more room for deformable structures in full width design. I don't believe in artificial limits such as restricting tyre widths but the tyres must be able to cope with all conditions — let's have no more of the pathetic fiasco we saw at Silverstone and the Nurburgring. The tyres used in Grand Prix racing today are totally unpractical for road use and offer no development potential. With today's emphasis on economy why not take off all engine limits but impose a maximum fuel limit. These are obviously only a few ideas but I feel something has to be done.

Restrictions in tyre width (articially or not) can only reduce cornering speed which must lessen danger and provide more excitement for the spectators as today's trends of high-speed cornering are unspectacular and dangerous.

Surely it is time that we reverted to essentials! For example if the Grand Prix car is the epitome of the motor-car what sort of nonsense is it to stop races because of rain? In similar vein I would suggest that we have now fallen into the trap of "tuning" circuit to suit the cars rather than the cars to suit the circuit.

BLAGDON, BRISTOL — SHAUN CAMPBELL

Gravel run-offs

Having just finished reading *Autocourse* 1975-'76 (great!), it seems to me that the big problem is still circuit safety. Well, I was wondering if catch fencing could be replaced, for this seemed to be a prime cause of Mark Donohue's death. If the poles don't impale the driver, and the netting doesn't trap him in a burning car, or roll him into a ball and lift him over the barrier, then catch fencing is OK.

But how about the edge of a track having, say, a 10 foot wide strip of grass and then an area covered by beach gravel and then the barrier. I say beach gravel rather than quarried as it has no sharp edges to cause punctures should any of it get on the track. I know that gravel really would slow a car down safely before it hit the barrier. Obviously this is not possible at some circuits, and I do not know what it would cost, but I bet it would work.

WORTHING, SUSSEX — PADDY BAKER

Super Swede sale

It is scarcely believable to read of the continuing saga of Team Lotus' efforts to "swap" or "sell" Ronnie Peterson to any other Formula 1 team.

Surely he deserves more praise than this accolade of offering his services to all and sundry? No other driver could have done more to extract the maximum from the ageing 72 over the last three seasons.

Now that the combination of the new 77 and SuperSwede has proved itself to be so competitive at Ricard (quicker than McLaren, Jackie) John Player should try to acquire Tom Pryce's services to complement Ronnie Peterson but not to replace him. This combination of a quick, adaptable car and the two most exciting drivers in Formula 1, today could be the match of beating Scuderia Ferrari, Ligier-Matra *et al.*

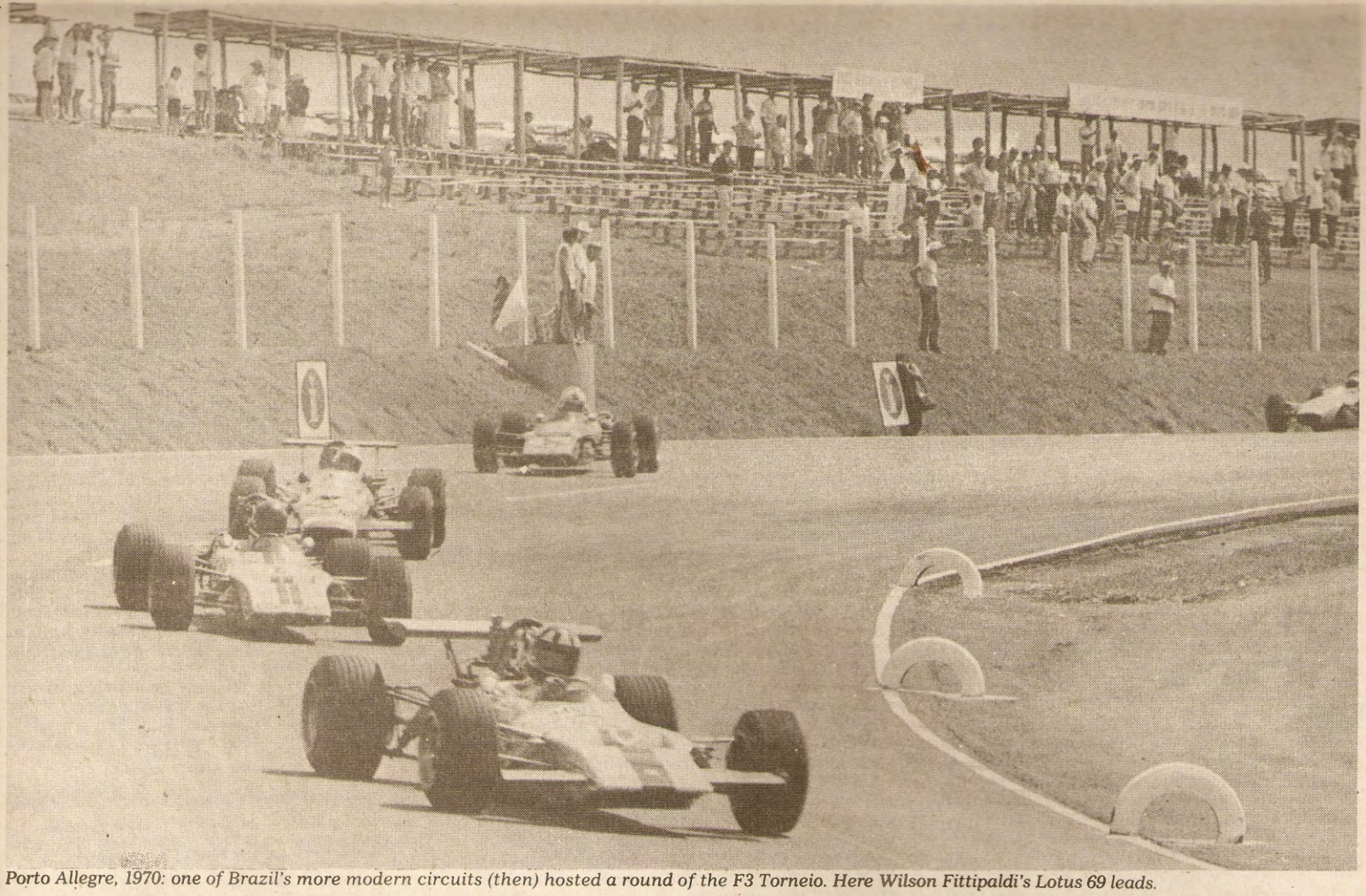
It is very fortunate for the rest of the F1 "Circus" that Ronnie was not driving for Ferrari in 1975.

COOKHAM DEAN, BERKS — GEORGE MANOLESCUE

It's a mad mad world

Long after I have forgotten that Roger Clark won the 1976 Tour of Dean, I shall still recall with a smile the performance of one Ronnie McCartney in the bog standard Mk 1 Cortina which he purchased hours before the event. He went on to provide the thousands of spectators with some incredibly nerve-tingling, exciting rally driving. What a pity the car went off song almost as soon as he sat in it but never mind, the sheer enthusiasm, devilment, call it what you may, was great stuff. Now I know the Irish are mad — in the nice way of course!

DUDLEY, WORCS — DEREK HILL



Porto Allegre, 1970: one of Brazil's more modern circuits (then) hosted a round of the F3 Torneio. Here Wilson Fittipaldi's Lotus 69 leads.

Brazil: plan No 2, year No 2

PETER HULL returns to Brazil's racing scene after five years and reflects on the changes.

They called it "chaotic," "disastrous" and a few other things besides. That seemed to have been the motoring press' general reaction to the 1970 Formula Ford tour of Brazil fashion perhaps but we did do the five scheduled races on five consecutive weekends. Some of the competitors in that trail-blazing series are still racing — Vern Schuppan, Ian Ashley, Tom Belso, Tom Walkinshaw, while Emerson Fittpaldi has even become famous. I still think it was the best five weeks of my life, so in March last year I went back for a longer look at that lovely land of sunshine, samba and the *suco de laranja*.

Quite unintentionally I seemed to spend a large part of my nine months there close to the racing scene and it's interesting to see how it's developed in five years along with the rest of Brazil. When the Formula Ford team arrived in January 1970, Brazil was barely two years into its "First National Development Plan." Now they're into the second year of the second plan and the results of the First Plan are clearly visible. A growing middle-income class with the money to buy manufactured consumer goods and nothing so desirable as the ownership of a car. Luck is often used as another word for management, but there is no doubt that by luck, or management, Emerson Fittipaldi began racing abroad at the time this increase in purchasing power started taking place. As his fame grew, so did the interest in cars and racing; ownership became all the more desirable because, for so many people, the dream was becoming attainable.

So Emerson and his success has been part of the development of the national racing scene in Brazil since the time that it had a priority to be expanded along with everything else in the country. You can see he's worked to contribute and its present booming state is due very much to the fact that so many of his countrymen have followed his example, racing in Europe and taking the experience back to Brazil.

Recent developments can be explored from several points of view. The number of new tracks, the expansion of costly single-seater racing, the number of Brazilian Grand Prix drivers and the participation of car manufacturers and the industry in general. Undoubtedly nothing in Brazil will ever equal the magnificent, long-established circuit in the suburb of Interlagos where spectators can see almost the entire five miles of track. Work to improve circuit safety is continually being carried out and over the last few weeks various protective walls have been erected at the recommendation of Fittipaldi. The paddock and pits hardly compare with Paul Ricard, for example, but then it's always easier when you start from scratch. The city of Brasilia didn't appear to have changed much in the five years since I last saw it except for the addition of the Autodrome. For what is no more than an average size town in the middle of nowhere the Brasilia Autodrome is ridiculously lavish, but certainly no one can complain about the effort to provide adequate facilities. Whether it would be practical to hold the Grand Prix in Brasilia so far from the main population centres is debatable. Anyway, just two years old, Brasilia comes under the heading of one of the country's new super-tracks. A similar facility now exists in Goiana, capital of the state of Goias a few hours away by car. For spectators, Goiana's track is even better, for most of the arena is surrounded by high, grassy slopes.

Naturally Brazil's traditional tourist capital, Rio de Janeiro, isn't to be outdone. On the old site where the FF tour ran two races in 1970 the Rio de Janeiro state government is spending its millions on yet another supertrack. Occasionally the state decides that it doesn't have enough money to complete the task so work is halted. Originally the track was scheduled to open in time for a non-championship Formula One race at the end of this month, but now completion date is reckoned to be around June this year. Don't be surprised to

Author Peter Hull competing in the early 1970 Torneio at Rio.



When the new ultra modern Brasilia circuit opened in 1974, Europeans were greeted with facilities never seen before at race tracks.



find the Brazilian Grand Prix on the calendar of Rio's attractions for summer 1978. Like its counterparts in Brasilia and Goiana, the new track at Jacarepague as the district is known, will have all the latest facilities and the complex includes a large wall surrounding the entire area. This time *no one* watches without paying! A new "double-decker" coastal highway brings this part of Rio within 30 minutes drive of Copacabana and Ipanema, so a Formula One race will undoubtedly offer an attractive alternative to a day on the beach.

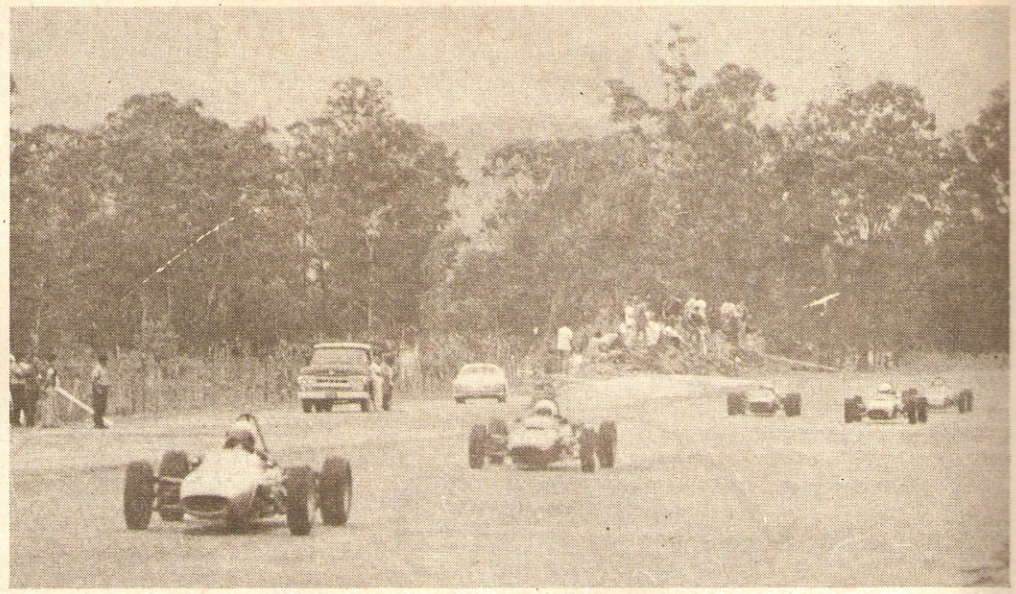
Taruma circuit in the southern city of Porte Alegre has undergone extensive safety modifications, mostly at the insistence of Volkswagen and the Super Vee drivers. Even Forteleza in the north has seen fit to improve its club-type circuit; then there's also Cascavel in the state of Parana. No one seems to know much about it, but the latest tale is that yet another circuit is due to open soon right down by the Argentinian border and up in the state of Pernambuco, enthusiasts are said to have a piece of land earmarked for a sensibly sized local project, not another costly super-track. Whew, five new circuits in only six years!

Following the FF series local organisers moved onto imported Formula Three and two years of Formula Two and eventually gained Formula One World Championship status, thus promoting wide enthusiasm for single-seater racing. Formula Ford struggled along after 1970 but not really providing big fields of competitive formula cars. But *Volkswagen do Brasil* changed all that at the start of 1974. They instituted a properly regulated class of Super Vees. They set up an efficient competition department to police the formula, to inspect the circuits and, most of all, to hand out huge sums of prize money. Two championships were run, a national title and a Sao Paulo state championship. Eleven cars competed in the first event and the entry has grown steadily for every race since. Well over 40 cars arrived for each of the national championship races in 1975 and even at Interlagos there was not room for everyone on the grid. Big budgets are a must to run in these races for winning engines are revving to over 8,000 rpm and in Brazil they don't use the later type of engine employed in Europe and the US. Locally built space-frame Kaimanns have been competitive both years, though only a few have been constructed. Carlos Avallone has a spacious factory that sporadically builds copies of the Supernova and some Van Diemans for Formula Ford – a category now pushed well to the back of the single-seater scene. But by far the most successful and widely used car in Super Vee is the locally designed and constructed Polar. Based in Rio de Janeiro, this well organised project is a partnership of two Brazilians with European experience . . . Ciardo Achcar, who raced a SMART Merlyn in Formula Ford during 1970, and Ronnie Rossi, who raced Formula Ford in 1970 and Formula Three in 1971. In two years, Polar Super Vees have won all but one of the drivers' and constructors' championships in Brazil.

Top drivers in the Formula include Jose Pedro Chateaubriand, an ex-March Formula Three man who has ex-Surtees Formula One mechanic Malcolm Hill to look after his Kaimann. He was national vice-champion in 1975. Beating him narrowly for the title was Chico Lameirao, who had several totally disorganised outings in a Royale Formula Ford in England during 1970. Chico is so improved in ability and organisation that he is unrecognisable as the same individual. He is a totally sponsored professional, has a splendid workshop and is a total credit to his sponsors. So far Brazilian Super Vee has produced Ingo Hoffmann to join the growing band of Formula One drivers from that country and Alfredo Guarana is another young front runner who hopes to find his way into Formula Three this year. With no firm plans to move abroad yet, Nelson Piquet is perhaps the man to watch in the future. He's very fast, somewhat erratic perhaps, and unlike most of the others, works on the cars and understands them. This is also the formula that's attracting the big sponsors. It receives national newspaper and magazine coverage and every national race gets complete TV coverage. Chateaubriand, for example, is joining a new team this season said to be sponsored by Bramha Breweries to the tune of £60,000! Sao Paulo state alone has 700 suppliers of automotive industry components where you can start looking!

Naturally the lower cost of saloon racing continues to attract many competitors, using everything from Ford Mavericks in Division One to barely recognisable VW "beetles" in Division Three. Ford directly supports a two-car team of V8-engined Mavericks in the highly competitive national, Division One, championship, composed mainly of 12-hour and 1,000-kilometre races. Last year's champions were Carlos Pace and Paulo Gomes, the latter now looking for a single-seater ride in Europe during 1976. Not to be out-done on the motor sport scene, General Motors have recently launched the additional GP model to their Chevette range as part of a promotion which includes sponsoring the forthcoming Brazilian GP; having got this far, I can't really see that they will let the event be called off! In about three months Fiat's new 35 million dollar plant starts production in Belo Horizonte and with that company's interest in racing it's hard to imagine that they'll stay uninvolved for long.

What really illustrates the development of Brazilian *automobilismo* and Brazil as an industrial nation, is the appearance of the Copersucar Formula One car. Among all the laughing up the sleeve it seems that few people appreciate that the enterprising Fittipaldis have produced a precision built, specialist piece of machinery in a country that was very definitely agricultural only 10 or 15 years ago. Certainly, the gearbox and engine are made in England but, particularly with the new car, the team has made virtually everything else in its own country. Few people, including those from the advanced industrial nations, have managed to do that. It's a perfect example of what Brazil and its people have become today. Understand this, and you'll understand why Emerson wants to drive the Copersucar this year. Readers may be assured that despite initial reactions from leading figures in the European Formula One world, Emerson certainly has not retired from serious Grand Prix racing. Early testing of the new Copersucar/Fittipaldi has delighted the man who hasn't finished lower than second place in the World Championship for four years. My bet is that Emerson will finish within the first six places within the first six races. Then we'll see who's laughing!



Basic Amenities at Rio in the 1970 Torneio. This circuit has now been completely modernised.

NEW CARS

Escort Mexico joins the ranks

Both the Escort RS2000 and the popular Mexico were officially back with us as from yesterday. The RS2000 we reported on last week (inadvertently jumping the gun) while the new Mk 2 shelled Mexico is pictured here in AUTOSPORT for the first time. The Mexico now uses the 1593cc sohc unit similar in specification to that fitted in the Capri 1600S, delivering 95 bhp. Brakes, suspension and transmission are all identical with those used on the RS1800 and RS2000 models. Inside, the Mexico is more spartan in its fittings than the lavish RS2000, though it is a considerable improvement over the original car. Noise level and ride quality is also said to be significantly improved. The car is immediately recognisable by its front air dam and rear bootlid mounted spoiler. A maximum speed of 106 mph is quoted with a 0-to-60 mph time of just over 10s. Price, ex-works and including VAT, is £2,443.50. The wheels shown are optional.



New-look Escort Mexico – more refined than its predecessors.

Engine: Four cylinder 87 x 65mm (1593cc). Compression ratio 9.2 to 1. 95 bhp DIN at 5750 rpm. Single belt-driven overhead camshaft. Weber twin-choke carburetter.

Transmission: Single dry plate clutch (8.5in dia), 4-speed synchromesh gearbox with central change, ratios 1.0; 1.37; 1.97; 3.65 to 1. Final drive ratio 3.54 to 1.

Chassis: Combined steel body and chassis. MacPherson strut independent front suspension with anti-roll bar. Rack and pinion steering. Rear live axle, half-elliptic leaf springs, radius arms, telescopic dampers. Servo-assisted dual-circuit disc/drum brakes. Bolt-on steel wheels 5½J (Alloy 6J optional), fitted 175/70 HR-13in tyres.

Equipment: 12-volt lighting and starting. Heating, de-misting and ventilating system. 2-speed wipers with delay-wipe. Hazard warning flashers, speedometer, rev-counter, oil pressure, water and fuel gauges.

Dimensions: Wheelbase 94.8in; front track 52in; rear track 51.6in. Overall length 13ft 0.6in. Width 5ft 2.8in. Kerb weight 1,991 lbs.

An overnight success

EDDIE CHEEVER's career outlined by CHRIS WITTY



It was overnight success. An unknown one day, certainly in the world of motor racing, and a hero the next. In fact, in the space of one week Eddie Cheever rose from near obscurity into a virtual "superstar". The specialist press ranted and raved to such an extent that they may have been hailing the arrival of the new Messiah. Starry eyed and obviously numbed by the furore he had caused, Eddie took a little time reacclimatising himself to reality. When you're 18 years old and have just beaten the recognised best in Formula 3 and repeated the success a week later, it takes a little time to readjust. Through no fault of his own, Eddie Cheever had been placed on a pedestal.

Fortunately for Cheever, all the pomp and ceremony that came his way last August was a situation he'd been in before. Prior to his move into motor racing, a successful career in karting had seen him rise to the height of becoming European Champion but it was a hard road in many respects. Apart from the sheer physical competition in the races themselves, Cheever also had political problems to overcome. You see, he was a naturalised American racing in the Italian national side. It was all good experience. The end result is that even though still in his teens, Cheever has a total dedication to motor sport to the extent of total paranoia and he's still in his teens.

Although he first drove a racing car at the age of 13 years, it wasn't until last season that he made the challenging step into active competition. Predictably Formula Ford was chosen as the proving ground but it wasn't a particularly noteworthy apprenticeship. It wasn't to last however and the transition to the tranquil (compared to FF) world of F3 saw Cheever begin to make his mark. It pleased his father especially who has been the driving force behind his son's exploits.

By the time the European F3 season had closed, Cheever had notched up a total of 4 wins in his Modus. He had proved his ability to contest the lead certainly and, with the historonics having subsided, it gave Eddie the chance to return to reality.



Although he now resides in Italy with his family, and they're enough of them to make them the Osmonds of motor racing, Cheever was born in Phoenix, Arizona, on January 10, 1957, which means that he's just turned 19 years of age. He didn't stay in Phoenix long enough to get accustomed to the race track situated nearby for his parents moved to Australia when he was 3 years old although he regards himself as American. His father was a health fanatic and currently runs a successful health spa in Rome. Consequently Eddie, too, is a health fanatic and a vegetarian. Evidence of this is found by the scores of peanut shells littered around his road car.

Eddie spent a further three years in Sydney, Australia, with his parents before his father moved the business to Rome, then Torino, then Naples and then back to Rome.

"I started racing when I was 12 years old which was in Italy" recalls Cheever. His shyness is already coming through at this early stage. He's an introvert which gives the false impression of conceit. Even starting racing at that early age had its problems because Eddie was effectively too young.

Although living in Italy, Eddie in fact attended an American school "but I was not much of a student. Maybe that is why I enjoyed it." His introduction to motor racing came via his father. "He had a thing about racing cars. He's always had Ferraris, Lamborghinis and Porsches and we always talked about racing." The seed was sown when his mother decided to buy him a kart as a Christmas present. "She regrets it now and is completely against my racing". When Eddie got a kart so did his father and the pair of them used to go out at weekends and buzz around in mock-races. Eddie had an old Birel with a 100cc BMW engine, but was usually eclipsed by his father who had a Pirilla unit. "He was always quicker than me. Always. I remember asking him if I would ever be as quick but he said he'd have to die first." Well, eventually the son got the better of his father and the sparring ended almost predictably when an accident injured Cheever senior's shoulder.

All this fooling around had taken place at the local kart track in Rome under the eye of the local track manager. "He asked me if I'd like to race with their team. They were not giving me anything. They just wanted an extra face." Eddie finished 5th which was an encouraging start.

