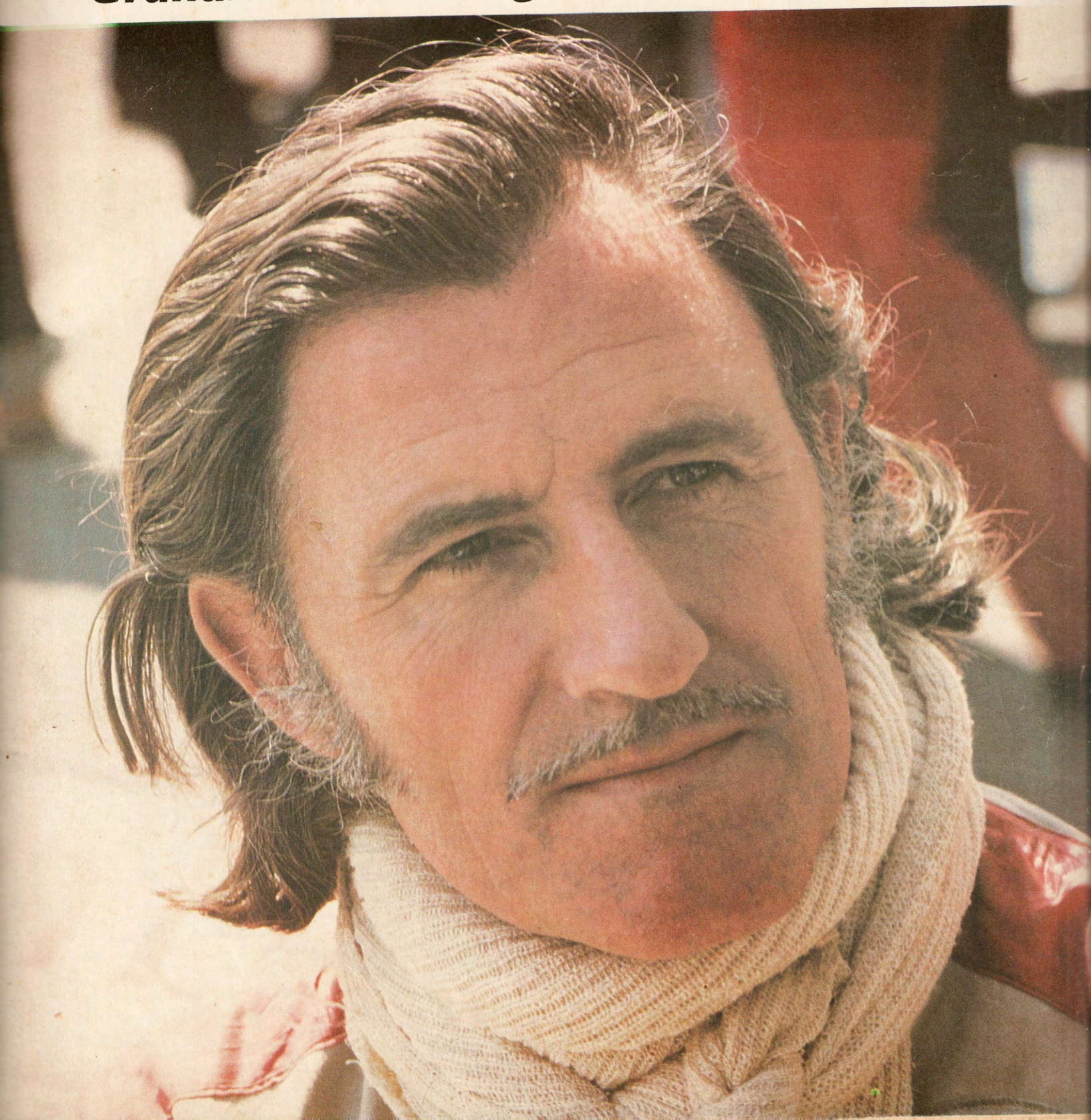
A Haymarket publication

TIMO MAKINEN'S LOMBARD RAC RALLY HATRICK

AUTOSPORT

Graham Hill - a legend in motor sport



December 4, Vol 61 No 10

AUTOSPORT

BRITAIN'S MOTOR SPORTING WEEKLY

CONTENTS

2 Pit and Paddock
8 Graham Hill
10 Tony Brise
12 Correspondence
14 Private Ear
16 Special Stage
20 Interview: Stig Blomqvist
22 Tune In: Motor Racing Stables
24 Parc Ferme
26 Road impressions: Porsche 924
28 Cockpit Cameo: Rupert Keegan
30 RAC Rally: Monopoly — played by Escorts
38 Profile: Steve Thompson
42 I was just . . . until I discovered Polski-Fiat
45 RAC Rally results
47 Sports Extra

Their combined talents were enormous, sadly they'll never be realized.