He then bought a brand new kart and spent a fair amount of money in acquiring a mechanic and so forth. It wasn't until his fourth race that Eddie saw the chequered flag and it made the world of difference. From then onward "I just wanted to become a racing driver. It sounds funny but I really did want to become a professional racing driver." He was 13 years old at this stage, and all he wanted to do was drive and drive. He used to spend 3 to 4 hours a day just driving round and round and consequently his education suffered. It wasn't long before he progressed onwards into a higher category (class 2) and Pirilla, the leading engine builders, noticed him and started to provide him with the best engines free of charge, "which was strange as it didn't happen in the category I was in".

He won the class 2 championship that year which was followed by the first of several political uprisings in Cheever's karting career. There was a move to get him drafted into the Italian national team but, being an American, there were objections. He was now 15 years old and shouldn't really have been racing in the premier class (1) until 16.

Anyway, he got into the national side and in his first race he came 3rd but it was a race of changing fortune and unrest. "I was leading but our team manager didn't think it was right. He thought the team captain should be leading and he shoved me off trying to pass!" There was feeling against Cheever being in the team because "rich people's fathers were putting a lot of pressure on the federation and I was withheld from one race before I got back in again" recalls Eddie.

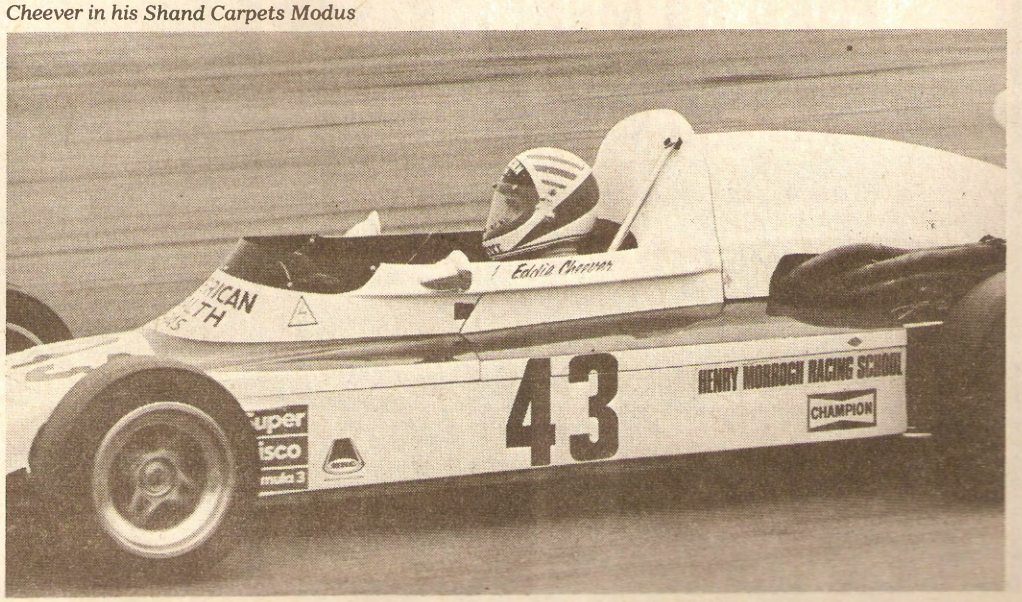
He was a young boy of 15 years of age or so finding himself in the middle of an internal upheaval. How was it affecting him and was he even aware of such turmoil? "My family were aware of it because I was 'uptight' all the time. I would not talk to anyone and I was always nervous. I was under pressure." He found it difficult to alternate between racing and studies. "I lived in my own world of motor racing and I only came into my own when I was racing. That was all I lived for at the time and my family must have gone through a lot not to reprimand me for it."

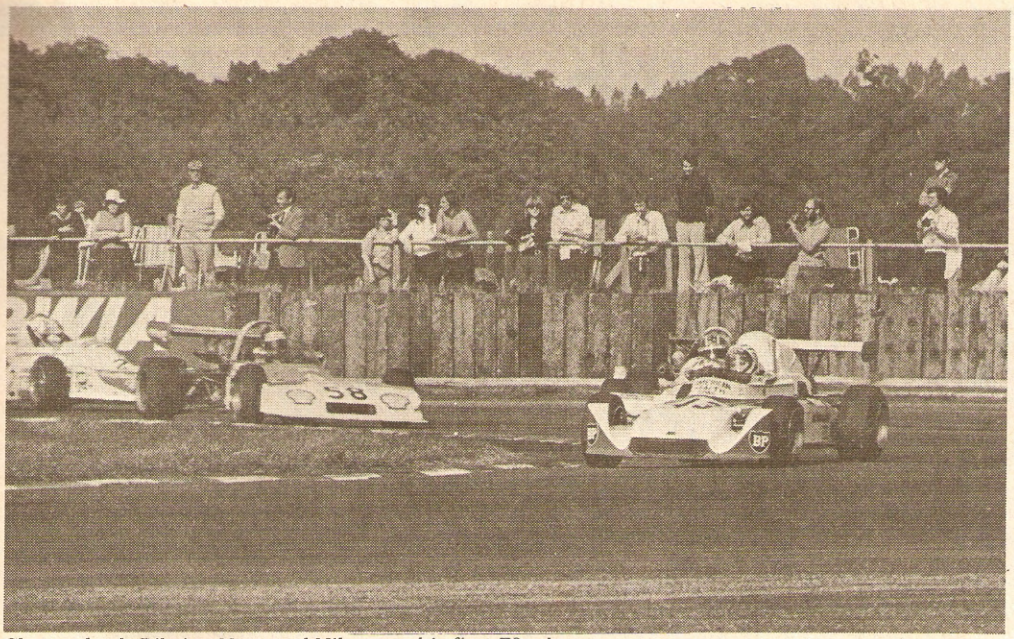


Cheever – crossed up in a kart

The cut and thrust world of karting gave him plenty of experience in aggression and close-racing. His racing took him all over Europe to Portugal, Germany, France and England and perhaps his greatest success was when he won the European Championship in 1972. How important was it for him to win that series? "Very important. That was really my weekend. There were 6 qualifying races and I won 5 of them." Recalling the event, Eddie explained that "in the second race I had a bit of trouble as someone tried to put me off which would mean that his team mate would win. You see you had to finish every race to qualify. I

Cheever in his Shand Carpets Modus





Cheever leads Ribeiro, Neve and Nilsson to his first F3 win

just managed to crawl back home." The amazing thing about the incident was the offender was a friend of Eddie's although Cheever confesses to being the worse at this underhand game. "I was very aggressive and I was reprimanded many times. I remember once in the Italian European team championships we were losing very badly. I was going slowly, around 5th or 6th I think. Anyway, the team manager told me not to let anyone pass so I just shoved them onto the grass. I had been told to do it! The international committee filed a complaint against me and I was nearly taken off the team. However, I had connections to live through it. Admittedly it was not ethical but you were allowed to do it."

The following year saw the World Championships take place and Cheever, at 17 was regarded as one of the favourites. "I should have won," but he was beaten. "That was my fault. I was driving defensively." He explained, his confidence having grown since we started talking. There were two final qualifiers and Eddie had the 3rd quickest time behind the reigning World Champion Francois Goldstein and Eddie's Italian team-mate. The mention of Goldstein seemed to stir Eddie's emotions. "He's a very intelligent old fox but he's the meanest, rottenest old bastard in racing. He can pull tricks out of his hat. If he could he would kill you. He would do anything to win. Anyway to get back to the race when the first final began I was lying 3rd. I moved up to 2nd before being passed by my team-mate who then began driving defensively. I came 3rd in that race, 2nd in another and won the last of the three qualifiers but I was 2nd overall. It looked like my last F3 race at Thruxton the other month. I sat back and couldn't do anything right."

The defeat really affected him and he admits that he didn't want to talk to anyone. "I couldn't understand why I didn't win. Here I was with the chance to win the World Championship. I tell you it's more difficult to come in 2nd than to finish last." Perhaps Eddie's attitude had left him a little arrogant? "No, never." He was emphatic about that. Explaining his introvert character, Eddie feels "it was more of an inward than an outward thing."

After the World Championships Cheever raced karts for about another year. He won the Italian national series but was not allowed to hold the title because of his nationality. A couple more kart races followed before he became "too involved with motor racing."

He'd first driven a Formula Ford racer when he was 13 years old at the Henry Morrogh Racing Drivers School in Italy. Cars, cars, cars. Drive, drive, drive. Did he ever feel trapped by it all, especially at such a young age? Did he ever want to rebel against his father's wish that he would become a racing driver? "No. I really enjoyed it. Sometimes I would get depressed seeing my friends getting drunk but I didn't really fit in with them anyway. At times I felt I was losing out but I was not. I would not have got where I am now if that were the case. What was difficult was to train my mind at 16 that this is all I should be doing. There was only one way to race and that was to win, otherwise you became an also ran. Who knows who comes second?"

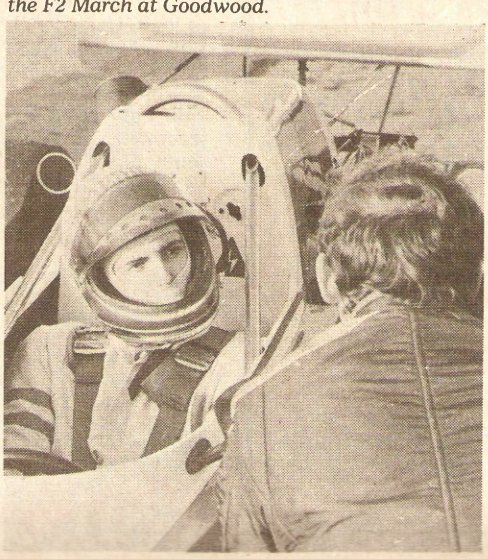
On the advice of Henry Morrogh, Eddie Cheever, just turned 18 years, arrived in Britain in March last year. His karting exploits now behind him, admittedly having given him valuable experience, the decision was taken that Eddie should move into Formula Ford. After all, England was the home of motor racing. After visiting most of the leading FF manufacturers, the choice of chassis became a new Dulon. The money to pay for it came from Eddie's father "which I do not like. I don't like him paying for my racing." Mind you, without his father's influence it remains to be seen whether Eddie would ever have gone motor racing.

Eddie's stay in FF was both short and unspectacular. It was a rude awakening in many ways. How did he find the formula? "Unbelievable. I thought I was racing karts again. I had a cross (novice) on the back of my car but whenever I got in front, they kept knocking me out. I didn't finish in six races. However, it was very competitive, I must say that. I got knocked off at Brands Hatch, twice at Silverstone then at Rufforth. They were barbaric. It wasn't racing and I got to the point where I didn't think of winning, just defending myself. All that I had learned in karting came back again and I discovered that that was the only way to get yourself across the line. In Formula 3, you had to be smart. There's a difference."

The hectic life in FF left him a little dispirited. "Yes. I wondered if I was doing the right thing. I was not getting anywhere and I began to wonder whether I should have stayed in karts. I was really getting cheesed off with the whole thing and I was actually asking myself if I had the talent to do it." His father began to get annoyed. "He does if I don't do well but that's the price I have to pay. He was getting really mad but then, finally, I had one good result. I got the quickest time at Silverstone and came second."

It was about this time that Motor Race Consultants came upon the scene and they

Cheever listens to Ron Dennis during his test in the F2 March at Goodwood.



advised Eddie and his father that Formula 3 would probably be a better training ground. In many ways they were right. The choice of chassis was a Modus "because of Tony Brise and Danny Sullivan and MRC also had contacts with them." Once again Eddie's father fronted up with the finance although "he thought I was running away from my torrid times in FF. He thought I should have persevered but MRC said it was not getting enough publicity and that I was not where I should be. We'd been spending a lot of money in FF up until then and now I realise that we were being taken. I suppose someone's got to keep motor racing alive!"

How did Eddie, a total newcomer, find that he got on with other drivers? "I tried to stay away from them. I didn't see any reason to mix. I tend to keep a low profile with people." Was this a legacy of his early days in karting? "It is just my personality, I guess. I can't really find an answer to that. It's not that I don't enjoy people's company, it's just that I'm more at ease on my own and then I don't have to be careful of what I say. You always have to be acting unless you know someone very well and the only thing I had in common with these other drivers, especially in FF, was that I drove in the same races.

"In Formula 3 it has definitely changed. It is much more professional. It's like a large family almost. Everybody knows you and you're together a lot of the time. In FF you race against something like 60 guys. How could you know everybody? It was impossible. In F3 it was a must and I made a point to get to know Danny Sullivan because I knew I could learn a lot from him. I knew that if I was to get ahead, I must get on terms with them.

"It wasn't because Danny was an American. It's because he was a nice person. He introduced me to a lot of people and showed me my mistakes, where I could gain and where I couldn't. I owe a lot to Danny. Experience is important. It's something you cannot buy but, if you have the right equipment, you can make up for it." How did he find the transition from karts to Ford and then F3? "I liked F3 a lot better. It was a lot cleaner and more like driving a racing car. It was difficult to drive an FF quickly because you had to slide it. That's a must otherwise you won't get out of the corners. In F3, you brake, change down and power it all the way through. In FF you scramble round."

Cheever took part in a couple of F3 races before he hit the headlines. How did he find people reacted to his previous success in karts? Did he think they expected him to win every time out? "No. I don't think I had anything to live up to really. I had told a few people about my karting but that's all. I try to be progressive in my racing by being a little better and a bit faster each time, not balls-out and running off like some others were doing all the time. If you fall off, people just don't pay attention any more."

He beat Messrs Ribeiro, Nilsson, Neve, Sullivan *et al* on the Silverstone club circuit, pouncing on a Ribeiro cock-up at the last corner to win, following this up with another win, this time on Silverstone's Grand Prix circuit a week later. Prior to that he'd been on the pole at Knockhill. Yes, people were beginning to notice the presence of Cheever.

However, things didn't fare too well for Eddie after his second success and internal problems at Modus caused an eventual split, the factory having overseen his racing effort up until then. Did the publicity affect him? "I must admit that it did and for the first time. I didn't think I was a super hero though I began to believe what I was reading. Thereafter I had a chain of disasters and I couldn't do anything right. It wasn't until Ron Dennis arrived on the scene that I started to put the pieces back together. He helped a lot."

Cheever ended the year by winning a couple of races at Hockenheim under the guidance of Dennis who then gave him a test drive in one of his F2 Marches down at Goodwood. It whetted Eddie's appetite and his liking for F2 power. "I think I'll get more from driving in F2 this coming year. It is more professional and the people are a known quantity so you know who you're up against. There's only one thing holding me back. I can't seem to find £50,000!"

His intentions are plainly obvious. He wants to get into Formula 1 and as soon as possible. For Eddie Cheever, being an introvert perhaps gives the wrong impression. "Arrogant and conceited," says Eddie. "In my case that's not true. I'm just shy."

A young man with very obvious intentions and, as Eddie says, "there's no room for error when people start saying you're the next World Champion."



The flat-riding Pangare Gringo of World Champion Wally Franz from Brazil

And now for off-shore

By QUENTIN SPURRING

The Christmas edition of AUTOSPORT contained an interesting article on the highly specialized sport of circuit powerboat racing, which is so closely akin to motor racing in a great variety of ways. At the time when the recent London Boat Show is still in many people's minds, it might be of interest briefly to follow this up with a look at the little circuit catamarans' big sisters — the impressive, sleek offshore powerboats which compete in the upper echelons of a sport still essentially the reserve of the privileged few who can afford it.

Ready to race – which it does a dozen times in a season at the most – a modern Class 1 offshore racing powerboat will set you back the thick edge of £45,000, plus spares and considerable running expenses. The resale value of a successful boat, mind you, is reasonably high, always provided that you can afford to wait long enough for Mister Right to come along. Most owners can.

While it is virtually impossible to do Class 1 on the cheap, even if you confine your sport to British waters, there are lesser beings and, as in any sport, the density of competitors increases as you go down in categories. Offshore, there are four basic classes, the two smallest of which are sub-divided into various engine capacities. Under the auspices of the Royal Yachting Association (powerboat racing's equivalent of the RAC), races are run pretty well every weekend throughout the summer, and competitor enthusiasm at this level is high. However, Class 3 and 4 boats are not fast enough even to pretend that this type of racing is a spectator sport.

At least in class 1 and 2, which normally race together, speeds of 80 mph plus are commonplace, and this does enable those involved to imagine that they are providing a real spectacle. In fact, at every massed start and, on unhappily rare occasions, during actual racing, they are – but that does not make Class 1 and 2 racing a spectator sport. Quite simply, the racing takes place too far offshore and, although we did have an exception last year, it's hardly bow-to-transom, gunwale-to-gunwale in any case.

While the comparison has been drawn between circuit (inshore) racing and motor racing, offshore racing has also been compared to rallying. This is because the emphasis, outside of winning, is firmly placed on navigation, and on getting the boat home in one piece.

With legs between turning buoys anything up to 60 miles long in the bigger offshore events, and race distances of anything up to 230 miles, it is very important to have someone aboard who knows his protractor from his dividers. You're not exactly going to get lost, but if a marshals' boat sees you go the wrong side of a buoy, you're normally disqualified, and there's sure to be a scene back home at Race Control when you find out . . . The stresses on boat and machinery, which can sock it to the water at 3g and even more, go without saying. At 80 mph plus, water can seem rather hard material. It is pointless to try to do anything but stand at the controls, and leg injuries caused purely by impact are not that uncommon.

The Class 1 powerboat crew usually consists of three men, and the most often used lines of demarcation are one navigator and two "drivers". With ever-changing surface conditions, and the certainty that your engine revs will go into orbit everytime your props come out of the water, it is frequently thought necessary to have one man just on the throttles. The other has an easy job: helmsman. Seeing that the hull comes down on the vee – whatever the water.

Imagine yourself driving a big car, flat out. You're steering, and the bloke next to you is on the accelerator, and he's working independently. All the while, some other bloke in the back seat is yelling directions. You can begin to understand that driving a 90 mph, 40ft powerboat can be a hectic experience.

Still, they manage it – they even claim to enjoy it. Windswept, soaked to the skin, aching arms, aching legs, bruised by hours of buffeting by the sea in spite of the cockpit padding, eyes sore from straining at little round dials, they still claim to enjoy it. Socially, it's enjoyable, too; one might even venture that it's difficult to spot the millionaires. (Perhaps they're all millionaires.) Each race is an annual occasion, at which old acqiaintances are renewed, old memories revived, old challenges repeated.

On the technical side, the restricted nature of powerboat racing causes comparatively slow development in terms of basic principles. In hull design, the only major breakthrough since Ray Hunt devised the medium – and deep-vee principle at the expense of the old warped plane, 25 years ago now, has been the adoption of glass-reinforced plastic as a constructional material. In machinery, since Jim Wynne developed the outdrive system for use with inboard engines, not much of essential importance has happened. But there are signs that we are about to enter a new era of hull design, in which multi-hulled vessels will reign supreme. And this is one sport in which lessons learned in race development are very definitely made to produce benefit for the boat-buying public.

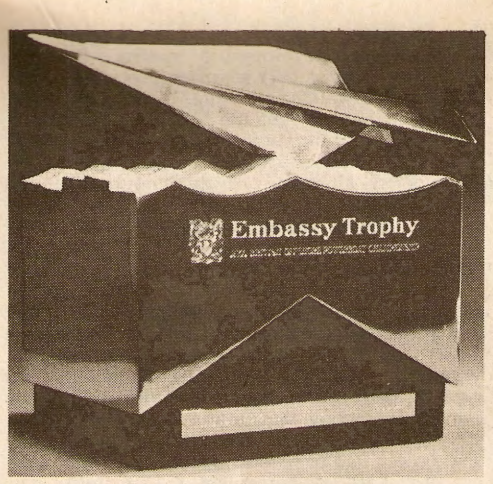
Before the advent of weird and wonderfully purposeful devices, however, it must be said that a current Class 1 challenger is a beautiful thing, and a group of them is a spectacle by itself, never mind the racing. Presently on show on the forecourt of the Earls Court Boat Show are the craft which finished first and second in the Embassy Trophy for the 1975 RYA British Offshore Powerboat Championship. Instead of concentrating on the World Championship (which is run very obscurely all over the world for little or no prize money, and can therefore be properly described as silly), perhaps a description of the recent British Championship series, and the boats which figured prominently in it, might be the best way to complete a picture of what offshore racing is all about.

Embassy Trophy

The winner of the British title was *Uno-Embassy*, driven by her designer, Don Shead, and crewed by her owners, Col Ronnie Hoare and Harry Hyams. Built by Enfield Marine in 1971 for Tommy Sopwith to race as *Enfield-Avenger*, she is getting a trifle long in the tooth these days, but

Winning Embassy's Trophy in 1975 was Uno-Embassy driven by designer Don Shead and crewed by Harry Hyams and Ronnie Hoare. This was the view Pangare Gringo had of her as they passed over the line after the Cowes-Torquay-Cowes race, for Uno-Embassy won by just eleven seconds, at a record speed, after more than three hours of racing.





The coveted Embassy Trophy which lay at the end of the British championship trail.

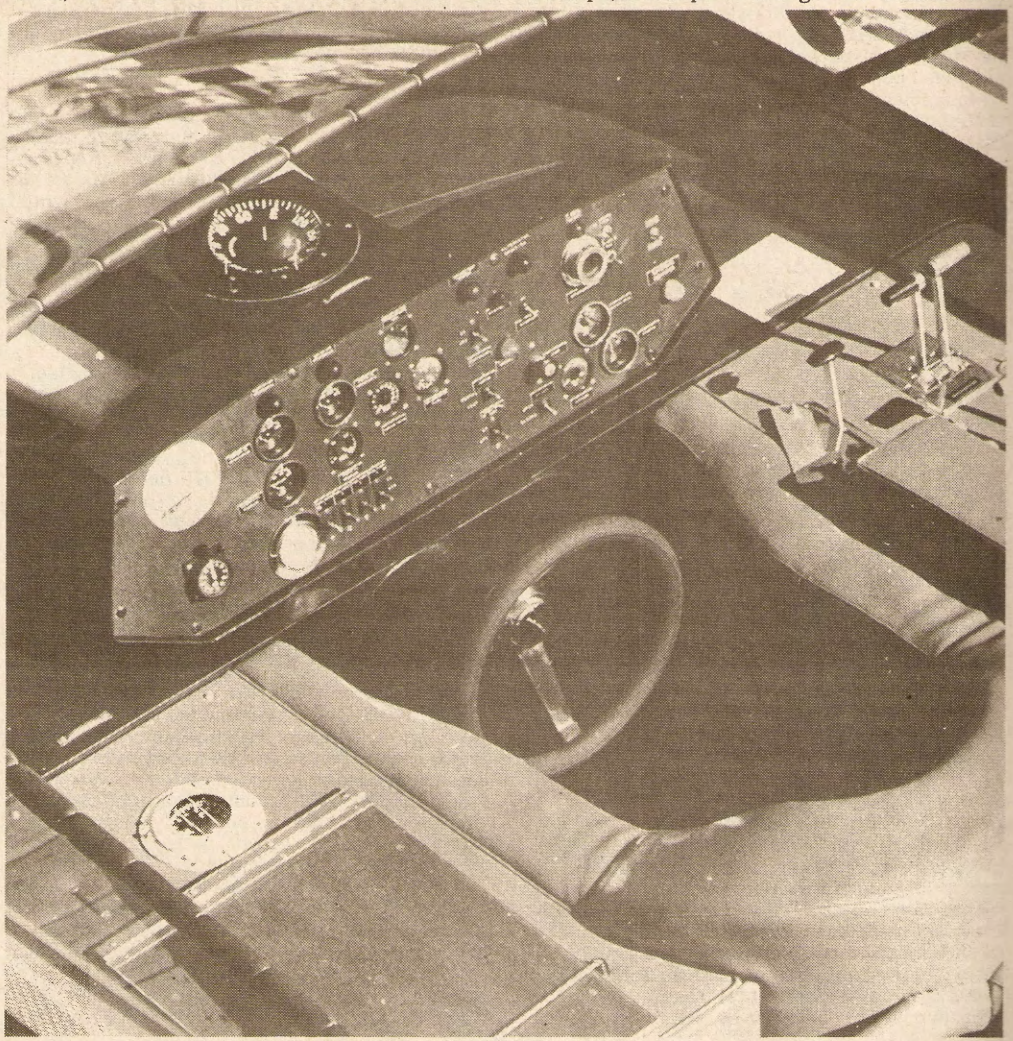
it doesn't show. She still goes like a bullet, and last season blew off every one of her rivals, among them the best modern boats presently racing worldwide. She is a typical current Class 1 boat, except that her 37ft hull is constructed of aluminium. She is powered by a pair of extremely meaningful 468 cu inch cast-iron Chevrolet V8 engines, modified for specialized marine work by Kiekhaefer Aeromarine in the USA. These big motors, mounted staggered in the rear engine bay, bring the boat's engine capacity up to the maximum for Class 1 (16 litres petrol/32 litres diesel), and deliver a total of 1220bhp at 6000 rpm on fuel injection. High octane fuel (130 Avgas) is used, carried in six rubber bag tanks. The 3½ ton vessel is power-steered by means of an engine-driven hydraulic pump. The power is transmitted via transom-mounted Kiekhaefer outdrives to her twin three-bladed propellers, churning the water at 6000rpm, which can push *Uno-Embassy* to 90mph in ideal conditions – a top speed which puts her among the leaders in all but the biggest seas.

In contrast, rough weather is ideal for *Miss Embassy*, the Experimental Class boat with which Tommy Sopwith, with Charles de Selincourt and turbine engineer Bryan Wilkinson, finished runner-up in the British Championship for the second year running. Five feet longer than her stablemate, *Miss Embassy* revels in big seas. Another boat from the drawing boards of Shead Design, built by Vospers and Planatec in GRP, she was launched in 1973 to become the first boat to race in the then newly established Experimental Class. Her engine is a single 1050bhp Rolls-Royce Gnome gas turbine, of the type used in helicopters and SRN hovercraft. Turning at a frightening 25,400rpm and running on aviation kerosene (of which 450 gallons can be carried if necessary), this unit gives *Miss Embassy* a top speed of between 75 and 80mph. This is a little on the slow side in a top-flight Class 1 field, so she relies on her proven reliability to pick up her points. However, when the waves are big she rides them regally compared to her shorter rivals, and that is when she comes into her own as a front runner.

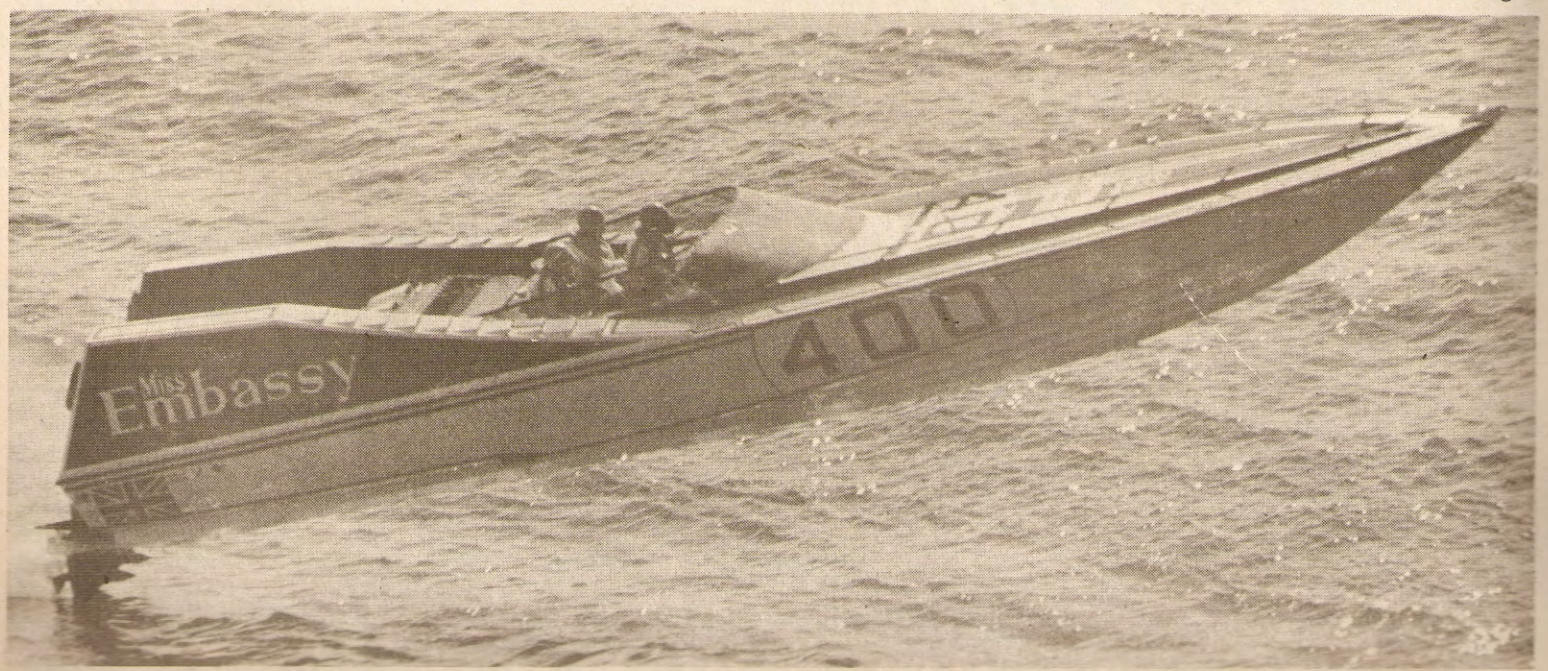
The Class 1 boat which finished third in the British Championship underlined the rivalry between Britain's Don Shead and his American counterpart, Don Aronow, in the lucrative field of powerboat design. This was *I Like It Too*, a 36ft Cigarette hull designed and built by Aronow in GRP in 1973, and raced to that year's American APBA Championship by Doc Magoon. Purchased by her British driver, Charles Gill, at the start of last season the former *Aeromarine III* is now powered by twin Chevrolets of 454cu ins, modified by Race Engine Services. With Mike Bellamy and Jim Brooker as crew, Gill should have been a real force in the Embassy Trophy series, but it wasn't until the third race that his challenge was translated into something concrete – points.

The first of the 1975 Embassy Trophy events – held, like the others, off the South Coast – was the Royal Motor Yacht Club's Poole National. The British debut of Gill and his Cigarette, awaited with interest by Shead, was a promising one: *I Like It Too* charged off into the lead, with *Uno-Embassy* hard astern. Midway round the first of the two 53-mile laps, travelling at about 70mph in fairly heavy seas, Gill and his crew had a very unpleasant shock: still holding a tenuous lead, his boat got a big wave all wrong and swapped ends violently, even becoming briefly submerged. Shaken, and with the engines drowned anyway, they withdrew. That's not something to do twice.

Shead won as he liked, needing to average only 56.7mph, and Sopwith brought the musical *Miss*



Miss Embassy and her cockpit. Miss Embassy is one of the longest boats in the championship, and as such, excels in rough weather. She's powered by a Rolls Royce Gnome gas turbine engine and driven by Tommy Sopwith. Her cockpit, above right, is well padded and instrumented. The throttles are to the right.



Embassy home in second place. To say that this was a race of attrition is a gross understatement: only two other boats finished. Derek Love, never again seen on a Championship race leader board, was third in a very slow, standard Triana cabin cruiser, *Young Love,* while John and Ann Craxford were fourth in their attractive Class 2 Fairey Spearfish *Ford Fantasy,* powered by two Ford Sabre diesels. This husband-and-wife crew actually finished the race in the role of tug. Forsaking a higher finish, they went to the assistance of a fellow Class 2 competitor whose craft had nosedived when lying third overall, and was saved from the clutches of Davy Jones by the Craxfords' tow.

This was *Penthouse Inver House,* the only competitive catamaran racing last season. Built in plywood by Cougar Marine in 1974, to a James Beard design, she was raced that year as *Wiggins Teape.* Her driver Keith Dallas, and crew Eddie Chater and Phil Hook, attracted sponsorship from the rude magazine and the whisky firm for 1975, and raced both in Britain and the USA. Powered by four 150hp Mercury outboard motors (two on each sponson), she was far and away the quickest Class 2 vessel. Class 2 allows for just half the engine capacity of Class 1 (8 litres petrol/16 litres petrol) and, until the appearance of the Cougar cat, no such boat was able to get near the much more powerful Class 1 monsters. The twin hull configuration is obviously the reason, although it is desperately unsuited to heavy seas, as the Poole National showed with almost disastrous results.

Fully recovered, *Penthouse* was able to show her paces at the next Embassy Trophy round, the UK Offshore Boating Association's Seavoice Vectis Trophy. The same pattern: Gill led, with Shead playing the waiting game, this time in Sopwith's wake. At halfway, Gill still held the lead, but he lost his smile simultaneously with an outdrive, and turned to limp home to Hamble. Sopwith led, but Shead was soon past to score his second victory at a slow average (53.6mph). When *Miss Embassy* developed a fuel leak, *Penthouse* was able to sneak past to take second place.

Come the Offshore Powerboat Club's BP-sponsored Brighton Marina South Coast Race, and this time poor Charles Gill was hampered for the entire 112-mile distance by a power steering failure. But at least he picked up some points at last, finishing third. Shead allowed Sopwith to lead for much of the event, but the big V8s roared past the whistling turbine shortly before the end and *Uno-Embassy* had a Championship hat-trick at 61.3 mph. *Penthouse* was fourth, again outpacing her Class 2 rivals, and these four boats had pulled ahead on points at the halfway stage in the series.

The fourth Embassy Trophy round was a different matter. Two of the British Championship rounds also qualify for the World Championship for the Sam Griggith Trophy, and for the Needles International Trophy, organised by the RMYC, a strong international contingent was headed by the reigning World Champion, Carló Bonomi from Italy. Driving that beautiful Cigarette 36 *Dry Martini* which you must have seen in the TV ads, Bonomi's big challenge came from the 1975 World Championship points leader, Wally Franz and his 38 ft Bertram *Pangare Gringo.* The latest Bertram hulls had been chipping away at Cigarette supremacy in the USA, and a lot was expected from this flat-riding boat if sea conditions were good. The three fastest boats all had Kiekhaefer engines, so the big confrontation was all about hull design.

In the event, *Dry Martini* led all the way, the wealthy young Italian banker scoring his second successive Needles International victory. *Gringo* chased him hard in defence of his points lead, but conditions were not ideal for the Bertram and in any case a loose exhaust manifold cost the Brazilian power halfway round the second 75-mile lap. As Bonomi went ahead to his 57.1 mph win, Gill passed the stricken *Gringo* into second place, only to suffer a split oil cooler less than a mile from the finish! Not his year. With *Miss Embassy* out – her automatic engine speed governor out of action – Franz somehow managed to repass *I Like It Too* to reclaim second place. But what of *Uno-Embassy*?

A heavy landing early in this rough race had caught Don Shead unawares, and he suffered the recurrence of a back injury which had kept him out of the cockpit all 1974. But Shead knew that fourth overall (second British driver home) would clinch the 1975 Embassy Trophy, which is decided on the best four results, so he was determined to finish and soldiered on at much reduced pace. While Gill was delighted with his maximum British points, his bid for the actual title was over, and Shead was able to view the remaining two races as individual events.

The next one was a race Shead particularly wanted to win. Of course, every powerboat racing driver wants to win the Embassy-*Daily Express* Race, the 229-mile Cowes-Torquay-Cowes which has been the classic race in the sport almost since its inception in 1961. The 1975 field of 31 boats included three former winners: Shead himself, who had taken this same boat (then *Unowot*) to the winner's berth in 1973; Sopwith, the only man to have won three times, in 1961 (*Thunderbolt*), 1968 (*Telstar*) and 1970 (*Miss Enfield 2*); and Bonomi, who was going for his treble having won in 1972 (*Aeromarine IX*) and 1974 (*Dry Martini*).

The most exciting C-T-C ever held started at a scorching pace, with *Uno-Embassy, Dry Martini, Pangare Gringo* and *ERAF* – Guilio de Angelis's Cigarette 36 – taking turns at leading. *ERAF* then took up the running, but the Italian, who is not known for his regard for machinery, retired when one overloaded engine cried enough. *I Like It Too* and *Miss Embassy,* fending off a brief challenge from another turbine-powered boat, Gordon Procter's *Passing Cloud,* both dropped back, outclassed by these race speeds.

With a new leader reported by almost every marshals' tender, excitement rose as the leading trio arrived at Torquay and turned for home. Franz had it, just, from Shead and Bonomi. Then the high speeds took their toll, although the mechanical gremlins were refreshingly liberal in their distribution. First, *Dry Martini* lost power in her starboard engine, and fell astern. Next, *Uno-Embassy* developed a misfire. *Pangare Gringo* went away, only to suffer an ignition fault. The Brazilian still led ten miles from home and it seemed to be over, but the V8s in *Uno-Embassy* were singing again now and, six miles out, Shead blasted past the disappointed Franz to win by just 11 seconds – after well over three hours of racing! Bonomi settled for third place, less than three minutes behind. Shead's winning average speed was a crashing 72.86 mph, and the first three boats improved on the race record.

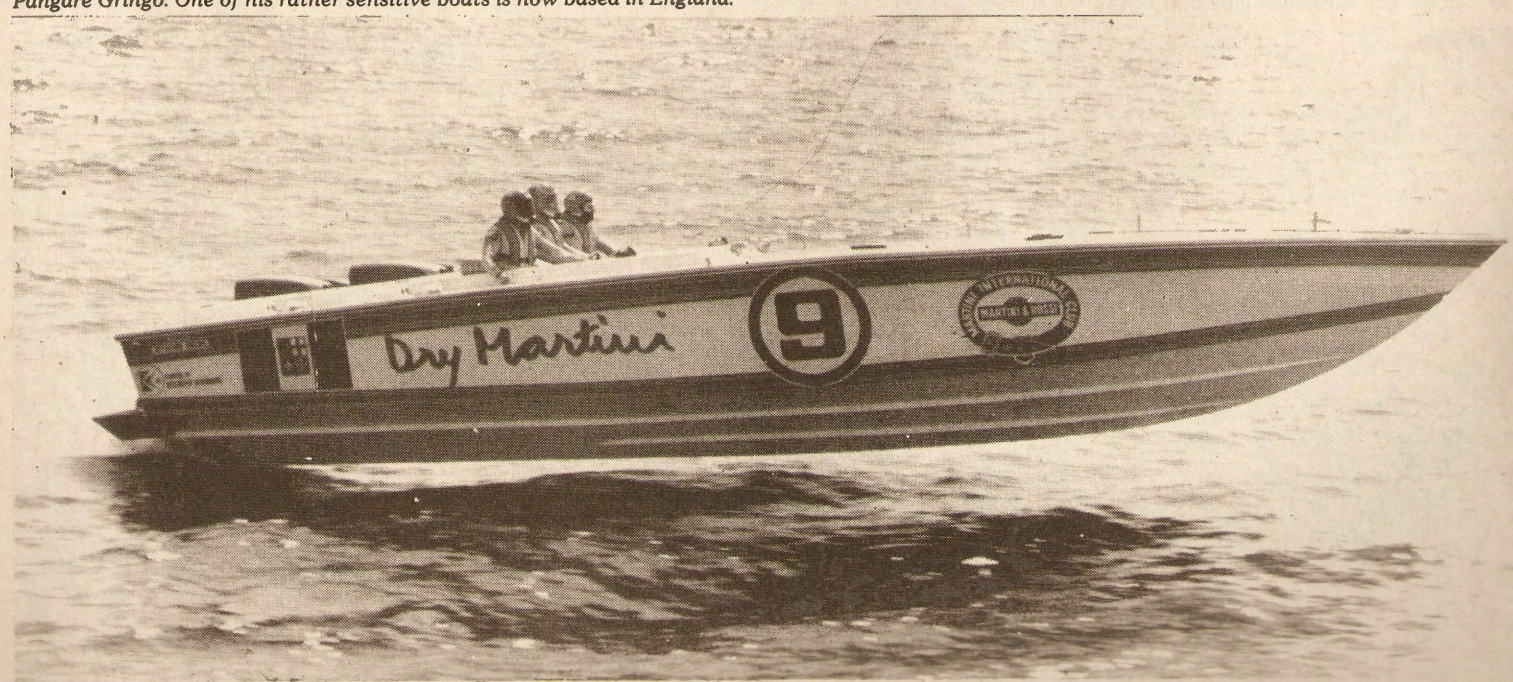
Gill was fourth, just four minutes ahead of Sopwith, while Tim Powell was sixth after a fine run in *Radio Rentals.* Almost the only fast Class 1 boat to race in Britain last season using Chevrolet engines marinised by MerCruiser, *Radio Rentals* was formerly *ABO,* the 1974 Embassy Trophy winner for Bobby Buchanan-Michaelson. A 40ft GRP Shead/Planatec, she was delayed at the start, and Powell had to pass 23 boats to earn his sixth placing. Last of his rivals to succumb was *Penthouse Inver House,* which lost an engine during the fray but still finished seventh overall, yet again the convincing Class 2 winner.

After the excitement of the C-T-C, the final Embassy Trophy round, UKOBA's Spithead Trophy, was something of an anticlimax. The main interest centred on Gill's efforts to topple Sopwith from the runner-up position, but *I Like It Too* retired with an engine failure. Run over three 36-mile laps in the Solent, the Spithead Trophy was easy for *Uno-Embassy,* but her stablemate was badly delayed by another fuel problem and finished third. Second place went to a very dark horse indeed, Charles Morley-Fletcher's *CanI-ComeToo.* This little 1972-built Pegasus, powered by Mercury outboards and co-driven by Peter Gaydon, had been a consistent runner all season, and her fine Spithead placing made her driver joint "winner" of the Class 2 category within the Championship with the surprised Dallas, and equal fourth overall in the final table. The *Penthouse* driver missed the Spithead race due to an American commitment.

Thanks to some consistent running, John Craxford finished the season sixth, having swapped his nice Spearfish for the faster (ex-Gill) 33ft Souter *I Like It* in mid-season. The two most disappointed Embassy Trophy competitors were Jack Cunningham and Neville Hutchinson. Both campaigned potentially fast boats, Cunningham his ultra-modern, Shead-designed Tiger Shark *FordSpeed Too* (complete with surface propellers), and Hutchinson his three-year-old 30ft Souter *AEG Telefunken,* but both suffered badly in terms of reliability.

Incidentally, back on the World Championship trail, Franz got the bit between his teeth after the two British events. It went right down to the wire: Franz had to win the final race of the long series, at Key West in Florida, and that he did, relieving Bonomi of the title. So Brazil did not get the World Champion they expected in motor racing, but a World Champion in another sphere of power sport instead.

Last year's World Championship winning offshore boat was Dry Martini driven by Carlo Bonomi. He was again pressing hard for the lead, but was pipped by Pangare Gringo. One of his rather sensitive boats is now based in England.





A strange sight for the locals as Waldegaard's Lancia Stratos speeds through a Kenyan village on the East African Safari.

INTERNATIONAL RALLY REVIEW

. . Munari's unoffical title

Despite being the three-quarter point of the century, 1975 will not be remembered with great affection. In the world at large, bombs and kidnapping blighted almost every enjoyment while protesters sprung up like cockroaches to ruin even simple pleasures like a game of cricket. All this had its effect on rallying and produced a season which had some enjoyable moments mixed in with a load of frustration. The political world impinged indirectly on the sport by increasing the cost of motoring in all parts of the world and even had its direct effects when part of the Tour de Corse had to be cancelled due to a protest seeking to draw attention to Corsican self-rule.

If the general picture of the world was unsettled and fewer teams were competing than in previous years, at least there was a minimum of acrimony between them and none of the rallies ended with protests or other bad feelings. Some of the organisers had problems like the Rideau Lakes which could not be run as there was not a sponsor in Canada that could provide the money or the Portugese Rally that had a sponsor, the Port Wine Companies, but had trouble finding a date that did not clash with its country's revolution. But most of the other rallies seemed to go from strength to strength though the number of entries was sadly low in the case of Monte Carlo and Morocco.

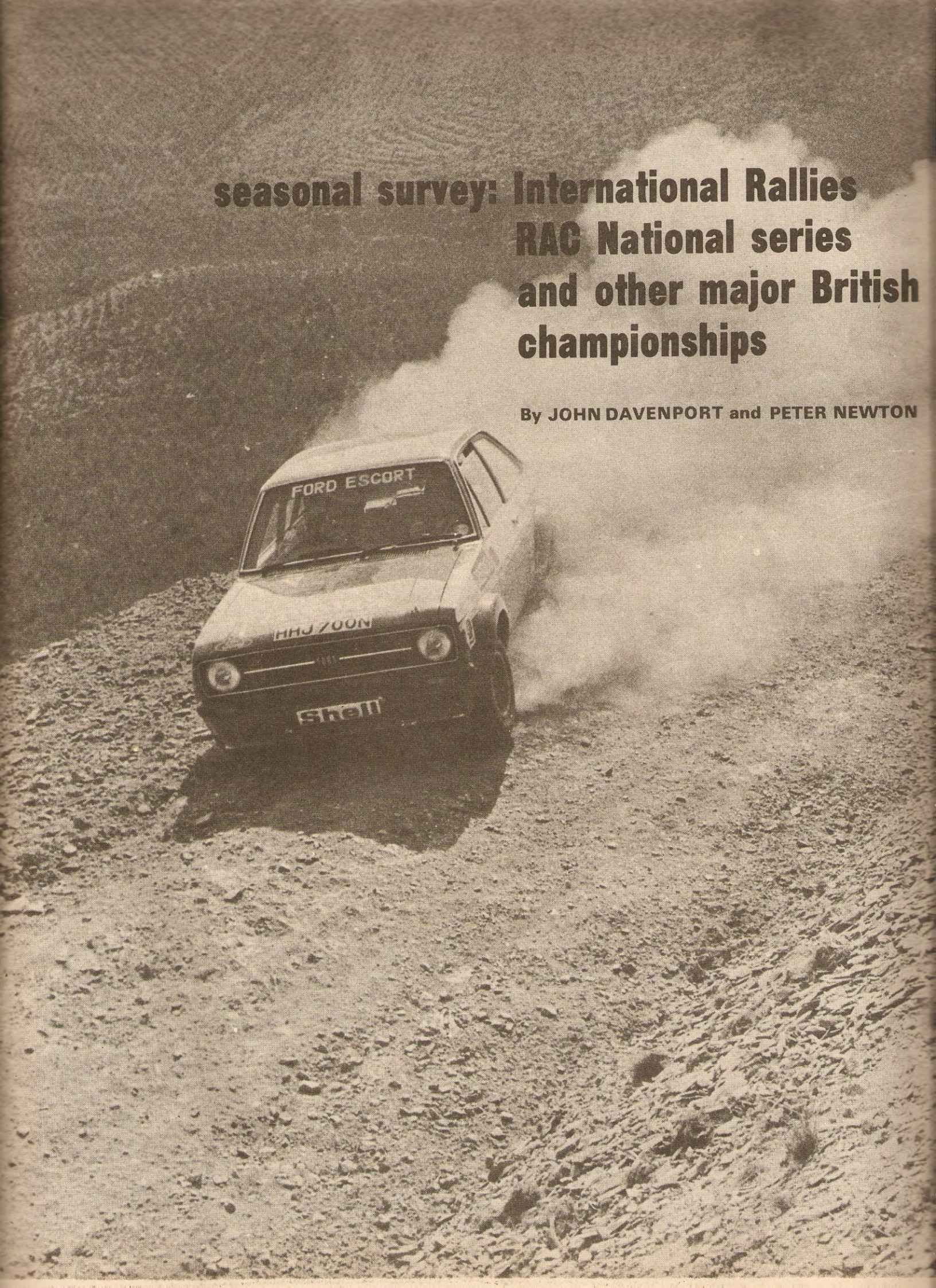
The world champions were Lancia who carried off their victory in fine style by winning four events outright and finishing second in another to make their total almost half as much again as those amassed by their closest rivals, Fiat. For those of you not in the know, it is true that Fiat own Lancia but in modern Italy the spirit of free competition lives on and both teams disputed the major rallies against one another. Or rather, it appeared that they did, for behind the scenes there was rather a nice deal worked out by Fiat's own competition committee that allocated certain rallies to one team and other rallies to the other team. They started the year by slogging it out between them on the Monte Carlo and then when Lancia came out on top in that particular event, they got the best choice of the following rallies. By mid-season, they should have done three rallies each, but Fiat had missed out on both the Acropolis Rally and the 1000 Lakes by deciding to save money and not send cars. It was this decision more than anything else which decided the championship for Lancia made no mistakes about winning the San Remo and Corsica, as they had done the year before, and by the time the RAC Rally came along, it was all decided. It is possible that Fiat were kept from these two mid-season rallies by a decision of the FRC but it is also true that they were spending quite a lot of money doing the Italian Championship and the European Rally Championship, but it does seem strange that they had two such expensive rally drivers as Hannu Mikkola and Markku Alen on the payroll and only used them in a couple of rallies. Indeed Alen would not have got a car for the RAC Rally had he not insisted that if Fiat did not send him, he would drive one of another make.

So far in this discussion of the world championship there has been little mention of drivers except those who did not, for one reason or another, get sent to rallies. The reason is that rallying does not have a world champion driver. It has its world championship but it is a thing of metal and rubber that wins the title and an executive that goes up to collect the prize. Is it any wonder that the man in the street knows and cares little about this branch of motor sport? To try and set the secord straight, if there was a world champion of rallying in 1975 it should be Sandro Munari. The Italian is one of the most brilliant drivers in the rally business and has a tenacity and dedication that makes him a frequent winner. He won the Monte Carlo Rally from the front in the knowledge that after just two stages, his Lancia Stratos team mates, Lele Pinto and Jean-Claude Andruet were both out and he had to contend with the works Renault Alpines and Fiats on his own. Despite the pressure, he drove quickly and safely to bring Lancia their first 20 points and himself his second Monte win. On the Safari where he was once again teamed with Lofty Drews in place of his regular co-driver, Mario Manucci, he kept the unsuitable Stratos in contention right to the finish despite having a sultitude of problems. At one point, the entire rear bodywork blew off in the middle of a village but they kept going and finished second overall behind the winning Peugeot. A greater contrast in events could not be found but nevertheless, there was this slim Italian doing so well in both sprints and long-distance rallies. Later in the year, he led the San Remo Rally until a puncture and an unsuitable spare wheel put him out while in Corsica he showed the tremendous speed of which he is capable until a rare moment of distraction on a difficult road section put him off the road. He professes that he doesn't like the RAC Rally but he finished third there with a Stratos last year and was eager to do better this time. A misread instruction about the number of laps at Oliver's Mount kept him out of the top placings the first day and then he was claimed by that infamous uphill bend at the start of Dovey and could not get back on the road to continue.

His principal rival — certainly in terms of mere success — was his teammate Bjorn Waldegaard, who won both Swedish and San Remo Rallies for Lancia with a Stratos and finished third behind Munari on the Safari after leading for most of the rally. Waldegaard started with Volkswagens and continued his rally career with Porsches in which he won the Monte Carlo twice and the Swedish Rally three times. Despite contracts over the last few years with Fiat and Toyota, he is evidently more at hime with the engine behind him and drives the Stratos in a way that few can emulate. He won the Swedish Rally in a car which was not fully rally prepared and with the regulations

seasonal survey: International Rallies RAC National series and other major British championships

By JOHN DAVENPORT and PETER NEWTON



cars, especially if they can get the mid-engined version going well, just to show the paying customer that his model goes well.

Fiat ran the 124 Spyder with 16 valve engine throughout the year. Normally it was on carburettors but Verini occasionally drove it fuel injected as was the case on San Remo. Generally this was a good compromise car as proved by its win in Portugal and second place in Monte Carlo but it lacks both the outright power and the supplest suspension to do well in both tarmac sprints and long distance rough rallies. Fiat's next rally weapon is the similarly powered 131 Mirafiori which should be homologated in March and will prove far more suitable for events of the Safari and Morocco types as well as being as quick as a Spyder on smoother events.

The problem at Renault Alpine was the choice of car as mentioned earlier. Had the sixteen valve version of the 1800cc Renault 16 engine worked better earlier in the year, then it would have been adopted immediately and the power difference might have kept the 310 in contention. As it was, the engine seemed to need the longer exhaust pipe provided by the R 17 and never really provided the extra power in the rear compartment of an Alpine where the exhaust is necessarily stubby. The V6 will doubtless give the 310 what it needs but it will be Monte Carlo 1977 before we get the chance to assess that. The R 17 can obviously be made into a very competitive long distance car and had the Renault and Alpine halves of the partnership acted with better co-ordination, one would have seen this car on more rallies where it could have gained results.

Opel started the year with the Ascona 1.9 knowing that, hopefully at mid-season, something better would be along to replace it. Running any sort of competition activity within a General Motors concern is hard work and Helmuth Bein seems to have done plenty of it at Russelsheim. The Ascona has never been too reliable and the problem seemed to stem from the engine but development cured this after the Monte retirement and the two litre, single overhead camshaft, crossflow engine was soon pushing out a reliable 220 bhp with fuel injection. It ran perfectly on the Acropolis to give Opel an important victory but the rougher Moroccan Rally proved too much for it and both works cars retired. Electrical failure sidelined Rohrl in Portugal but Rauno Aaltonen came through to finish fourth and gain some valuable points. The new car was a Kadett with the same engine that had powered the Ascona but it was a disappointment in San Remo where the propellor shaft became detached. Even the Ascona could not get points in San Remo for Aaltonen retired with a bust head gasket after the first stage, and Opel gained points from a privateer who finished sixth after the majority of the works cars had fallen by the wayside. In the RAC Rally though, the Kadett showed itself to be made of rally winning stuff. Tony Pond drove the British-prepared example of the DOT team to fourth place overall after the German cars had retired with transmission problems culminating for Rohrl anyway, in a crash and a fire. This relatively untried car went extremely well considering the lack of real development work that had taken place and far better things are expected in 1976.

It is difficult to associate such a staid car as a Peugeot 504 with modern rallying, Full of its rorty saloons and refugees from the race track. Still facts speak for themselves and in the past twelve months, Peugeot has won the Bandama, the Safari and the Moroccan — and now the Bandama again — and in short, dominated that part of rallying which takes place on the African continent. The reason for this is not hard to find. Firstly the Peugeot is an excellent standard car as its results in Group 1 form will show. Secondly, Peugeot have undertaken a two and half year development course with Makinen and Mikkola as prime destroyers which has brought their Group 2 504 to a point where it must be the strongest rally car around. It is not the fastest and Ove Andersson's performance in winning the Safari from the two Lancias could easily be compared with the proverbial tortoise and a brace of hares. The engine is decidedly unexciting compared with its opposition but it does use fuel injection and extracts all of 165 bhp from its two litres. The 504 may not be the most accelerative of rally cars but it makes up for it by not having to slow down for the rough bits. By winning two of the World Championship rallies, Peugeot scored forty points and thus finished ahead of Ford, Toyota, Saab and Datsun which must prove something about the mixed challenge of rallying. For next season, Peugeot too are looking to the Renault-Volvo-Peugeot V6 as their new power source and preliminary plans are to rally it in the 504 Coupe body though as they do not actually make that themselves, they would prefer to use it in the 504 saloon. Only homologation may stop them. In case one should wish to speculate where they might have come had they tried a few rallies other than the African ones, they did in fact send Mikkola to the Total Rally in South Africa and on this rally which most resembles a European event of all those held in Africa, the 504 finished a creditable fourth overall.

Ford as previously related, did very few rallies outside Britain, and when they did they were largely unsuccessful though often through no fault of their own. Their Escort RS 1600 has remained virtually unchanged since the two litre BDA aluminium block was introduced though of course refinements have been made especially in light of the new body sheel for the Mk 2 with its slightly different weight distribution. With the idea of doing more tarmac events in 1976 and carrying the Ford attack into Europe, a project was started at mid-season to re-develop the Escort as a potential smooth rally winner. Panhard rods, coil springs, Watts linkages, shock absorbers mounted on the parcel shelf, 12in J wheels, anti-roll bars, compression struts to locate the front struts; all were tried and now Ford have got a definite improvement in handling along with much better traction. The solution can be varied according to the event but Makinen did some times over the Turini in the wet during the Tour de France that suggest that even Mr Munari might have a hard time with the Escorts on the Monte Carlo. Panhard rod rear ends were adopted for the RAC Rally and both drivers praised the increase in traction. Makinen has been experimenting with 15in diameter wheels for some time in an effort to improve traction but now it seems that the Fords can go back to 13in diameter wheels, run on hand-cut racers and pulverize the opposition in the forests. The Ford team is never short of ideas and with an excellent technical service to back it up, it may well prove to be the talking point of the 1976 series.

The miracle workers of 1975 were Toyota who did things with a 1600cc saloon car, admittedly with a sixteen valve engine, that others found impossible with two litres or more. Architect of their modest success was Ove Andersson who had been driving for Toyota since 1973 and now found himself in the position of rally manager, first driver and development engineer. Fortunately he was qualified for all those posts and the result was a very finely developed car with which Waldegaard finished fourth overall on the RAC Rally in 1974. The team missed the Monte and did the Marlboro Arctic Rally instead with Leo Kinnunen as first driver. Andersson was engaged by Peugeot for the Safari which he won while in Eurpoe he campaigned the Corolla with success in ECR rounds winning the controversial Nordland Rally in Germany.

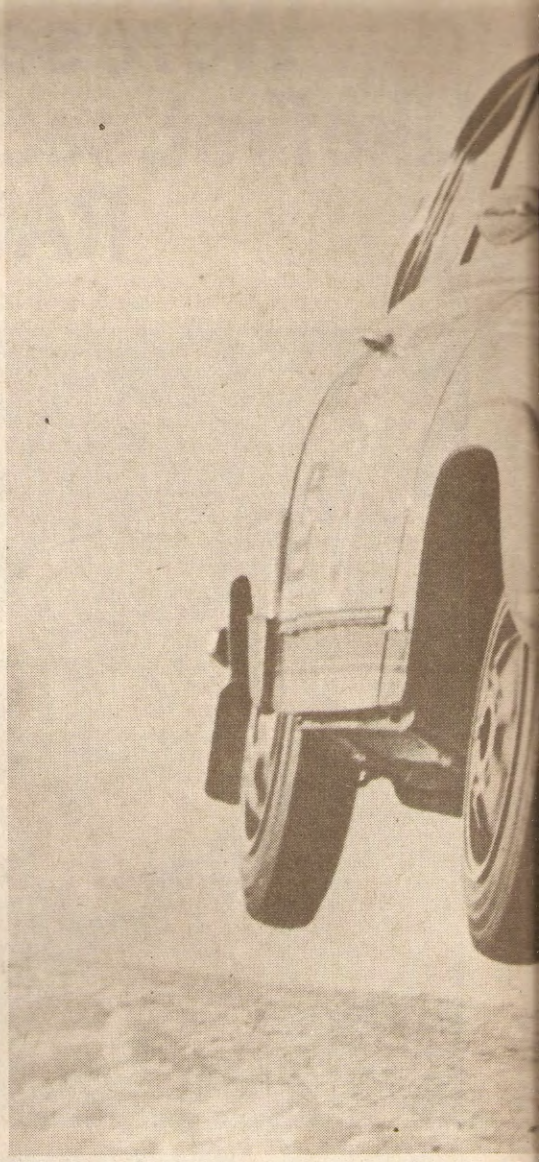
The Acropolis Rally saw the Corolla at its best and though Andersson retired with a broken gearbox and Warmbold with not enough road, the little car had led the event and shown that it was no slouch on rough roads. Portugal confirmed this but it was evident that in steep and twisty country, it was no match for the more powerful cars. Still Andersson set a string of fastest times and finished third overall. For Finland they literally rented Mikkola a car and he surprised everyone by going and winning the 1000 Lakes against very hot opposition. For 1976 he will drive for the Toyota team and he even was able to join them for the RAC Rally when they had their sixteen valve, two litre Celica out for the first time on a World Championship round. It had made its debut with Andersson on the Baltic Rally where valve trouble had stopped it after a few stages, but Herr Schnitzer who looks after the engines had corrected that. Still, a more disastrous RAC Rally one cannot imagine with both Mikkola and Andersson going out after just a few stages and only Chris Sclater surviving in the old Corolla 1600 to finish, albeit well down after a long off in Kielder forest towards the end of the rally. The two litre Celica will be the spearhead of their attack in 1976 but not until after the Monte and the Swedish when Andersson is sure that it is 100 per cent reliable. For the Monte Carlo, Mikkola will be on loan to Opel to drive a Kadett.

One of the most remarkable phenomena of modern rallying is the Saab. Ten years ago it was still a rally winner with its miniscule two stroke engine until Minis, Cortinas and Porsches left it way behind in the power race. Then it acquired a four cylinder V4 engine from Ford and started to go well again and with drivers like Simo Lampinen, Stig Blomqvist and Per Eklund won rallies like the RAC, the Swedish, the 1000 Lakes and the Scottish. It is still underpowered by today's standards but is capable of going extremely well in bad or slippery conditions. Blomqvist came second on the Swedish Rally this year to Waldegaard's Stratos while in the same period, Lampinen won the Marlboro Arctic Rally and later in the year collected a second place on the 1000 Lakes. He was also Finnish champion which stands for quite a lot in the inner world of rallying when you consider that he had to beat blokes like Makinen, Mikkola and Alen to get the title. Saab were extremely unfortunate on the RAC Rally to lose both their cars with mechanical problems as this was to be the swan-song of the V4 96 saloon which is to be replaced with the 99 EMS saloon in the next

The attractive Beta Coupe has been run along with the all-conquering Stratos. Best result was a third place for Simo Lampinen on the Swedish – which, of course, the Stratos won.







Opel can expect great results, once the Kadett is running as it should, from team driver Walter Rohrl. Pictured above is Aaltonen's ill-fated RAC car.

season. Blomqvist has already done several ECR events with the 99 and has shown that it can go quite well even in a moderate state of tune. With the sort of horsepower which has been promised from the 99 engine, 1976 could see a Saab revival.

Of the events that comprised the World Championship little can be said simply because they are the best to be found today. Most of them were feeling the pinch as competitors made economies and stayed out of the entry lists. The Monte Carlo in particular was disappointed to discover that private owners were not enthralled at the idea of motoring round Europe for four days before getting down to some proper rallying. Their long cencentration run did not attract a large entry nor did it please those that entered anyway. The format for 1976 reflects the feeling of the competitors that a shorter rally is needed in these hard times. The Swedish Rally ran without problems but finds it more difficult every year to attract people to rally in a country with such a high cost of living. Its regulations concerning the sort of studded tyres that can be used are not popular with the continental teams who are also suspicious of local knowledge on the special stages but improvements should be in the pipeline for 1976 since the rally has merged with the Varmland Runt to put the two biggest rallies in Sweden into one.

The East African Safari is nowadays the Kenyan Safari since no one fancies their chances with the Chinese in Tanzania or the ebullient regime in Uganda. However, this has done a lot to commend the rally to the Europeans who are going there in larger numbers than ever before. They even had a European organiser — Gunnar Haggbom — for 1975 and the result was a first class rally. The standard should be maintained as the capability and keenness of the Kenyans has to be seen to be believed. As yet, no major changes have to be made in the running of the rally to reduce speed or introduce special stages, but the problem of finding new roads goes on as the highways authorities rush on improving the network of existing roads thus destroying the best rally territory.

The Acropolis Rally and the Portuguese Rally are two pearls from the sea of rallying. Their organisers look upon their rallies as if arranging them were a competition in itself and strive to make them as perfect as possible. The result is that one knows that they will be well run, well timed and well financed. Even political problems do not seem to deter them and they are European classics of a kind that it is hard to find. By contrast, the

British spectators probably had their last chance to see the 124 Abarth Spyder's on this year's RAC. Markku Alen, above, will be campaigning the 131 Mirafiori along with Verini and Bachelli next year.



Yumping-on, year after year, the Saab 96 never ceases to amaze as will, no doubt, the 99. Pictured above is Per Eklund on the Arctic.



Moroccan Rally is a touch of Africa-within-Europe and though equally well run, presents a different style of rallying altogether. It has special stages but they are long affairs of several hundred kilometres across barren foothills and desert where every kind of surface and trap lurks to smash the car or fool its driver. Morocco did not even time its stages to the second this year, regarding it as unnecessary in the face of so much mileage. All the same, drivers still finished some of the shorter ones within a minute of each other and were complaining that they preferred the more normal timing. As it turned out, the organisers were right and the final placings were worked out in fractions of an hour but still, it seems fairer to count the seconds while in the early stages at least.

Finland's 1000 Lakes Rally saw some major changes for 1975. It moved its date to late August to avoid the holiday period which meant fewer spectators but less trouble while it also tightened up very much on the amount of practice that competitors could do so that they caused the minimum annoyance to the poor people who live on the route. The stages were also chosen in a different part of Central Finland presumably so that a different bunch of people were annoyed by the practising. One feature of the rally that was also new and worked well was the institution of a time control at the end of each special stage so that problems on a stage did not cause people to go like hell on the public road to make up time. In any case the Finnish police were as strict as ever and Stig Blomqvist was excluded from the rally for being caught in a speed trap at ten kilometers an hour over the limit.

The San Remo Rally used to feature a lot of dirt roads but like the Safari, modern surfacing techniques are catching up with it and more and more of the classic sections are becoming tarmaced. This is a problem for the organisers who must try to stay within the Italian law which says that all special stages must have a set average speed of 50 kph (31 mph) but they get a bit mixed up with their mileages and no one seems to do the stages in time! In Corsica, the roads have always been tarmaced but it is often of a very old and rugged type. The rally is nicknamed the Rally of Ten Thousand Corners but so twisty are the roads that experts estimate that thirty thousand might be a more accurate guess. Little is done each year to alter the format perhaps because the island itself does not permit much change but really there is no necessity as the rally is tough enough on both car and driver to do what it has to in twenty-four hours. This year they tried using a couple of very long selectives put in the middle of the easy road sections but they might just as well have called them special stages, left the road timing as it used to be and stopped the works cars having twenty minutes service.

Grand Old Man of the year was the RAC Rally of Great Britain. We may not have produced a winner since Roger Clark in 1972 but, by gum — we do run a popular rally. It was the only one this year to have reserves on the entry list though it must be admitted that when there were some non-starters, all the entries who wanted to start were able to take part. Still an entry of over two hundred is not bad in the present state of European economies and the rally was well organised so that the participants were pretty satisfied with their expenditure. There were worrying aspects of the RAC Rally and the main ones concerned its growing popularity with spectators who presented car parking problems near the stages and often hazarded their lives once inside the stages by standing on or near the road. So far, no major accident has marred the peaceful use of British forests by rally cars and no one likes to ask questions of what will happen if one does. It is very pleasing to see the sport become so popular but it will be a shame if this very popularity brings about its demise, at least within Britain.

In all, 1975 was a good year for rallying during which several firms bided their time in order to more fully participate in the coming season. Let's hope that 1976 will be an exciting year as a result.

JOHN DAVENPORT



Just one of many copy-book performances from Roger Clark this year – the "Master" taking his sixth Scottish Rally victory in 12 years.

RAC NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

A vintage year for Clark

It would have been a foolhardy entrepreneur who was prepared to stake odds on Billy Coleman retaining the RAC Championship for a second successive year. With Roger Clark and Boreham wholeheartedly back in the hunt this year, after early season experiments in 1974, there seemed little chance of the Irishman hanging onto the title. With the arrival of Clark on the scene, one almost senses that most of the opposition are beaten before they even attempt the first test, and Roger has had many years in which to perfect the technique of psychological dominance, as if he really required it.

The RAC championship has come a long way since Stuart Turner first took the step of putting Clark in among the pigeons to set the standard for all to aim at. His continued presence on the national scene has raised both his own and everyone else's game, as the results of this year's RAC will testify; yet no one has ever beaten him and last year they scarcely ever looked likely of doing so. Of course there were moments in 1975 which remain to be cherished in a healthy though hardly precipitous season — who could forget Clark's insolent dominance of the Circuit before his retirement; Will Sparrow's fine performance on the same event; Tony Pond's epic drive on the Scottish when the Opel driver got as close as anyone was to get all season before everything started to go sour; Clark's shattering performance on the Manx in his slick shod car — one felt above all the others that this one was where Roger really turned it on. His was a performance that scarred the mind with searing speed — there was more at stake than merely winning another RAC round, and after being relegated to third place behind the Porsches the previous year, the gauntlet was down. The Manx last year gave Roger tremendous satisfaction and it was probably the only time throughout the year when he really tried hard — this excluding the RAC itself of course where he always relishes the increased competition.

So what can one say about Boreham's direct involvement in the premier national series; has it merely served to demoralise; to leave the erstwhile hopefuls grovelling in the abyss of self-pity; or has it served to sharpen up the casual 'clubbiness" of the former days of British national rallying. This year's RAC saw a fine international field start out off from York and at the end of the first day when the majority of that international field were still in the hunt, nearly half of the top 20 were British or Irish crews; and the tributes from foreign drivers for home grown talent was indeed a pleasure to hear. That there is some resurgence in British rallying goes without saying, and this year a number of foreigners are paying tribute to the competitiveness of our national series by involving themselves for the season and thereby increasing its kudos still further. One must not forget that Roger Clark and Boreham have had a big hand in this resurgence.

Next year the strain of acting as 'stool pigeon' to the hungry hordes will descend upon Roger to an even greater extent, but far from showing through in the form of the occasional below-par performance, or the occasional slight mistake, he seems to thrive on it — and 1975 saw a series of glittering, faultless performances which were ruthlessly underlined by seven wins and one second place (on the RAC) in the 10 round championship. This last weekend was yet another copybook performance. Just how good Roger Clark is can be gauged particularly on long stages, where concentration can tend to flag; here physical exertion and adrenalin can rapidly contribute to a small mistake. It is on these occasions that Roger makes vast and punishing inroads into competitors' times using the brutal efficiency of his car to the full; but it was a graphic lesson learnt at the televised Tarren stage which drove the message home perhaps more clearly than at any point during the season. Despite repeated runs over the same stage in Wales, no one got really close to Roger all day; in a field which included Pond, Brookes and Rockey; Roger's first competitive attempt remained the target for everyone to beat; it is this kind of faultless driving, bred through years of practice plus Clark's own fierce competitiveness which makes him the 'force du frappe' which he is.

The one day national forest rally in this country is very much a 'sprint' affair; or as Brian Culcheth firt coined the phrase, 'a forest race' and those who do not switch on quickly, who have a puncture or make a small mistake are immediately relegated to the also-rans. It is significant that perhaps the only person who can afford to play 'tactics' under such acutely competitive circumstances is . . . guess who!

Nevertheless at the beginning of the season it was Billy Coleman who set the pace; in fact it was Billy throughout the year who cleaned-up when Roger retired. The Irishman's Thomas Motors-prepared Escort (latterly a Mk2) was among the most reliable of the front-running cars and he was afflicted by serious mechanical trouble on only two of the rounds, the Welsh and the Lindisfarne. Despite a fine record of consistency, Billy was justifiably unhappy with his performances this year and a number of contributory factors seem to present themselves. The previous year on the Burmah, Coleman had come closer than anyone to beating Roger Clark. The effort clearly drained more than a little out of him and it was almost as though he had made up his mind from that moment that the 'Master' was not to be beaten. Accordingly Billy paced himself this season and trod comparatively carefully — too carefully as it turned out; for when, at the close of the season he at last made a supreme effort on the Lindisfarne in order to reclaim a championship that was fast disappearing in front of his eyes, mechanical problems intervened to sideline him. He had left his effort too late and presented a fait accompli in all but name to Roger on the RAC Rally itself. Billy's plan to retain his RAC title through consistency was also thwarted somewhat by the problems inherent with the Mk2 — a problem that afflicted all the principal runners at various times, but probably meant more to Billy than to others and served to erode his confidence — this was the question of brake balance and Billy scarcely ever got the car exactly as he would have

liked it. Roger's car was similarly afflicted and it was a lack of rear brakes which accounted for the gap between the two cars after those dramatic opening six stages on the Lindisfarne — and not merely a question, as is so often the case, of Roger hanging back to let the others fall over themselves prior to making a move.

Billy started the season in fine style with a win on the Mintex and followed this up by a resounding victory on the Circuit of Ireland. He had to wait until the Jim Clark however before Roger retired again (!) (this time after hitting a sheep over the Otterburn ranges) and as the season came to a close Roger sliced heavily into Coleman's points advantage, giving Billy nothing but a purely mathematical chance on the RAC Rally. In fact Roger came very close to retiring on the RAC, such were the mutlitude of his problems, but as long as he was there, the contest was null and void. Thus Billy's 'gentle' season failed to pay off and one feels that he may often be his own worst enemy in respect of assessing his chances of outright victory. We scarcely ever saw the flashes of the Coleman brilliance which brought his name so rapidly to the fore, but there were moments nevertheless — the first night on the Circuit of Ireland when service anomalies within the works team served to upset him; a fine drive on the Welsh that came to nought when a universal joint on the steering broke; a spirited performance on the Manx when he ran without pace notes to third place; and those unforgettable six stages of the wet and windy Lindisfarne. There is only one way Billy can go this year, and that is up. He has all the talent to accomplish this, one hopes he will allow himself to do so.

Tony Fowkes' third place in the RAC championship and third overall on the RAC Rally in his semi-private Mk1 RS was the crowning achievement to a year of painstaking hard graft. Tony is the first to admit that he is not one of those 'natural' drivers like Ari Vatanen, Airikkala and others; Tony has to work at his rallying both physically and mentally in order to start events in the right frame of mind. After a number of accidents, the roll on the Tour of Dean at the beginning of last year decided him on a policy of caution. Finance was scarce and he knew he could not afford another accident so he trod carefully throughout the season, picking up consistent placings in the top six (his best being second overall on the Jim Clark), resolving to have a real go on the RAC. The latter event is still recent history and Fowkes' tremendous, gritty performance still very much in the news, but his early points scored on clashing RAC and Castrol rounds meant that in the later stages of the year he devoted some of his attentions to winning this championship. He left himself with a narrow "safety" margin with which to achieve this goal, and in the end was robbed of overall victory by a headgasket failure on the Cheltenham Festival. Although never extending himself unduly, Fowkes was easily the quickest man in the Castrol championship and his car preparation, which is all done by himself and his small and enthusiastic crew, was an object lesson in how to pace himself and drive to orders, and he was rewarded by a most successul season that was generously recognized by Boreham. One hopes that Tony will be able to find another sponsor to help him carry on in '76. This being the case, we shall undoubtedly find him in the winners' circle this year.

Fowkes finally wrested third place from Russell Brookes on the RAC Rally itself and many people [illegible] generally very short and Russell took to the G2 Escort so readily that it is easy to forget that he began the season in a G1 car, finally discarding it after yet another giant-killing performance on the Circuit of Ireland. Brookes 'borrowed' a works Mk1 G2 Escort for the Granite City before finally appearing in his now commonplace Andrews Heat M2. He drove the more powerful car just as he had always done the G1 Escort – with determination and fire, but he suffered a number of mechanical ailments including a blown engine on the Manx after possibly his finest drive of the season in the forest specification car. Another high point was a hard-earned second place on the Scottish and another second to the 'Master' on the Burmah. However it was the final two rounds of the championship which cost him dear, and he retired on both the Lindisfarne and the RAC with sheared wheel studs. A failure to tighten them in the final stages of the consecutive Keilder tests certainly cost him a very high placing on the RAC Rally (a bitter blow to all concerned, not least his service crew), after a run which had seen him closing rapidly on Clark for some hours. Russell is one of the hardest triers in the business; he started the



Chris Wathen turned in a great early-season drive on the Circuit of Donegal.

season with very little experience of G2 and ended it as an unconditional front runner. Many people including Ford themselves, see him as the man most likely to topple Roger one of these days (apart from Vatanen of course!) and thus they are continuing the loan of a works-built car for this year – his prospects in 1976 must be as bright as anyone's. The final favourite was of course Nigel Rockey who started the year in high spirits with his Pink Stamps supported and works loaned RS1600; but by mid-season everything began to go wrong. A co-driver's error on the Scottish robbed him of a high place and Derek Tucker's consequent appearance in the left hand seat did not bring him a change of fortune whatever it may have done for his confidence, and after three early season second placings, he could only manage a best of fourth overall on the Lindisfarne in subsequent events. In the latter months he was troubled by the possibility of his sponsors' withdrawal and this may well have contributed to his erratic performance on the RAC when he put himself out of contention after a number of minor 'offs' and mistakes. Nigel now faces a bleak new year with no immediate prospect of a car – (the Mk 1 has been sold and the proceeds returned to Boreham) or a sponsor.

Such is the domination of the Ford Motor Company in our national series that it is quite easy to forget that other manufacturers are in fact seriously competing. British Leyland took the dubious honour of winning the non Formula Ford 'race' thanks to some splendidly controlled performances from "Our Brian" Culcheth in the underpowered, overweight Dolomite Sprint. After years out in the sticks driving class cars primarily

The man most likely to . . .? Russell Brookes has Ford's blessing for another season.





Brian Culcheth enjoyed a number of pleasing results with the comparatively cumbersome Dolomite. TR7 plans auger well for this season.

for direct marketing purposes, Brian returned to full time British rallying in '74 where after a number of uncharacteristic accidents had set a precedent, settled down to put in some really workmanlike performances. It is largely due to his undying efforts over the years that Leyland have returned to the sport which they dominated so completely in the halcyon days of the Mini, and Brian reinforced their tentative trials by two wily third places on the Jim Clark and the Lindisfarne; out-right victory on the Scottish championship Hackle, and a very pleasing 16th overall and first G1 car on the RAC-Leyland sensibly electing to go G1 in such tough overall company. We fervently hope that Leyland's ship comes in during '76 – and in grabbing Tony Pond soon after mid-season, they have the driver who can accomplish the ultimate accolades for them. One hopes that rumours of problems encountered with the TR7 are largely groundless, or can be overcome and that we shall rapidly see these two men out in Leyland's latest forest development. To see either driver winning regularly in a TR7 would do more good for British rallying than the arrival of an army of Finns, let us hope that they are rapidly given the opportunity to do so.

Of the dealer teams, Opel can look back on a fraught 1975 with some encouraging signs for the future; true they lost their star driver to Leyland, and have spent a difficult year developing the Kadett while running the Ascona, but Pond underlined the potential of the car on the RAC, his first drive in a Kadett, and with 16-valve power to come, possibly by mid-season, there are real chances on the horizon. Of the two remaining major teams in contention perhaps the less said the better. DTV were plaqued with incessant mechanical unreliability from the engine room, and morale had indeed reached a low ebb by mid-season. Had Will Sparrow not salvaged a fifth overall on the Burmah, the team might conceivably have buried themselves completely, and '76 is witness to a reorganisation under Gerry Johnstone at Shepreth and a much reduced budget. Whether this formula is the right one for success is a moot point, but Will Sparrow has certainly not lost his appetite for rallying, and besides, the fortunes of the team can now surely only go upwards.

The Group 1 side of DTV's affairs were not as smooth running as in '74, and the Magnum proved surprisingly unreliable, with niggling faults often intervening to hamper its driver, Paul Faulkner. When the car was running properly it was clearly very quick, though Faulkner was obviously not at home in the Vauxhall which could look rather ponderous on occasions.

If DTV had a poor year, the hard-working Chrysler team had an unmitigated disaster in G2 where after a depressing series of non-starts due to developmental problems with the 2-litre 16-valve engine, the final ignominy was a cylinder liner which broke up on the way to York prior to the start of the RAC. It was left to Robin Eyre-Maunsell in the reliable G1 Avenger to save the day; this he did with his usual flair and after a series of early season mishaps, eroded the lead of the DTV car so that they went into the final round, the RAC Rally itself, equal on points. As a spectacular confrontation, this had to be a good bet, however, again the tense situation was not forthcoming, and Faulkner, owing to a number of niggling problems, had to be content with second in the championship to the Chrysler. There is no doubt that a properly sorted Avenger is a very good handling car, and its comparative light weight makes up for a lack of power; nevertheless an 1800 motor with considerably more torque, was homologated towards the end of the year.

Of the others, Andy Dawson had a very difficult year finding the necessary spares to peddle his

An early spin for Will Sparrow on the Circuit of Ireland. Car reliability was all that stopped Vauxhall.





Robin Eyre-Maunsell achieved RAC group one honours after beating DTV's Magnum on the RAC Rally.

heavy Datsun around the forests. The policy of non-cooperation which both the concessionaires and the factory adopted, made the Kleber award seem rather farcical. Dawson spent most of the year waiting in vain for a sack of competition parts from Japan which, when they finally arrived just prior to the RAC Rally, were substantially the wrong type anyway. He was forced on a number of occasions to leave the car in the garage, but when he did bring it out, he drove with his customary skill and zeal. This year we shall finally see him in a representative Escort 2; with a car such as this, he may well surprise one or two people who had forgotten that he is one of the country's quickest drivers and is not afraid to demonstrate the fact. His 12th overall on the RAC in the Datsun, a result that did not go unnoticed in foreign circles, was a fine achievement.

This year there promises to be a greater struggle than ever at the top (although the Dean result does nothing to substantiate this fact). Roger Clark will be fitting in as many RAC rounds as possible between his WCR commitments, and two Finns. Pentti Airikkala and Ari Vananen, are livening-up the show. Ari Vatanen has already produced some fireworks and one wonders whether principal British drivers will be able to stave off this challenge. Will he (or anyone for that matter) beat Roger this year? The prospect seems almost unthinkable, and the Dean shows it to be equally unlikely.



David Stokes' old car kicks up the dust on the early-season Tour of Lincs.

Castrol/Autosport

In some ways the Castrol AUTOSPORT championship, with a number of clashing rounds, might have been considered to be treading too close to the RAC championship itself – yet the results which show a Vauxhall at the top of the tree – do not bear this out. The Martin Group had planned to contest both championships and follow up the one where they scored most heavily. Good runs on the Mintex Dales, Tavern and Tour of Lincs in the early rounds saw them concentrate their efforts have taken the Championship. George's problems on Castrol events and George Hill swiftly built up a seemingly unassailable lead over rivals who were often not able to complete on every round for a variety of different reasons. Then the clashing rounds arrived – and with them Tony Fowkes who was to provide the only serious opposition to the Magnum. Tony very nearly caught George, and had it not been for a head gasket failure on the Cheltenham Festival, Fowkes would undoubtedly with the Vauxhall have been chronicled copiously elsewhere but there were a number of talented men who could have provided the series with real spice had they been in a position to contest every round.

Laurie Richards had a miserable season and could well have won three of the rounds – Lincs, Tavern and Marina, rather than just the latter when for once everything went approximately right for him. Even here however he was not destined for a trouble-free run. It was one of those years for Laurie, and one hopes that he will have a chance this season to demonstrate his obvious ability more regularly. The genial Robert James finished fourth in the championship having only contested a handful of rounds in his tired Carrefour-sponsored Escort. James was always consistent rather than spectacular and this year he will have privately entered Mk2 with which to do battle.

The championship was thoroughly enjoyed by the participants and as the season progressed so the character of the events and the rally circus concerned combined to create a memorable atmosphere of relaxed ambiance. Two of the finest rounds, the Castrol '75 won by Tony Fowkes and the Cheltenham Festival by Nigel Rockey, remain as lasting memories, and of course who could ever forget Donegal? This season there remain the sometimes unavoidable clashes with RAC rounds, but despite this fact, interest is running at a very high level and prospects look good. The '76 championship will be fully previewed in a later issue.

BTRDA Gold Star

Although all three of the major British championships were decided on the last round almost none of them produced the kind of cliffhanger finish which seemed to be in the offing. The BTRDA Gold Star championship was a case in point. David Stokes, having discarded his aging and underpowered but trusty Twin Cam for a very heavily 'modified' ex-Adrian Boyd Escort RS found the series slipping from his grasp by mid-season through the unreliability of his 'new' car. He eventually had the bugs sorted out however and went into the final round, Hercock Simpson, locked in battle with Randolph Whittal Williams whose consistent results throughout the season in his Crickhowell Caravans sponsored RS put him in a strong position to take the title. Randolph however sidelined himself early and Stokes was allowed to cruise home almost as he wished, a worthy winner of the Gold Star crown. Terry Kaby put up some fine performances in his Mini to finish third in the championship, and John Taylor, who continued his inroads into the rally world appeared in the Southwest and the Lake District to gain pre-RAC experience. It was in the latter area that one of the season's most unlucky drivers, the talented Chris Wathen put up another fine performance to finish second to the rallycross star. Chris put up some really startling performances in the various championships throughout the season and was most unfortunate not to bring to fruition great drives on the Circuit of Donegal and the Castrol '75. Towards the end of the season he was without an effective rally car and one hopes that Vospers who have helped Chris in the past will be able to carry on in '76 as Wathen was one of the quickest men on stages last year. The Gold Star series this year has the welcome support of Esso, back again after a year's absence and the rounds look very good with some interesting new stage events and a packed entry registration.

PETER NEWTON

Britain's most exotic regular rally car has undoubtedly been the Chequered Flag's strangely temperamental Stratos.



by John Bolster



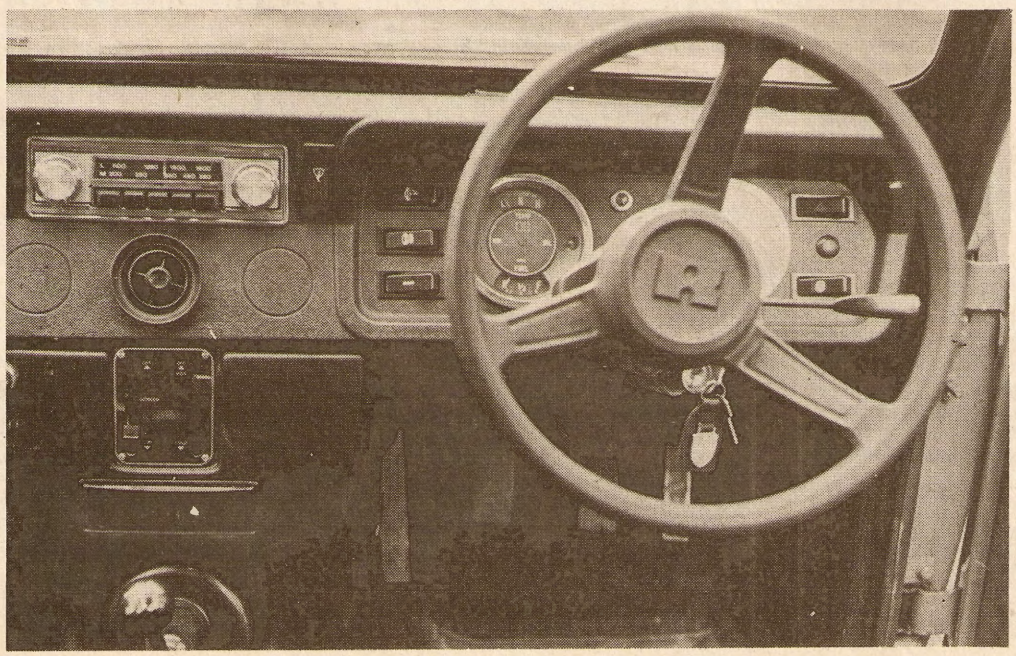
The baby Reliant looks quite grown up, with no sign of it three-wheeler ancestry.

Transportation investment

Nobody can be entirely uninterested in a new economy car these days. Even if he has eight cylinders in his garage, a man is apt to take a sidelong glance at cheaper transport, in case inflation catches up with him. The Reliant Kitten is of great interest technically, because it approaches the small car market from a new direction, but although it appears to be rather too expensive at first glance, it may well prove to be a very sound transportation investment.

Among the cars which might be regarded as competitive, the 848 cc Kitten has the smallest engine in its price class, some of the others boasting more than 1100 cc. Its external dimensions are also more compact, apart from the Mini, which is a law unto itself. The chassis design is certainly somewhat conservative, in a world of front-wheel drive and independent suspension, and one might be tempted to dismiss the little machine because it's less car for more money.

The small steering wheel should appeal to the sporty element.





The Kitten is more compact than most of its competitors.

Nevertheless, there is another side to the argument. The Kitten is comfortably in the lead for fuel economy, indeed it's way ahead of the four-cylinders and threatening the two-cylinder class. This economy is not obtained by restricting performance, indeed the Kitten is one of the livelier small cars, and most of these benefits have been secured by constructing a car which is much lighter than any of the opposition. It is therefore of great interest that the small Reliant has a very sturdy box-section steel chassis and a separate glassfibre body, which evidently saves a lot of weight compared with the usual all-steel saloon.

It would take a few years to find out whether or not the Kitten will stand up to hard work, but it certainly seems to be just as strong as the cars of steel monocoque construction. Where it scores, of course, is that it is virtually immune from rust, and when the others are failing their MoTs for rusty bottoms, the Kitten will be as good as new. This means that the man who wants to keep his car for several years will still get a good price for it when the time comes to part.

The baby Reliant looks quite grown-up, with no sign of its three-wheeler ancestry. It will carry four quite substantial people without too much crowding, and the rear seat will fold for the carriage of bulky parcels. The back window is frameless and a shelf automatically covers the luggage boot, which is of useful size though calling for some effort to unload heavy objects. The driving position is excellent, giving a full view of all four corners for parking, but the seats are

less than luxurious. A very small steering wheel will appeal to the sporty element.

The light-alloy engine is a slightly stretched version of the well-known Reliant unit, which has powered all sorts of vehicles, even including single-seaters. The gearbox is made at the parent factory and the rear suspension consists of a live axle and leaf springs. In front, there's quite a sophisticated wishbone layout, with rack and pinion steering. The most remarkable achievement has been to keep the weight down to half a ton, no less than 2½ cwt below that of the Mini. It is this light weight which makes the car so lively and saves many gallons of petrol per annum; it also ensures that simple drum brakes give ample stopping power.

The Kitten really does feel lively, fairly leaping forward at a touch of the accelerator and taking hills in its stride. Yet, it is deliberately over-geared, in the interest of quiet cruising and economy, the engine revs remaining below 5,000 even when 80 mph is exceeded under favourable conditions. The ultimate speed in third gear is almost as high as the top gear maximum, but the little machine is quite flexible in top, so there is no need for a lot of gearchanging.

Actually, the gearbox is a delight to use and quiet on all ratios. The rear axle is a spiral bevel, instead of the almost universal hypoid, and that is silent too. The steering is light and quick, giving a smaller turning circle than that of any other four-wheeler. The car is a pleasure to handle, behaving beautifully on corners and feeling entirely safe when driven hard. There is a very slight degree of understeer and it is rare indeed for bumps to set the rear axle hopping. The body sides get extremely muddy in bad weather as the wheels and tyres are not well covered.

The ride is not excessively hard but it's definitely a bit choppy and there's a good deal of up-and-down movement on country lanes. For a light car with a live rear axle, however, it's not a bad ride, and rather better than one might expect. Indeed, there are successful small cars that hop about more, though the riding comfort is not comparable with that of some French examples.

Even if the brakes are used to excess, they do not fade, having quite a light pedal pressure without the complication of a servo. During normal driving, the high gearing ensures that the machinery is by no means noisy. It becomes more audible if maximum revs are used, but the Kitten is not a noisy little car.

The very light weight is a great advantage for it makes the car feel as though it has quite a large engine, which is somewhat surprising with only 848 cc. This lightness is not the result of flimsy construction but stems from the simplicity of the design. The engine is quite flexible and does not tend to rumble at low revs, but for fast driving on winding roads it certainly pays to stay in third gear. It is possible to achieve 50 mpg without any trick driving, partly because the little engine produces surprising torque around 3,500 rpm, so there is no need to use high revs in normal motoring.



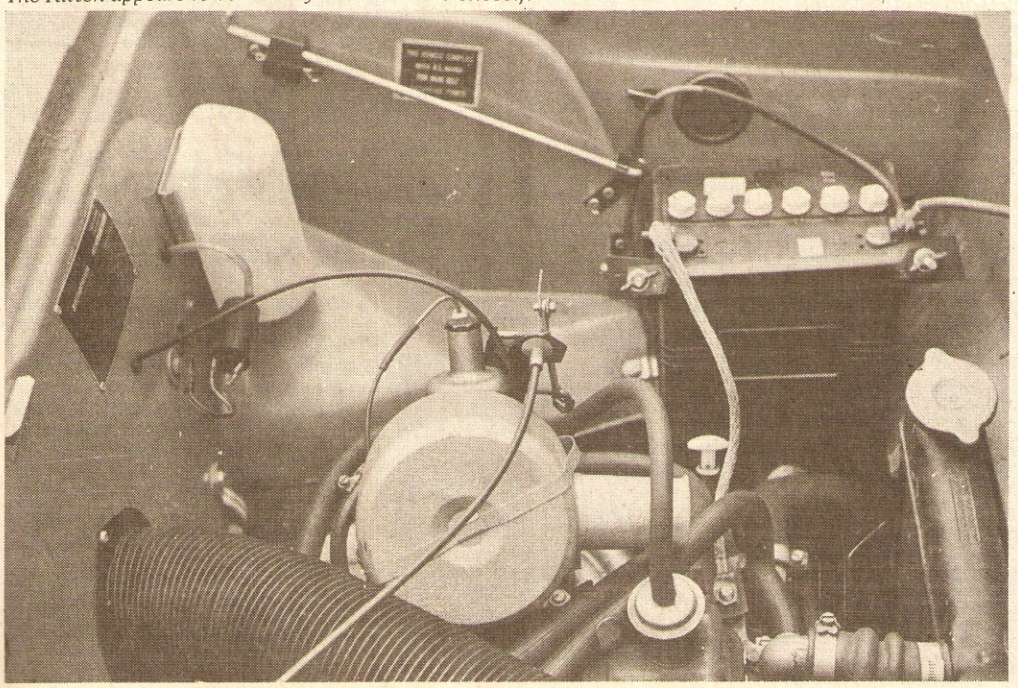
The rear window is frameless. A shelf automatically covers the luggae boot.

This would appear to be an easy car to service oneself, though there's not a lot of space around the engine.

In general, the standard of construction is high, but the front windscreen has a curiously wide surround which gives the effect of very thick screen pillars. Some small details look a bit cheap, but the car seems soundly built for a long life. The light-alloy engine has wet liners, so it would be easy to do a reconditioning job without removing the unit from the chassis. With the dreaded rust problem virtually eliminated, it should be possible to keep on motoring indefinitely. The equipment is adequate, the heater working well, though there is only a central eyeball ventilator and one has to pay extra for a heated rear window.

This report lays a good deal of emphasis on the light weight of the Kitten, and of course the edge would be taken off the performance if one habitually transported a full load of hefty adults and their luggage. However, the average car spends most of its life with just the driver and perhaps one passenger aboard, so the comments on its liveliness are justified. It may not be possible with this form of construction to compete directly in price with the mass-production, pressed-steel offerings, but there are many worthwhile advantages, as Lotus have already proved.

The Kitten appears to be an easy car to service oneself.



Car tested: Reliant Kitten 2-door saloon, price £1,499 including car tax and VAT.

Engine: Four cylinders 62.5 x 69.1 mm (848 cc). Compression ration 9.5 to 1. 40 bhp DIN at 5500 rpm. Pushrod-erated overhead valves. SU carburetter.

Transmission: Single dry plate clutch. 4-speed synchromesh gearbox, ratios 1.0, 1.32, 2.05 and 3.88 to 1. Spiral level rear axle, ration 3.23 to 1.

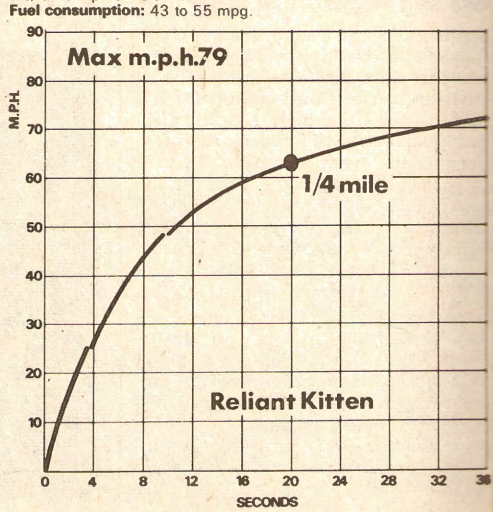
Chassis: Box-section steel frame with separate glassfibre body. Independent front suspension by wishbones and coil springs. Live rear axle on semi-elliptic springs. Rack and pinion steering. Drum brakes all round. Bolt-on steel wheels fitted 145-10in tyres.

Equipment: 12-volt lighting and starting. Speedometer. Fuel and water temperature gauges. Heating, demisting and ventilation system. Windscreen wipers and washers. Flashing direction indicators with hazard warning. Extra: heated rear window.

Dimensions: Wheelbase 7ft 2in. Track (front) 4ft 0.5in (rear) 4ft 1in. Overall length 11ft 1in. Width 4ft 8in. Weight 10.1 cwt.

Performance: Maximum speed 79 mph. Speeds in gears: Third 76 mph, second 48 mph, first 26 mph. Standing quarter-mile 20.2s. Acceleration: 0-30 mph 4.6 s, 0-50 mph 10.6 s, 0-60 mph 17.2 s, 0-70 mph 32.0 s.

Fuel consumption: 43 to 55 mpg.





Dawson in the Dean. More hard work for the car lies ahead this year.

Stratos for Castrol rounds

Chequered Flag plans for the remainder of the season seem to be virtually finalized now. The team will continue campaigning their hard-working Stratos heavily in national and international rallies. Per Inge Walfridsson will be in the car for home internationals, the 1000 Lakes and the Swedish, while both the Porsche and the Stratos are expected to be seen on the Circuit of Ireland and in Galway. The idea seems to be to try and pick up points in the ECR series and should this plan go with success, some more continental events may be in the offing.

Good news for British rally fans is that Warner is negotiating a deal with a prominent British stage driver who is apparently delighted at the prospect of driving the car on Castrol/AUTOSPORT rounds. Details however have yet to be finalized. Meanwhile the Stratos continued its ill-fated run at the weekend and a fine start by Dawson on the Dean with two fastest times on the first two stages, came to nought when he discovered a 'box full of neutrals on the fourth test — an occurrence with which the 'Flag are depressingly familiar but which had not so far afflicted them with the 'new, improved' transmission. In the afternoon an upright broke on the suspension, a disturbing happening which should not occur as a result of a bump. The break suggests that perhaps the chassis is not 100 per cent fit following the severe knock it took on the Eppynt ranges recently.

The 'Motor' sponsor RAC series

Late last week a deal was agreed between the *Motor* magazine and the RAC to sponsor the RAC championship this year. The situation now means that the championship is henceforth to be known as the *Motor* RAC Rally Championship. The architect of the deal is staffman and rally co-driver Hamish Cardno who finished thrashing out the details with Dean Delamont last Friday. It involves the magazine in paying for the championship prize fund at the end of the year (approximately £2000), or considerably less than forking out for the Tour of Britain, as editor Roger Bell pointed out on Monday. The magazine will be spending a considerable sum on promoting the series in other ways, however, and it was the gap left by the withdrawal from involvement with the Avon Tour of Britain which prompted this new move in the direction of rallying – a move which has hitherto been uncharacteristic for the journal which has predominently racing overtones. They seem to have accomplished something of a coup here, and if the business is handled with flair, *Motor* should be able to promote a wider interest still in rallying while doing themselves a power of good in the process.

● We hear that Pirelli are to sponsor the *Cars and Car Conversions* rally championship and official release from the company will follow when details are complete.

Granite tools

Sponsors for this year's Granite City rally which was unfortunately curtailed by snow last year, are the Tool Division of the Consolidated Pneumatic Tool Co which has its UK headquarters in Aberdeen. Regulations for the event, which takes place on March 13th and is the third round of the RAC championship, are available from the Secretary of the Meeting, Bob Shearer, 53A Victoria Street, Aberdeen AB1 1UX. Rally HQ is the Treetops Hotel.

● The Welsh Association of Motor Clubs Year Book has now been available for some time and can be obtained at 20p plus 9p postage from Press Office Megan Lewis, Rhydonnen, Pentrecourt, Llandysul, Dyfed. The telephone number is 055-932-3219.

Kitted out

Another one joins the kit car hordes! Nigel Rockey's latest news is that Ford have agreed to provide him with a fully trimmed and modified rally RS1800 shell together with the loan of an engine for the year courtesy of Brian Hart and would supply parts direct from Boreham at cost plus 20 per cent. This is good news for Nigel and with the talented Mike Phillips to help him, there is no doubt that the car will be ultra-competitive; the problem is how to run it, for Nigel does not plan to sell house, business and other valuables to go rallying; having nearly bankrupted himself in the past pursuing the same interests, so 'hunt the sponsor' is very much the game being played down in Bristol at present. Should nothing be forthcoming, he will have to pass over the opportunity as he feels that he would be unable to take advantage of the deal were he to run privately. He has optimistically put in an entry for the Mintex but not the Snowman which is too close now to be even a possibility.

Leyland conquer trans-Sahara spectacular

Leyland Cars 1-2 on an international rally? The possibility seems to owe more to the past than the present, but that is what happened this week when two self-prepared Range Rovers entered by a Paris Leyland dealer, swept the board on Claud Bertrand's latest marathon – the Cote d'Ivoire- Cote d'Azure – a 17-day spectactular open to motorbikes as well as four-wheeled vehicles. The route, including a crossing of the Sahara, covered 6,250 miles and of 96 starters, 28 finished. There were three more Range Rovers in the top ten and a motorbike (a Honda) finished seventh. Third was a four-wheel-drive Renault 12 device known as a Sinpar. Winning crew were Jacky Prive/Dan Blain and the second-placed Rover, driven by Cyril De Rouver, had 53,000 miles on the clock!

Ronnie McCartney/Frank Main in a Mk 1 Lotus Cortina on the Dean! The behind-the-scenes story of how they came to be in the car can only fully be understood by the Irish–see page 49. this must become the "quiz" picture of the future.



"Road racing" on the Dean

If a driver has a mechanical problem in the course of an event, does he then become a hazard to other public road users? This is a question which Owen James, Clerk of the Course on the highly successful Shellsport Dean last weekend is now considering very seriously indeed, for apparently the behaviour of some drivers on the road sections between stages was utterly appalling and he was presented with two separate complaints from independent sources about the incidents in both morning and afternoon.

What surprised Owen perhaps more than anything, was the fact that these complaints concerned 'star' names or as Owen remarked "people who ought to know better. If they behave in this fashion, then quite honestly I'd rather not see them at all," he said after considering the matter some two days after the event. "It is very poor form indeed and emphatically not the sort of behaviour one expects from very prominently seeded gentlemen. When highly professional people drive on the public road in a wholly reprehensible, 'rock-ape' manner, they are doing no one, not even themselves any good at all. Just one incident like this can set my entire operation back six months and undoes years of public relations work."

Apparently one well-known driver, having experienced a mechanical problem in the morning, was clocked at 82mph by the Police on a narrow section of the Dean's winding roads. Owen is now worried that Police and public reaction to this sort of hooliganism may damage the reputation of rallying in the area for some time to come, and indeed the ramifications of the issue in national terms could seriously throw the entire sport in jeopardy.

Owen was further dismayed to discover that while hotels for miles around were solidly packed with bookings, the Gateway Motel, rally HQ, had a number of rooms vacant. The reason for this was that bookings were not taken up and no effort was made to inform the management — the culprits? Why it is those prominent professionals again!

Campbell is off to a great start

The first round of the Eire Rally championship, the Boreen Rally, took place last weekend. The championship, which involves combined stage and navigational events, was predictably won by Sean Campbell/Paul Phelan in their very quick G1 RS2000 from Brendan Fagan/Kenny Johnston in their Mexico. John Coyne's Avenger GT was third while Gerry Buckley (Billy Coleman's cousin), who had been leading the rally after the special stage sections, then retired with headgasket failure. The same affliction befell John Tansey's BMW (he now seems to have forsaken the unreliable Porsche).

Russell Brookes ties it up

Andrews Heat, Castrol and Dunlop support

Following weeks of negotiations with would-be co-sponsors, Russell Brookes has finally sorted out his rally plans for '76. Brookes reckoned that he needed some £12,000 with which to effectively contest the season of RAC championship rounds, and no two sponsors could agree to come up with the necessary finance split in a mutually suitable ratio between them. Despite what was said at a recent forum in Birmingham, namely that the *Birmingham Post* were to be heavily involved, and separate negotiations with Bristol Street Motors, the right formula was not found and Russell's programme appeared a little on the bleak side before John Andrews decided, in the absence of another suitable deal, to put up the full amount necessary. The car is thus entered solely by Andrews' Heat for Hire, this being their third year of involvement with Russell, and the car will also be strongly supported by Castrol and Dunlop.

The team will continue with the RS1800 which made its debut on the Welsh last year, and the car will shortly be supplemented by a tarmac specification Escort for use on events such as the Circuit of Ireland and the Manx. New addition to the personnel is chief mechanic, Peter Harrison, who is an engine development engineer at Rover. Peter is, however, no stranger to rallying, and he has in fact prepared Roger Clark's car in the past (everyone must remember that Monte Carlo Rover 2000!).

Avon/Sutton signings go ahead

The Dean provided a suitable venue for the public announcement of Avon's heavy involvement with David Sutton (Cars) Ltd in 1976. Left to right: Alan Blake of Avon, David Sutton, Pentti Airikkala and John Davenport.

John is scheduled to compete on just one more rally with Airikkala (the Snowman) before taking up his new appointment at the RAC-Belgrave Square. (But doubtless a Rally Record finale will reveal more.)



Arctic news, Monte imminent

A road accident at the weekend "totally destroyed" the Monte Carlo-bound Polski Fiat which was to have been driven by Jussi Kynsilehto/Martin Holmes, so this pair will be non-starters on the event. However, the other two cars for Stawowiak and Ciecierzynski will be competing. Kynsilehto's Artic Rally car has already been shipped to Finland preparatory to the rally at the end of the month; meanwhile the Monte concentration routes start this weekend.

Principal entries for the Arctic include Simo Lampinen (Finnish Saab); Russling in a VW, Leo Kinnunen in a Volvo/Daf 66, Hamalainen in his Avenger, Haugland's and Saaristo's Skodas; and Jaroszewicz's Fiat Abarth 124 Spyder while Pauli Toivonen returns to contest a Simca (he is the Finnish concessionaire for the cars) while Timo Makinen's Ford entry at number two in the G1 RS2000 is now expected to be cancelled owing to the pressure of commitments at Boreham. The company considered running Makinen in a G2 car but dismissed the idea, reckoning that the car, under the tyre regulations appertaining to this event, would be out of rubber by about one third distance.

There are 135 entries for the secret route rally which boasts 800 stage kilometres. The longest stage is as usual the road to the Russian frontier and it is 114 kilometres long, attempted by the crews in both directions. Average stage length is between 40 and 50 kilometres.

Regulations for the Tour of Britain will be out by the end of March; the start will be as usual at the Post House, Birmingham, and the prize fund currently stands at £4,250. The dates are the 9th/11th July.

Texaco take on Tour of Britain

Barrie Gill's leading questions at the Ford Motorsport conference with regard to the Tour of Britain could only have implied one thing; thus it was no surprise to hear last week that a sponsor had been found in the shape of Texaco who are now totally committed to the event in '76. The Tour is promised to be bigger and better than ever this year with more stages and a wider route being envisaged. The event will be staged the weekend before the British Grand Prix in order to attract the F1 racing drivers and Ford have expressed their interest over the possibility of putting their rally stars into the fray.

Meanwhile negotiations are now underway on the details of the event. The main problem for Peter Browning and the BRSCC however is one of classes — whether run to FIA Group One, RAC Group One, or production saloon classes . . . Peter himself would prefer to support the home teams where possible, thus he is at present sounding them out as to their thoughts on the matter, but there is a possibility that there may be classes for both FIA and RAC G1 regs as Peter feels that they may not necessarily be incompatible. As to the possibility of the G3 class for invited drivers to provide a sort of race within a race, Browning felt that it would likely as not become a Porsche benefit and he is adamant that the Tour must not encroach on the unique style of the two premier events in this country, the Grand Prix and the RAC Rally. He is convinced that the Tour, at least this year, must continue in the style and format with which it has been hitherto identified, "but the last thing we want is for potential competitors to have to splash out on expensive re-preparation for one event; the dilemma is that we have so many G1 formulae . . ."

Organisers meet

Last week a very well attended meeting of the organisers of Castrol/AUTOSPORT rounds took place at the palatial Burmah House premises in Swindon. The meeting was most informative and differing ideas were discussed at length before the company dispersed in the small hours. One of the tangible results of the highly informative discussions was the fact that it is most likely that Castrol rounds will be using digital clocks for stage timing purposes in the very near future. A further meeting on similar lines is expected to be scheduled for mid-season.

Meanwhile Castrol are to make a film of the '76 championship and rounds to be immortalized under the talented direction of Barry Hinchcliffe include at least the Mintex International, the Circuit of Donegal, the Arkell and the Manx.

Meanwhile trade support for the championship is growing and major companies are showing considerable interest. Goodyear have so far confirmed a tyre bonus, and TechDel (Minilite) are among others presenting awards. First round is the Mintex international, which now has a full entry and is being held on February 19/21.

● Last Sunday while rallymen slugged it out in the Dean, the BTRDA held their Annual GM and luncheon in the St Johns Hotel, Solihull where the assembled company (less many of the rally fraternity) were presented their '75 awards in the convivial atmosphere imparted by both surroundings and company. An otherwise packed house had come to see representatives of the Autotest, autocross and production car trials world as they collected their trophies. Present also was a representative of the Esso petroleum company who of course are to sponsor the Gold Star rally championship this year.

Delays for Snowman entrants

THE GPO is causing the organisers of the Snowman, round two of the RAC championship at the end of the month, some headaches at present. Apparently there are some stupendous delays from southern England postal services with the result that letters posted before Christmas are even now only just reaching Inverness. Bob Wilson has asked us to point out that if competitors have not had an acknowledgement from the organisers they should get in touch with the entries sercretary on Inverness 37861 as soon as possible. The Mercury Motor Inn is now apparently fully booked but there are still vacancies at the Glen Mhor Hotel (Inverness 34308) or the Drumossie Hotel (Inverness 36451) for the event which takes place on Saturday 31st January. There is to be a rally forum on the Friday night with Brian Culcheth, Charles Samson, and Will Sparrow among the guests. Leading entries so far received include Russell Brookes, Billy Coleman, Colin Malkin, Tony Fall, Donald Heggie and Mick Bryant. There are 88 stage miles and 22 stages on the agenda.

The Dean witnessed another highly competent drive from the promising young Graham Elsmore whose style again impressed.



Dieudonne—B and O's best

Belgium is not noted for its export of ambitious single-seater drivers. Those that have made it into Formula 1 in the last 25 years number very few. The country is, however, gaining a reputation for prosperity and two factors partly explain this — hard work and the role of Brussels as a business centre. These two aspects combined in 1975 to provide the Formula 3 trail with an outfit renowned for its colourful, immaculate presentation — the Brian Lewis-run Bang & Olufsen team of March BMWs. They also provided team drivers Pierre Dieudonné and Herve Regout with a real chance of following the paths of Jacky Ickx and Teddy Pilette — all four of them hailing from Brussels.

Twenty-eight year old Pierre Dieudonné has reached his intermediate goal — that of performing well in a fully competitive, international formula. In a recent interview, held in the space-age Brussels HQ of the Danish hi-fi concern, Bang & Olufsen, Pierre described the almost traditional hurdles that confronted him. Parental opposition, followed by a complete lack of money and capped by the inevitable National Service all threatened to halt progress. Back in 1954, Monsieur Dieudonne was enticed along to a touring car race at Spa by his close friend, driver-journalist Paul Frere.

Seven year-old Pierre came too, and that, quite simply, was that. "From seven years I start to direct everything in my life and behaviour towards becoming a racing driver. When I left shool at 18, I told my parents that I want myself to become a racing driver and this was a big shock news to them and they went into some sort of despair because they wanted me to go to the university and so on." His father called in a mediator. "Because he found it a bit crazy to become a racing driver, he asked his friend Paul Frere to come and try to put me on the right path because he was convinced this man was going to tell me that it was something ridiculous. Of course, Paul Frere didn't say it was ridiculous."

The next step was to learn English, meet people and earn money. All three were provided by Frere who introduced him to Rob Walker and in the summer holidays after leaving school he worked in Walker's garage. Weekends were spent at Brands Hatch where, under instruction from Syd Fox and Tony Lanfranchi, he completed an MRS course. The satisfaction of hammering round Brands obviously did him some good — he came back to Brussels to settle down and take an engineering degree. "In England I had in fact a false press card which gave me a lot of facilities to reach the circuits — I decided I need to have a press card on my own."

A knock on the door of the now defunct Belgian edition of *Virage Auto* magazine brought immediate success. The editor was at that moment preparing material for an article on the ways in which keen youngsters found finance for racing. Pierre was a case in point and wrote the article himself. He continued freelance journalism during his three year honours degree in engineering, always finding a holiday job at Rob Walker's.

After college he worked for *Virage Auto* full time, and through this he got his first race – an Autodelta prepared Alfa Romeo GTAm in the 1970 Tour de France. He finished second in the touring class to the works GTAm of Giorgio Pianta. "The works drivers were big-headed and crazy enough to destroy themselves in the first two days – it was a sort of destroying derby."

This success led him to Aldo Celi, a Belgian constructor keen on entering the proposed Super VW. Pierre did the design and test work, with the chance of driving a second car. The first was for Willy Braillard. Pierre also drove his first Spa 24 hour race – in an Escort BDA. With the following year, 1972, came the opportunity of a full FSV season as lead driver for Celi – but Pierre had run out of time. His 12 months' National Service could not be put off any longer.

"At the army they were very good and gave me all the permission to go to the race meetings all over Europe and I never missed a race – I was just sort of jailed during the week which cut me from a lot of contacts."

His best result was 2nd to Brian Henton at Thruxton, but the whole Celi episode had been underfinanced and inconclusive. He came to the 1973 season a civilian, but with little money and no car. The Swiss Markus Hotz, constructor of the Horag FSV, hired him the '72 ex-Bertil Roos car for one race – the European Gold Cup opening round of the series at Nivelles, ten miles from Pierre's home. He beat the other three Horag team members, and ultimately earned himself a permanent place in the team. Income came from his job as a reporter with the Belgian weekly *Sport Moteur*. Consistency brought success – and his name, in Belgian circles, was made.

At this time he met fellow Belgian Bernard de Dryver. This meeting was to change Pierre's career in dramatic fashion. Bernard was keen to enter FSV and sponsorship was to come from his father Freddy, head of Bang & Olufsen's Belgian subsidiary. The outcome was a team of B & O sponsored Horags, one for each of them. Nineteen seventy three also saw Pierre as reserve driver in the Spa 24 hour race for the Luigi team in their potent BMW 3.3 CSL Coupe. This he earned through consistency and "not sending the car in the armco."

Bang & Olufsen were keen to continue in 1974, launching themselves into F2 with Surtees which Pierre describes as "a sad affair really, and a missed season for me – virtually no racing." Whilst the ensuing legal wrangle was played out Pierre was left with only two races – he won a Mexico race and came 10th at Spa, again in the Luigi BMW. Bang & Olufsen's 1975 activity in F2 and F3 is recent history. Pierre was placed 9th in the prestigious BP Super Visco Championship, with a best result of 2nd at Snetterton to Gunnar Nilsson. Two third places at Silverstone confirmed his consistency. Pierre Dieudonné fits two moulds – one, the F3 driver with a clinical approach to the art form of single-seaters. The other, the endurance driver who lives and breathes a BMW Coupe on Europe's last road circuit.



"Spa is a great circuit, that's for sure. I would like to drive once a prototype or single-seater there. I don't really like the 24 hours, there are too many cars and too many differences in speed. I think it's a bit of a crazy race and the track also is a bit crazy. What is great is that it really sorts the drivers. The problem is at night at Spa – the drivers are flat out in the blind bends; even in the BMW we are flat out nearly everywhere. That means 160 mph down Masta. The marshals have their flags and little lights and I wonder what they can see with headlights in their eyes. The sport cannot afford the sort of tragedy we've had there. Spa must have warning lights so the marshals can first push a button and go and assist at the scene of an accident. This is better than stopping the race. Even in the rain you cannot stop the race – it's going to be farcical. We've got good wet tyres. I think it's just up to the driver not to try and be a hero."

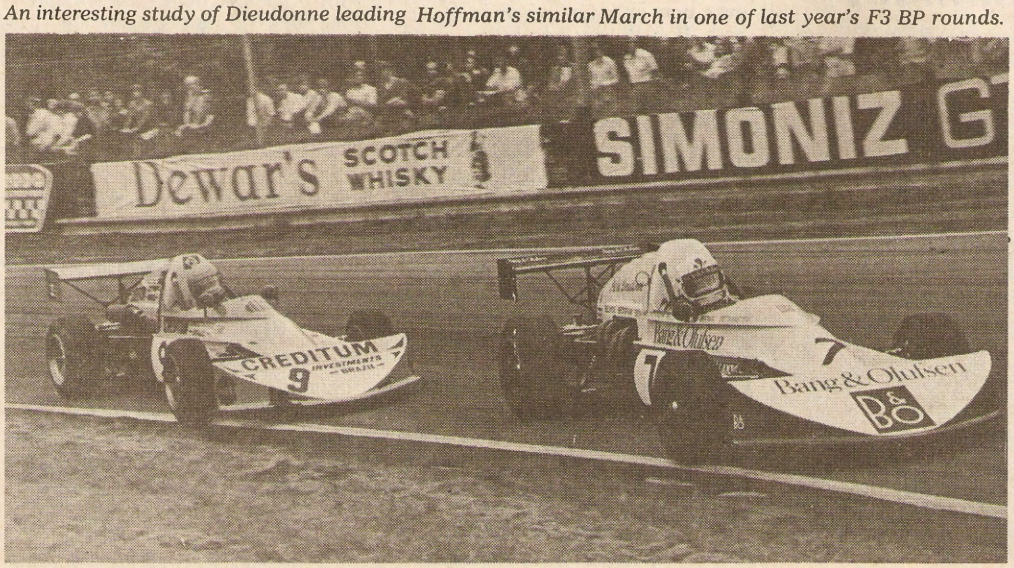
The B & O team, run by Brian Lewis, has set enviable standards in F2 and F3 this year. The immaculate cars and equipment, all in red, white and black, have been a mobile showpiece. What about the view from inside? "Brian Lewis is very good — very professional. We built up a good relationship inside the team which was very important. The only problem we suffered is that we have not been allowed to do private testing. We have had a good team in appearance, which is what B & O really wanted, but we have not really had the opportunity to try and win. The budget was not as enormous as a lot of people thought. We didn't have an awful lot of money, we couldn't afford new tyres every meeting. We had to rely on what the sponsor wanted to do. They were paying the bills and this was quite an important bill this year. Personally I would have liked it done in a little different manner."

What then is B & O's conception of sponsorship? "B & O said in the beginning of 1973 they want a three year involvement so this means they stop at the end of the '75 season. They don't want to go too far in connecting their normal activities with motor racing . . . they think it is good to spread the knowledge of the name Bang & Olufsen. But they don't want to link race cars to their products. The general public are listening to classical music on their equipment and racing cars are something noisy and sometimes dirty so they don't want to mix it. I think they are quite right to do it that way."

With the departure of Bang & Olufsen, Dieudonné is so far a free agent for 1976. "Big problem – once again I will have to fight and find a solution. I would like to move to England which I think is most important. If I don't find a sponsor I shall still find a way to carry on because I don't think it's sufficient reason to stop."

RUSSELL DOUGLAS

An interesting study of Dieudonne leading Hoffman's similar March in one of last year's F3 BP rounds.





The familiar sight and also the most spectacular sight, "visibly quicker" than his challengers.

RAC RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP — 1 **SHELLSPORT DEAN**

1976—No room at the top

By JOHN DAVENPORT **Photographs by HUGH BISHOP**

Writing rally reports on British events has become progressively more difficult ever sine 1972 when Stuart Turner decided to run a works car for Roger Clark in the RAC Championship. The reason is that Clark has won so many rallies that in reporting his latest success, one is highly likely to repeat the adjectives and superlatives of the previous week. It would not be too bad if he had the decency to encounter some kind of problem along the way and then fight his way back up to a narrow victory. The fact of the matter is that normally, after a careful start, the Roger Clark/Jim Porter/Ford Escort machine gets in tune and with a consistency that is the envy of its rivals and just goes majestically ahead and stays there.

That is how it has been for four seasons but 1976 promised to be different. Two ex-patriate Finns had been fixed up to come and drive in the RAC series and both Ari Vatanen and Pentti Airikkala had cars that were the equal of Clark's. Russell Brookes and Billy Coleman, both of whom have shown that they can nudge the master on occasions, had their works-loaned Escorts for another year. Then there was DOT with the Kadett that finished fourth on the RAC Rally. Vauxhall with the 16-valve Magnum in the charge of Will Sparrow and Colin Malkin now proceeding with a Wilson-supported 16-valve Chrysler Avenger; plus a host of other drivers, some of whom like Tony Fowkes have shown that they are world class drivers in recent months. What chance would Clark stand against all this assembled talent?

If the Shellsport sponsored Tour of Dean is anything to go by, the rest of the circus can forget its hopes and aspirations and resign themselves to another year of Clark as champion. He won the rally as he pleased even though the Cossack car looked as if it had come straight from the finish of the RAC Rally with just a wash to remove the dirt. The man who Ford hoped would give him something to think about was Ari Vatanen who with Peter Bryant drove the PG Escort that had actually won the RAC Rally. They finished second overall, 36 seconds behind Clark, after a rally where Vatanen confessed that he had been feeling his way a bit more carefully (until Brookes started to turn the pressure on) not wishing to repeat his RAC accident which he-(just)-didn't. Just seven seconds behind the Anglo-Finnish crew was the works-supplied Escort of Russell Brookes/John Brown who are continuing with Andrews Heat for Hire and plan on doing a very full season in Britain. Getting on for a minute behind them was the Cables and Components entered Escort Mk 1 of Tony Fowkes/Bryan Harris exercising caution too in view of the fact that they had rolled the self-same car on this event last year.

Ex-British Champions, Billy Coleman/Donal O'Sullivan finished fifth with the Thomas Motors Escort after a day of problems but they still pipped Tony Fall/Mike Broad for that position by a mere two seconds.

Just three seconds behind Fall was Graham Elsmore, teamed with Rupert Saunders in his own Escort Mk 1 who gave Avon Tyres their highest placing on the rally and showed that recent successes were no flukes for this promising young driver. Over a minute behind were Will Sparrow/Ron Crellin in the DTV Vauxhall Magnum appearing for the first time under the direction of Bill Blydenstein's rally team. Next man home was the friendly 'butcher's boy', Tony Drummond, whose Escort scraped in just one second ahead of Colin Malkin/Paul White in a small engined version (1917cc) of the 16-valve Avenger.

Just out of the top ten was Chris Sclater who with Martin Holmes gave the 16-valve, two litre Toyota Celica its first rally finish though it could doubtless have been better placed had he had more time to build the car and to accustom himself to it. As it was he finished just ahead of the top placed Group 1 car which, as on the RAC Rally, was the Leyland Dolomite Sprint, driven on this

Tony Fowkes drove his soon to be replaced Mk 1 car steadily to 4th place.



occasion by their new signing, Tony Pond and Dave Richards. "Team Captain" Brian Culcheth, was out for the day in a TR7 following the rally and seeing how it went. Robin Eyre-Maunsell was second in Group 1 while the new DTV man, Jimmy McRae was third in a Magnum Coupé and together with Jeff Churchill in another Group 1 Magnum, helped to win the team prize for DTV. Before the start, many eyes had been on the Stratos, the Chequered Flag machine which this time was to be driven by Andy Dawson in association with Clive Richardson of *Motor Sport* magazine. Both car and driver proved their worth by recording fast times in the first stages but then surprisingly last year's gearbox problems returned and it collected a maximum which together with other problems meant that they finished 24th. Pat Ryan collected a class win in his BL Allegro while in the same class, Mike Jackson had typical bad luck with the Crystals 1300 BDA Escort when it collected a maximum on the very last stage while leading by a couple of minutes.

As an event that set the pattern for single day stage events more years ago than most of us care to remember, the Tour of Dean and the Newport Car Club have a special spot in British rallying. However, it is only this year for the first time that they have been in the RAC Championship and the result was an entry even more fabulous than they normally expect.

Toyota Brussels in the person of Ove Andersson had lent Chris Sclater a two litre Celica but Chris had to re-prepare it himself and found that the rear brake assembly given him to modify the heavily rear-accentuated braking were not complete so that he had to run with the car as it was. Unfortunately, Andy Cowan was amongst the non-starters in his works Colt Lancer as he had to push off to New Zealand earlier in the week following the death there of his father. Barry Lee failed to start after taking the Datsun Violet down off its trailer and discovering that a camshaft had seized.

The most incredible story of the rally, reserved from Irish folklore, concerned that of Ronnie McCartney, who sold his Porsche on the Thursday evening on the way to the rally and then decided to send for the McCartney Mazda which expired on the motorway not a stones throw from Lloyds of Stafford. A chance conversation in a pub led to Ronnie and the irrepressible Frank Main driving a Mk 1 Cortina GT with Twin Cam engine lent by the co-driver of another car entered in the rally. McCartney got it to the finish, albeit 76th overall, but for him the best bit of the rally was when Peter Ashcroft came over, looked at the car, saw a convert from Porsche to Ford, and suggested that he might like to try an Escort!

The rally comprised 16 stages in eight locations with eight stages before lunch and eight after. From the start, Dawson put his foot down and set fastest time on the two stages outside Monmouth, but then he spun on stage three trying to see how late he could brake for a corner, and then on stage four, over some ruts, the gearbox selected neutral and stayed there. He enterprisingly got it off the stage and into the arms of the service crew (the crew failed to raise service on the radio despite the fact that the barge was scarcely two miles away)



It even looks awkward – Chris Sclater suffered a day of problems with the hastily-prepared Toyota Celica.

who found him the gears and he continued but at a steadier pace (the problem, again, was bent selector forks). On the 10th stage he broke a front upright on an invisible bump, a disturbing occurence in itself, and then three stages from the end a brake pipe pulled off, leaving him with no rear brakes.

Clark took it carefully on the first stages and had some reason for thinking that his tyres were those on which he had finished the RAC Rally, but by stage three, he had shaken off the cobwebs and was fast, as indeed he was on rest of the stages that morning. Meanwhile John Taylor posted his second retirement in a row with engine failure. Airikkali ws suffering from the effects of four days in bed with 'flu and though he kept pace with the other Escorts on the short stages, he almost flaked out on the longer Serridge stage and lost quarter of a minute to Clark. He was in the middle of experimenting with radial and cross-ply Avons when the gear selector started to play up and he set off on stage eight with co-driver Davenport selecting gears with a screwdriver. In the middle of the stage, the electronic pickup failed, the distributor stopped working and they were out. Avon Tyres team mate Jill Robinson took a message out to the David Sutton mechanics but they could not find the car in the middle of Speech House. The Girls were also to retire their Escort RS2000 while easily leading the ladies and lying 24th overall when the engine inexplicably seized on Sallow Vallets. The David Sutton flag was kept flying by David Palmby/Peter Clarke who returned to the rally scene to finish 32nd in their RS2000.

Will Sparrow was having twin troubles with his Magnum which misfired at high revs and this was only partially cured by changing the plugs. He also had too little rear brakes which were fine after they had been adjusted, but didn't last too long, and this caused him to smite the bank at a confusingly arrowed hairpin turn on the first stage. Retired already was Russell Close in the Motor Centre's Escort RS1800 when the rear axle assembly tore out on Mailscot 1, freeing the propellor shaft to wreak havoc under the car. Brookes had lost most of the effectiveness of his limited slip differential but poor Coleman in the other loaned Escort was without most of the gears in the box and had to limp through to lunchtime where the box was changed. That was not the end of his troubles by any means as twice in the afternoon his rear brakes locked on in a stage while accelerating hard, and this was eventually traced to a faulty rear servo which was disconnected.

Sclater was wishing that he had a servo on his Toyota as with all the brakes biased towards the rear, the car was very difficult to stop in a straight line. Rockey in his one-off drive for Graham Lepley's Derby Road Garage had a trailing arm break after four stages and then two stage later the rear wheel complete with shaft came off the other side when the wheel nuts sheared at 80 mph and promptly overtook him.

Paul Faulkner had a sticking throttle early on but was in more serious problems when the rear brake unions kept leaking and rather than have a nasty accident, he called it a day. The Johnsons of Gainsborough Escort RS2000 driven by Peter Hanson had a very exciting day, hitting a rotten stump on Serridge and then demolishing a gatepost on Nags Head. The left-hand drive car only suffered creasing and we shall see this racing driver out again on other events. The entry of a works car from Mercedes (GB) did not draw as much attention as it might have done and the 350 SLC proved quite a handful for Jonathan Ashman who gained a maximum on Serridge when the power steering and power brakes deceived him as to what the front wheels wanted to do. They gained three fails for missing stages but were classified as finishers.

The Opel Kadett broke its Panhard rod mounting in the morning and when Fall was getting more "with it" in the afternoon, the misbehaved to the extent of losing its clutch twice when severe bumps caused the engine to touch the guard, and sprung the circlip off the cable. He was comparing notes with fellow GM driver Sparrow and was surprised to learn that the Vauxhall did not crash through in such a fashion thanks to its new 250 lb front springs which has apparently transformed the rough road talents of the car. Tony Pond was finding the Dolomite "interesting" to drive but apart from having an alternator go on Russells and an elusive problem with the water system which sometimes inexplicably boiled, the car gave no trouble. He tried using the Dunlop A2s during the day and was very enthusiastic about them. The works Fords swapped to these "racing" tyres for the afternoon session when the roads were well scraped, but Brookes was a bit chary and lost 30 seconds to

Hopefully it won't be this car for long – Tony Pond had to content himself with group one victory.





Dramatic as ever, and always a spectators favourite, Colin Malkin could not, however, push the Avenger higher than 10th.

Vatanen in Reddings and Mailscot before adopting the same tyres and starting to pull back on the Finn. Graham Elsmore had his anti-roll bar come loose on Russells but his most serious problem was towards the end of the day when the lights refused to work except with the flasher switch and he had to do one of the dusk stages with this taped into the 'on' position.

The works Allegro came off Sallow Vallets 2 with the engine sounding terrible but the BL mechanics diagnosed a broken rocker and it went off as sweet as ever. The leaders in that class were Mike Jackson/Steve Howard in the Crystals 1300 BDA Escort but this stopped on the last stage with a faulty petrol pump switch and they did a time just two seconds short of a maximum. Tony Fowkes had his only problem of the day when his throttle pedal broke off at the hinge within sight of the finish of Speech House 2 while the eventual winner, Mr Clark, had his only worry when the sump began to drip oil after the penultimate stage and the Ford mechanics (a sense of deja vu?) had to pack the split. Ronnie McCartney was making progress with his borrowed mount after discovering that the misfire was caused by the pistons hitting the gaps closed on the spark plugs. Piggy Thompson enjoyed his days motoring in the Porsche Carrera but would have gone better had the suspension been more suitably set and if he had not been progressively losing gears. Afternoon problems for Sclater included a plastic injection pipe that split and had to be replaced after Russells 2 while Eyre-Maunsell found his problems away from the stages when a private Volvo turned right and struck his Avenger amidships, bending the axle and generally giving the Chrysler boys plenty to do before he could continue.

The battle between Vatanen and a rapidly closing and chastened Brookes kept the spectators happy right to the end with the young Finn doing some really desperate things to retain his place. One of his near accidents saw him broadside and stopped on the finish line of the very last stage and he could be grateful for the fact that the timekeeper recorded the time despite the threat to his own security.

The rally had been a great success and had provided plenty of enjoyment for its 88 finishers and hundreds of spectators. In particular, the co-operation of the police had helped in making for a smooth-running rally while the laxness of the road timing had kept as many people in the event as was possible without imposing too great a strain on the marshals. Results were final by 8.45 and the hour's delay between this and prizegiving was due to the fact that all the replica cups were properly engraved with the winners' names adding a final touch of efficiency to a thoroughly professional and enjoyable event.

The forceful new combination of Airikkala/Davenport and a Ford were side-lined with ignition failure.



1976 Shellsport Dean

1, R. Clark/J. Porter (RS1800) 85.25;
2, A. Vatanen/P. Bryant (RS 1800) 86.01;
3, R. Brookes/J. Brown (RS1800) 86.08;
4, T. Fowkes/B. Harris (RS1600) 86.56;
5, B. Coleman/D. O'Sullivan (RS1800) 88.38;
6, T. Fall/M. Broad (Opel Kadett) 88.40; 7, G. Elsmore/R. Sanders (RS1600); 8, W. Sparrow/R. Crellin (Vauxhall Magnum) 89.56; 9, T. Drummond/M. Knutton (RS1600) 90.19; 10, C. Malkin/P. White (Chrysler Avenger) 90.20.

Group one
1, T. Pond/D. Richards (Dolomite Sprint) 91.47
2, R. Eyre Maunsell/N. Wilson (Chrysler Avenger) 93.13.

Stage times

Reddings 1
1=Dawson, Brookes and Rockey 5.51; 3, Vatanen 5.53; 4=Airikkala, Clark, Fowkes 5.55.

Mailscot 1
1, Dawson 6.37; 2, Vatanen 6.40; 3, Brookes 6.44; 4=Fowkes and Faulkner 6.46.

Sallow Vallets 1
1, Clark 3.36; 2, Brookes 3.39; 3, Vatanen 3.40; 4, Airikkala 3.41; 5, Sparrow 3.43.

Serridge 1
1, Clark 6.54; 2, Vatanen 6.58; 3, Fowkes 7.02; 4, Brookes 7.04; 5, Drummond 7.07.

Kensley 1
1, Clark 2.16; 2, Brookes 2.17; 3=Coleman and Drummond 2.19; 5=Vatanen, Fowkes, Rockey and Fall 2.21.

Speech House 1
1, Coleman 5.02, 2, Sclater 5.03; 3, Clark 5.17; 4, Brookes 5.24; 5, Fowkes 5.25.

Russells 1
1, Clark 3.40; 2, Brookes 3.41; 3=Fowkes and Fall 3.46; 5=Airikkala and Elsmore 3.48.

Speech House 2
1, Clark 8.02; 2, Vatanen 8.03; 3, Fowkes 8.08; 4, Brookes 8.13; 5, Dawson 8.19.

Reddings 2
1, Clark 5.38; 2, Vatanen 5.39; 3=Fowkes and Brookes 5.49; 5, Elsmore 5.51.

Mailscot 2
1, Clark 5.46; 2, Vatanen 5.51; 3, Elsmore 6.02; 4, Brookes 6.04; 5, Coleman 6.05.

Swallow Vallets 2
1, Vatanen 4.13; 2, Clark 4.15; 3=Brookes and Elsmore 4.16; 5, Coleman 4.17.

Nags Head
1, Vatanen 2.47; 2=Clark and Brookes 2.50; 4=Sparrow and Drummond 2.53.

Russells 2
1, Brookes 4.11; 2, Vatanen 4.15; 3, Clark 4.18; 4, Fowkes 4.21; 5, Dawson 4.26.

Serridge 2
1, Brookes 6.09; 2, Clark 6.10; 3, Fowkes 6.13; 4, Vatanen 6.18; 5, Coleman 6.23.

Kensley 2
1, Clark 2.25; 2, Vatanen 2.26; 3, Brookes 2.27; 4, Fowkes 2.28; 5, Fall 2.30.

Speech House 2
1, Brookes 11.29; 2, Clark 11.31; 3, Fowkes 11.32; 4, Vatanen 11.34; 5, Fall 11.49.

County competition

Silverstone Circuits have announced a new idea for their Championship season in 1976 — the Jaybrand Racewear Silverstone League. This covers thirteen counties within an approximate fifty mile radius of Silverstone and features Formula Ford, Clubmans and Special Saloon cars.

Much support from competitors and spectators at Silverstone's well-attended Championship race meetings comes from the Midlands, West Country, Home Counties and Eastern England. Therefore the introduction of this Inter-County League brings an added interest and involvement with which the local supporters can become immediately identified.

The winning County will receive the first Jaybrand Racewear Silverstone County League Trophy, together with £600 which will be equally divided between each member of the County who scores qualifying points. In addition a prize of £50 will be made to the driver who scores the highest number of points for a county.

Silverstone's eleven major Championship meetings are involved in the County League and the rules/regulations have been made as simple as possible. County points are scored on the finishing positions of the normal Championship races covering Formula Ford, Special Saloons and Clubmans provided the driver's home County is one of those included in the League. Race programmes will state clearly the drivers eligible to score County points and for which County.

League tables and details of County drivers will be made available in the race programme in press information prior to and following each round. In addition, over 100 local motor clubs within the 13 counties will be kept informed of the latest information relevant to their County.

The qualifying counties are Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Gloucestershire, Hertfordshire, Leicestershire, Middlesex, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire. The driver's home county, declared on the entry form for each meeting is used as a basis for points scoring and foreign competitors can score points depending on which county they are living in.

The points scoring system is 10-9-8-7- etc to one for the first ten in a single class race on overall positions in finals only, and 8-6-4-3-2 in races with classes. If more than one driver from the same county scores in a race or class, only the highest position counts for County points.

The events, plus the eligible relevant classes of racing at that meeting are as follows:

March 14, FF, Clubmans; March 28, FF, SS; April 19, FF, Clubmans; April 25, FF, SS, Clubmans; May 31, FF, Clubmans; June 6, Clubmans; June 20, FF, SS; July 4, SS; August 1, FF, SS, Clubmans; August 30, FF, SS, Clubmans; October 2, FF, SS, Clubmans.

Hurt fights off tight scrap

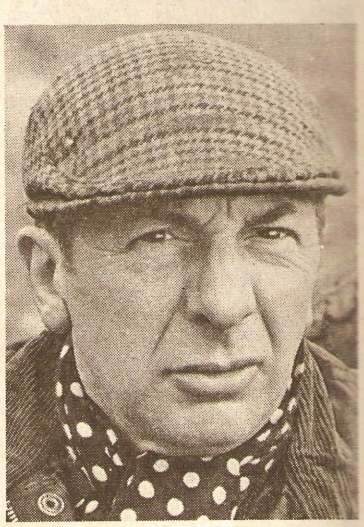
A shortage of marshals, plus some inexperience among those present, caused a slightly nasty taste among several RAC Sporting Trials Championship contenders when they tackled the Harrison Sporting Trial last Sunday at Dronfield near Sheffield, run by the Sheffield and Hallamshire MC.

Only 24 of the listed 36 entries appeared for three rounds of a fairly good set of sections, some greasy and some offering tremendous grip and the event quickly resolved itself into a four man contest with Messrs Hurt, Julian Fack, Pearce and Jackson the contenders.

Hurt, in his Ford Special, took the lead from the first round and steadily increased it all day ending up with a nine mark margin with a total of 64 marks lost. Jackson, the only southerner to make the trip, was four marks off the pace in his Ibex initially and he held a single mark advantage over Messrs Fack and Pearce in their Impunity and Kincraft machinery.

On the second tour, which Hurt led by five marks, the three way scrap for second was still mainly unresolved with only two marks between all three and this was how it remained for the rest of the day with Fack eventually squeezing into second on 73 marks from Pearce (74) and Jackson (75).

One of the new Facksimilies, driven by Robin Alexander, was eventually fifth but a long way off the pace with 105 marks lost.



Lol Hurt – nine mark win.

Alexander had begun the day well in fifth spot along with Malcolm Eaves (Cannon) while Ray Hatton (Harford) and Norman Manser (Tirsman) and Keith Butterfield (Cannon), all tied for seventh spot.

The pace was too hot however and although Manser stayed in touch on the second tour along with Eaves, Bob Dayson in his Crugar eventually slotted home sixth.

1, L. Hurt (Ford Special), 64 marks; 2, Julian Fack (Impunity), 73 marks; 3, J. Pearce (Kincraft), 74 marks; 4, G. Jackson (Ibex), 75 marks; 5, R. Alexander (Facksimilie), 105 marks; 6, B. Dayson (Crugar), 106 marks.



Richard Piper – looking good.

Piper's quick Sark

Just before the car was stripped down, Richard Piper took the Sark (née Starfire) down to Brands for a rather cold and blustery run. After playing himself in with the rather elderly tyres (the original ones) and the cooking engine, and giving himself a little pep-talk as to how to drive the car, Piper impressed with laps less than two seconds outside the lap record, despite damp patches up at Druids and traffic. He professed himself well pleased, although it took a while for the Formula Ford driver to get used to the slicks.

Kim Perry's new FF

Entirely new to the British Motor racing scene is the Teal, produced in Chinnor, Oxfordshire, and the brainchild of Keith Freeman and Guy Buckingham, Teal's designer who has many years of racing car design experience behind him. For many years Guy ran his own racing car factory in Australia before returning to England. The initial car is a Formula Ford, type numbered TF76, which will be driven by 1975 750F champion Kim Perry.

For this year, Perry, a departmental head at Harvey Hudson in Essex, will have a works supported car, and although he will run the car himself, the car is to be a true works car in the sense that it will be developed and maintained with the close assistance of Teal.

The company was originally set up to produce Clubmans cars, but they're now diversifying their efforts in two areas: the design and construction of Formula Ford chassis and the racing of a Vauxhall Magnum in the Radio One production saloon championship.

Perry will be sponsored by Louis Caring, the manufacturers of Jump clothing for his first Formula Ford season.

Longton raise it £500

Now don't all rush, but entries are now being received for the Longton and District Motor Club's sprint and hillclimb championship. If you remember, last year the prize fund held £1,000, but this year this has been increased to £1,500 so that the overall winner of the championship now gets £500.

The amazing prize fund increase was announced by the club's chairman, Graham Malcolm, at their recent dinner dance, and it's all that much more amazing when one considers that the championship is unsponsored and that all prize money comes from the club's own funds and capital. This year the entries have been increased to 120, but this does not guarantee entries at each meeting, which is on a first come, first served basis. The best ten results will count from fourteen events and points will be awarded as last year's bogey times.

The prizes will be awarded on the following basis: first, £500; second, £300 and third £200, down to twelfth position giving a total of £1,580. The dates of rounds are as follows:

March 21, Longridge; April 18, Harewood; May 9, Scammonden; May 29, Wallesey; June 13, Longridge; June 20, Blackpool; July 3, Oulton Park; July 11, Castle Howard; August 8, Baitings Dam; August 15, Woodvale; September 12, Scammonden; September 25, Isle of Man; October 10, Castle Howard; October 30, Oulton Park.

Entry forms are available from M. Hayhurst, 35 Preston Old Road, Blackburn, Lancs.

Almost equality

An all ladies crew very nearly upset the male applecart on the co-promoted CSMA (South London Centre) Break the Ice Rally last Saturday, but they erred twice in the second half and dropped to ninth.

Pauline Smith and Madeleine Grubb took their Avenger clean through the first half of the 100 mile novices-only event to lead 24 other crews and to prove it really was a ladies first half, Sue Ponsford navigated Paul Evans (Imp) into a tie situation with the Avenger. Wrong approaches robbed the ladies of final glory.

Will Mason and Martin Harrington from Tolworth won in their Imp on 6 minutes from Peter Hughes and Steve Heap on 10 minutes in their Spitfire. Evans and Mrs Ponsford were third on 1F 0m, surrendering their lead shortly after petrol. Fourth were Nigel Wilkes/Dave Pegg (Fiat 124), 1F 5m from Ron Turner/Sue Bartram (Volvo 144) on 1F 9m with Tim Simmons/Jim Smith sixth in their Cortina on 1F 13m.

● Former F1300 champion Mike Taylor is currently on the hunt for a Crossle 25F with which to do a season's Formula Ford. Taylor has never quite hit the same form as he did the year he walked all over his F1300 colleagues in Tetranychus Telarius, but he's hoping for better things in the Crossle. He'll share the car with his protege Steve Allen.



Roland Young/Brian Goff, first on the tough Hairpin Rally in the Allitt's Motors RS 1600.

Tough one for Young

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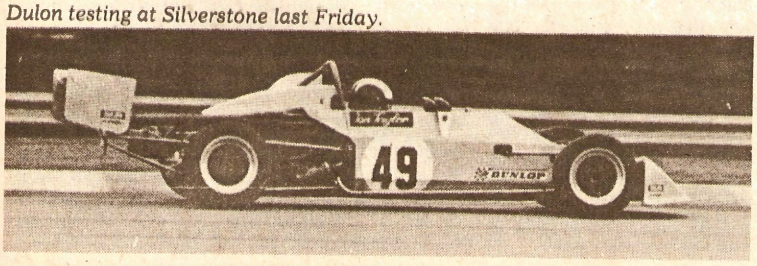
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Training day

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County competition

Silverstone Circuits have announced a new idea for their Championship season in 1976 — the Jaybrand Racewear Silverstone League. This covers thirteen counties within an approximate fifty mile radius of Silverstone and features Formula Ford, Clubmans and Special Saloon cars.

Much support from competitors and spectators at Silverstone's well-attended Championship race meetings comes from the Midlands, West Country, Home Counties and Eastern England. Therefore the introduction of this Inter-County League brings an added interest and involvement with which the local supporters can become immediately identified.

The winning County will receive the first Jaybrand Racewear Silverstone County League Trophy, together with £600 which will be equally divided between each member of the County who scores qualifying points. In addition a prize of £50 will be made to the driver who scores the highest number of points for a county.

Silverstone's eleven major Championship meetings are involved in the County League and the rules/regulations have been made as simple as possible. County points are scored on the finishing positions of the normal Championship races covering Formula Ford, Special Saloons and Clubmans provided the driver's home County is one of those included in the League. Race programmes will state clearly the drivers eligible to score County points and for which County.

League tables and details of County drivers will be made available in the race programme in press information prior to and following each round. In addition, over 100 local motor clubs within the 13 counties will be kept informed of the latest information relevant to their County.

The qualifying counties are Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Gloucestershire, Hertfordshire, Leicestershire, Middlesex, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire. The driver's home county, declared on the entry form for each meeting is used as a basis for points scoring and foreign competitors can score points depending on which county they are living in.

The points scoring system is 10-9-8-7- etc to one for the first ten in a single class race on overall positions in finals only, and 8-6-4-3-2 in races with classes. If more than one driver from the same county scores in a race or class, only the highest position counts for County points.

The events, plus the eligible relevant classes of racing at that meeting are as follows:

March 14, FF, Clubmans; March 28, FF, SS; April 19, FF, Clubmans; April 25, FF, SS, Clubmans; May 31, FF, Clubmans; June 6, Clubmans; June 20, FF, SS; July 4, SS; August 1, FF, SS, Clubmans; August 30, FF, SS, Clubmans; October 2, FF, SS, Clubmans.

Hurt fights off tight scrap

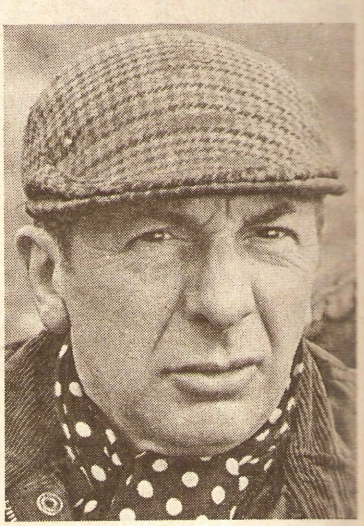
A shortage of marshals, plus some inexperience among those present, caused a slightly nasty taste among several RAC Sporting Trials Championship contenders when they tackled the Harrison Sporting Trial last Sunday at Dronfield near Sheffield, run by the Sheffield and Hallamshire MC.

Only 24 of the listed 36 entries appeared for three rounds of a fairly good set of sections, some greasy and some offering tremendous grip and the event quickly resolved itself into a four man contest with Messrs Hurt, Julian Fack, Pearce and Jackson the contenders.

Hurt, in his Ford Special, took the lead from the first round and steadily increased it all day ending up with a nine mark margin with a total of 64 marks lost. Jackson, the only southerner to make the trip, was four marks off the pace in his Ibex initially and he held a single mark advantage over Messrs Fack and Pearce in their Impunity and Kincraft machinery.

On the second tour, which Hurt led by five marks, the three way scrap for second was still mainly unresolved with only two marks between all three and this was how it remained for the rest of the day with Fack eventually squeezing into second on 73 marks from Pearce (74) and Jackson (75).

One of the new Facksimilies, driven by Robin Alexander, was eventually fifth but a long way off the pace with 105 marks lost.



Lol Hurt – nine mark win.

Alexander had begun the day well in fifth spot along with Malcolm Eaves (Cannon) while Ray Hatton (Harford) and Norman Manser (Tirsman) and Keith Butterfield (Cannon), all tied for seventh spot.

The pace was too hot however and although Manser stayed in touch on the second tour along with Eaves, Bob Dayson in his Crugar eventually slotted home sixth.

1, L. Hurt (Ford Special), 64 marks; 2, Julian Fack (Impunity), 73 marks; 3, J. Pearce (Kincraft), 74 marks; 4, G. Jackson (Ibex), 75 marks; 5, R. Alexander (Facksimilie), 105 marks; 6, B. Dayson (Crugar), 106 marks.



Richard Piper – looking good.

Piper's quick Sark

Just before the car was stripped down, Richard Piper took the Sark (née Starfire) down to Brands for a rather cold and blustery run. After playing himself in with the rather elderly tyres (the original ones) and the cooking engine, and giving himself a little pep-talk as to how to drive the car, Piper impressed with laps less than two seconds outside the lap record, despite damp patches up at Druids and traffic. He professed himself well pleased, although it took a while for the Formula Ford driver to get used to the slicks.

Kim Perry's new FF

Entirely new to the British Motor racing scene is the Teal, produced in Chinnor, Oxfordshire, and the brainchild of Keith Freeman and Guy Buckingham, Teal's designer who has many years of racing car design experience behind him. For many years Guy ran his own racing car factory in Australia before returning to England. The initial car is a Formula Ford, type numbered TF76, which will be driven by 1975 750F champion Kim Perry.

For this year, Perry, a departmental head at Harvey Hudson in Essex, will have a works supported car, and although he will run the car himself, the car is to be a true works car in the sense that it will be developed and maintained with the close assistance of Teal.

The company was originally set up to produce Clubmans cars, but they're now diversifying their efforts in two areas: the design and construction of Formula Ford chassis and the racing of a Vauxhall Magnum in the Radio One production saloon championship.

Perry will be sponsored by Louis Caring, the manufacturers of Jump clothing for his first Formula Ford season.

Longton raise it £500

Now don't all rush, but entries are now being received for the Longton and District Motor Club's sprint and hillclimb championship. If you remember, last year the prize fund held £1,000, but this year this has been increased to £1,500 so that the overall winner of the championship now gets £500.

The amazing prize fund increase was announced by the club's chairman, Graham Malcolm, at their recent dinner dance, and it's all that much more amazing when one considers that the championship is unsponsored and that all prize money comes from the club's own funds and capital. This year the entries have been increased to 120, but this does not guarantee entries at each meeting, which is on a first come, first served basis. The best ten results will count from fourteen events and points will be awarded as last year's bogey times.

The prizes will be awarded on the following basis: first, £500; second, £300 and third £200, down to twelfth position giving a total of £1,580. The dates of rounds are as follows:

March 21, Longridge; April 18, Harewood; May 9, Scammonden; May 29, Wallesey; June 13, Longridge; June 20, Blackpool; July 3, Oulton Park; July 11, Castle Howard; August 8, Baitings Dam; August 15, Woodvale; September 12, Scammonden; September 25, Isle of Man; October 10, Castle Howard; October 30, Oulton Park.

Entry forms are available from M. Hayhurst, 35 Preston Old Road, Blackburn, Lancs.

Almost equality

An all ladies crew very nearly upset the male applecart on the co-promoted CSMA (South London Centre) Break the Ice Rally last Saturday, but they erred twice in the second half and dropped to ninth.

Pauline Smith and Madeleine Grubb took their Avenger clean through the first half of the 100 mile novices-only event to lead 24 other crews and to prove it really was a ladies first half, Sue Ponsford navigated Paul Evans (Imp) into a tie situation with the Avenger. Wrong approaches robbed the ladies of final glory.

Will Mason and Martin Harrington from Tolworth won in their Imp on 6 minutes from Peter Hughes and Steve Heap on 10 minutes in their Spitfire. Evans and Mrs Ponsford were third on 1F 0m, surrendering their lead shortly after petrol. Fourth were Nigel Wilkes/Dave Pegg (Fiat 124), 1F 5m from Ron Turner/Sue Bartram (Volvo 144) on 1F 9m with Tim Simmons/Jim Smith sixth in their Cortina on 1F 13m.

● Former F1300 champion Mike Taylor is currently on the hunt for a Crossle 25F with which to do a season's Formula Ford. Taylor has never quite hit the same form as he did the year he walked all over his F1300 colleagues in Tetranychus Telarius, but he's hoping for better things in the Crossle. He'll share the car with his protege Steve Allen.



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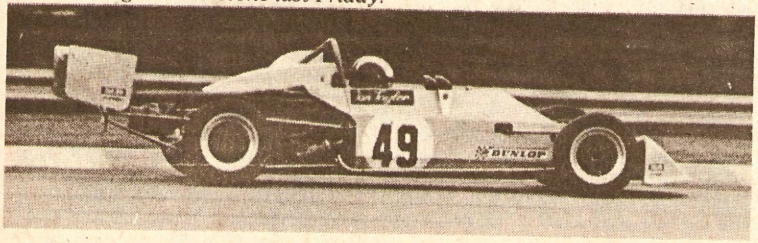
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Willis best on Infernal

Last weekend the French club, ASA Hauts-de-Seine ran their eighth Rallye Infernal centred on the picturesque town of Crepy-en-Valoise, 50 miles north of Paris. As has become customary the event was based on a circuit through the surrounding forests of about 130 kms, more than half that distance comprising timed off-road sections. This circuit is used twice on each day, late runners having to finish in the dark.

Overnight rain had left the very tough course with an extremely slippery surface of fresh mud; conditions which appeared to favour the very strong British All Wheel Drive Club team. This team, ably supported by a large and enthusiastic volunteer service crew, included three Range Rovers, Alvin Smith's highly modified pick-up version, Simmonite's less modified vehicle from Yorkshire and Pat Willis' near standard 150,000 mile example. Also from Yorkshire were three V8 engined and one standard ex-army light weight Land Rover. The south was represented by an ARO, a six cylinder Bronco, Ernie Hamilton's very tidy Haflinger looking smart on Revolution wheels and the rugged 1944 Jeep of the very experienced English trials man Colin Cowley. The standard light weight Land Rover of Beddall/Ardoin had dispensed with the twin umbrella racks used last year — a single brolly was deemed sufficient for supervising the French in any retrieval of the vehicle. Andy Anderson and Cousins once again finished preparing their buggy in the paddock, a prelude to an early retirement!

The muddy conditions did not in fact favour the four wheel drives, for the track was treacherously slippery and frequently blocked by two wheel drive vehicles bogged in the deep ruts that were quickly dug by the early runners, despite much stricter rules controlling tyre tread patterns. While the British displayed awsome courage in hurling their sometimes obviously too powerful vehicles through the narrow bumpy tracks in the forests, the locals, with a greater respect for the conditions found a smoother style and careful preparation gave the best results.

On the first day Cowley, Wright, Willis and Preston all rolled with progressively more serious damage, Dave Simmonite almost totally destroyed his Range Rover against a tree and Preston's Land Rover was consumed in a fierce fire after the crew had leapt clear.

The half-way positions issued Saturday night put Willis thirteenth, despite the considerable body damage resulting from his roll over.

Hamilton retired on Sunday afternoon after losing one of his two cylinders — he felt he had become a mobile hazard to others, the ARO of Ashcroft and Scull was reliable but excluded from the final results after a gasket, blown on the way to Crepy, had taken so long to fix that they missed the first stages. White's V8 Land Rover broke its bell housing and Stallwood ran consistently at the very tail of the field. 199 vehicles had started and following the cancellation of the last three stages, the event was running over 3 hours late, 58 vehicles were classified as finishers.

First was the Strakit buggy (VW 1500) of Pagani/Carlotti, another buggy with a rear mounted R16 engine was second with a Gordini 1300 engined buggy third.

Best placed British crew were Pat Willis and his son Roger in twelfth overall with Smith/Harber (Range Rover) in 27th and Cowley/White (1944 Willys Jeep) 29th.

The French public had been very vocal in their recognition of the Range Rovers spectacular performances, but whether nationalistic desires to see the British destroy their vehicles was the genuine emotion, is not beyond possibility. A salutory experience for the British although Willis saved some national pride with a second in class.

Pat Willis took his Range Rover to second in class which was some consolation to the British.



Exciting Riponian

Only 11 seconds separated the first three crews after an exciting all night struggle on last Saturday's seventh Riponian Rally, the event being won and lost on a quick nine mile selective in the first half of a 184 mile route around North Yorkshire.

Run for the first time in fine weather — it had snowed on the previous six — the Ripon Motor Sport Club attracted a full entry of 100 of whom 94 actually completed. From the start the battle was joined between a couple of RS 2000s and a Dolomite Sprint.

Steve Smith and Adrian Dixon from Northallerton finally clinched victory in their RS 2000 finishing on 33m 17s, just nine seconds up on Ron Beecroft and John Millington in a similar car. These two, along with John Potter and Brian Hughes in the Sprint, alternated for the lead for much of the night and in the heat of their battle pulled well away from the rest of the field. In the end just two seconds demoted Potter and Hughes to third. Ron Shipp and Peter Whittaker were also doing well initially but retired with a broken halfshaft on their Magnum.

Fourth spot went to Pete Smith and David Langdon in their Ascona on 40m 5s, just 44s quicker than Steve Rathbone and Frank Stuart-Brown in their Mexico who took fifth ahead of Trevor Roberts and Ian Grindrod in their Mini on 42m 5s.

Best of the semi-experts were Malcolm Wilson and John Teasdale in a Marina on 56m 22s while the novice winners Martin Banks and Jim Downes (Mini), on 72m 28s had never done anything bigger than a 12 car event before.

Best Ripon members were Garry Marsden and Peter Busfield in their Escort who were seventh on 45m 53s.

Johnson's Ystra

Some inconsistent timing spoilt last Saturday's Ystra Rally run by Dukeries MC but a good route made up for the other disappointment.

The first round of the Northern Car Clubs Rally Championship and the second of the East Midlands series, the 180 mile route, mainly in Derbyshire, attracted 77 crews and eventually provided a first ever championship win for the Loughborough crew of Pete Johnson and Mark Gregory.

Third in last year's East Midlands series Johnson took the lead in the second half when he was the only driver to clean a particularly long 44 section and he went on to win the event for the first time by five minutes in his Mexico.

Second crew home was John Bygrave and David Lloyd in their Escort on 17m with Andy Blair and Howell Jones third in their Escort TC on 18m.

Championship aspirants John Leyland and Neil Fairhurst were well in contention early on but subsequently they appear to have missed getting a signature at TC 11 and, discovering their mistake, presumably went straight home.

The next two places went to a Magnum and a Saab with Tony Shute and Steve Wright claiming fourth on 21m from Geoff Grundy and Martin Phaff on 24m. Best semi-expert and sixth overall was Colin Atkin and David Coleman in their Mexico on 24m.

● Last year's *Classic Car* champion Richard Thwaites is said to be driving a Brabham BT8 in the Rochas sponsored series next season. The BT8 is the car in which Denny Hulme had much success.

●Mike Fisher, who last year campaigned a Lightweight E type alongside that of Willie Green, will be putting the car away this year and running a Chevron-BMW B8 instead in post historic racing. The car will be entered by Casbah Racing, a wholesale fashion company.

●If you fancy a winter autocross, there's one this weekend at Froggatts Farm, Wade Lane, Hill Ridware, Staffs, commencing at 1 pm on Sunday.

Tricentrol's Clubmans

Tricentrol, who were prominent for their support of the Clubmans Formula at the Register's dinner dance on Saturday, are again sponsoring a Silverstone based Clubmans championship for both A and B classes. All six rounds of the championship will be held at Silverstone and points will be scored on a 9-6-4-3-2-1- basis in each class in each round, with all six to count. Prize money in each round will be, class A: first, £50; second, £35; and third £20; Class B: first, £35; second, £20; third, £15. Overall awards will be £100 plus the Tricentrol Car Group Trophy for the winner and the other class winner gets £50. The dates, printed correctly in last week's issue are as follows:

March 14, April 9/10, April 19, May 31, August 30, October 2, Silverstone.

Wagstaff by 2m

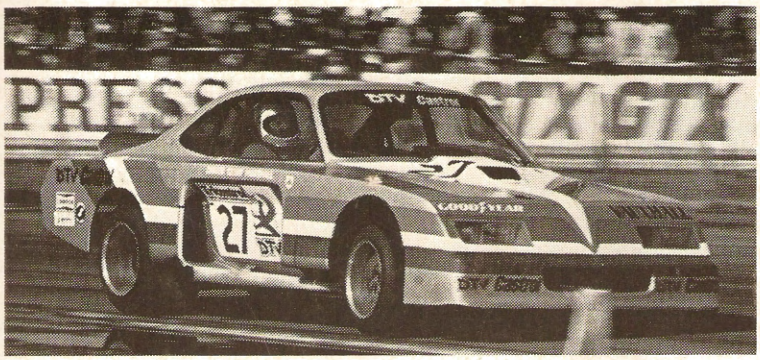
Bolton-le-Moors CC members took first and third places as well as leading novice crew on last Saturday's first ever co-promoted rally run by Wigan and District MC over a 105 mile route around Macclesfield.

Winners of the Allen Group Trophy were Peter Wagstaff and David Starr who dropped 10m 7s in their Escort and finished nearly two minutes up on Brian Gibson and Philip Woolley in their Mexico who dropped 11m 57s.

The organisers provided a good route with 32 controls and a four and a half mile selective in the second half which resolved several close battles among the 51 crews.

Second Bolton crew home were Bernard Griffin and Andy Milner in their Cooper S on 12m 16s and they were nearly two minutes up on Roger Brighouse and Roger Dovey in their Imp. The Escort of Geoff Whittaker and Colin Mason was fifth on 15m 43s and top novices Graham Darcey and Phillip Shannon were sixth in their Mini on 16m 55s.

A bit of flag waving for Vauxhall.



Gerry Marshall won the Tricentrol Super Saloon Car Championship in Baby Bertha Firenza V8.



Dealer Team Vauxhall won the Manufacturers Team Award in the 1975 Lombard/RAC Rally of Great Britain. Will Sparrow, in a Magnum 2300 also won Class 7 (Group 2 cars over 2000cc).



George Hill and Team Martin Rallying won the 1975 Castrol Autosport Rally Championship in a Magnum 2300.



Jenny Birrell won the Radio Forth Production Saloon Car Championship in an SMT Magnum 2300.



Alan Tyndall won the Bosch Plug Production Saloon Car Championship of Ireland in a Magnum 2300.



Bill Dryden won the Over 1300cc class in the Scottish Special Saloon Car Championship.

Vauxhall VAUXHALL GM