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EDITORIAL

Happy memories

Many times over the last 20 years this column has been filled with congratulatory words for Graham Hill. Now he is gone, killed with the heart of his team in a horrific air crash last Saturday. It is time to congratulate him once more — it's with deep regret that it is not on account of his team winning the world championship, as surely it would have been one day, and that would have been just reward; but it is with happy memories that we should pass on once more the accolades of many millions of people throughout the world for his many fine achievements.

Above any of his tangible successes both on and off the racing circuits, we must thank him for being a true, fun-loving British gentleman. A man who commanded respect in any company and, who, through his motor racing exploits, represented Britain proudly and with dignity throughout the world. Not only did he bring motor sport into the hearts of many people who otherwise would never have heard of it, he, more than any other man, gave it a respectable image. Although successful in business he was never looked upon as the trendy, 1970s tax-dodging plastic person that bedevils the commercial world of motor sport these days. He was from the old school of gentlemen sportsmen who managed to retain his sense of values while competing successfully with the entrepreneur brigade.

That he should only have been world champion twice during his glittering 20 year career is a travesty of justice. For to motor sport fans throughout the world, Graham Hill was the perennial Champion of motor racing.

All budding young racing drivers should take Graham Hill's career as an example. He started with nothing and yet he achieved everything — two world championships, a win at Indianapolis and Le Mans being the highlights of his many hundreds of successes. He achieved all his triumphs because of his grit and determination to succeed. All of us complain of how much money it costs to go into motor sport, but money cannot buy success; those two qualities that Graham Hill possessed enabled him to overcome the complete lack of finance. In relative terms motor racing cost money in the mid-fifties, but then a man with Hill's powerful, staunch character and drive will get there in the end.

What makes Hill's death yet more tragic is that the nucleus of his team died with him. It would have been most fitting if they had been able to continue in the sport, not just to perpetuate his name, but to bring just reward to a man who was putting something back into the sport which served him well. It had been tough work establishing his own team, but with typical determination and enthusiasm he persevered. With Tony Brise as his driver and his own new car, success was only just around the corner. That Brise was the man upon whose shoulders the key should have rested was right, because he had many of the Hill qualities. It is sad and wasteful that his enormous potential will now never be realised.

Above the sadness of it all we must remember Graham Hill with happy recollections of his successes and the enjoyment and support he gave to so many people, young and old, enthusiasts or no.

our cover picture

Graham Hill's death last Saturday robbed the sport of one of its greatest competitors and gentlemen. A full appreciation appears on page 10.
Photo: Phipps Photographic

Hunt/Peterson swop deal? Will Frank get the 308C?

As we closed for press on Tuesday afternoon, the future of James Hunt was still undecided. Many had thought it would be a mere formality that Hunt, late of Hesketh Racing, would be snapped up by McLaren and Marlboro.

However, stories toward the end of last week suggested that Hunt might have become involved in a swop deal with Ronnie Peterson and Team Lotus. "Well that's the most far-fetched story I've heard this winter," chirped Team Lotus manager Peter Warr when we spoke to him on Tuesday morning. Peter Hunt, James' brother who deals with his business arrangements, didn't reckon on the "swop" either. "As far as I'm concerned, it's James that has yet to make up his mind."

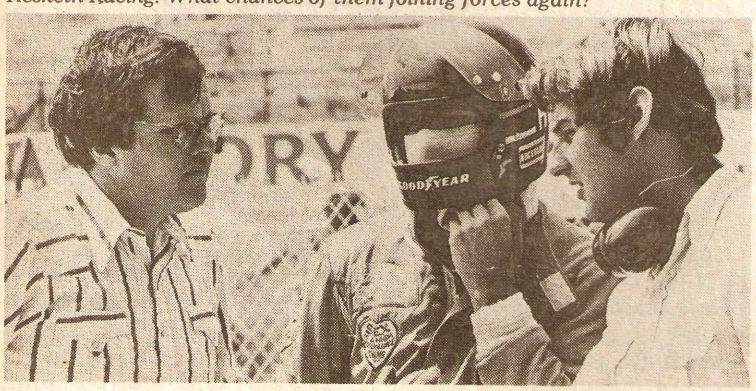
It looked, certainly at one stage, that James might not have been in a position to make up his mind for it was thought Team Lotus, anxious to sign a true British driving star, would part with Peterson after a mutual agreement with McLaren. Marlboro are known to be keen on Peterson's promotional value as well. If Hunt had not wanted to play ball, it would simply have been a case of "you want a competitive car, here it is." Providing both parties, or all the parties involved, co-operated, then the drivers in question would have little choice in the matter if they wished to remain in a competitive team.

However, time moves fast and quickly following onto the heels of the proposed "swop" were stories that Frank Williams had been able to finalise some exciting plans "which I just can't tell you about at the moment" and that the Hesketh 308C project "was in its final negotiations" according to Hesketh personnel. Then came news that Hesketh designer Harvey Postlethwaite had received an offer from the Copersucar Grand Prix team which was confirmed by team manager Jo Raminez earlier this week "but I think we were a bit late because he had other commitments." Those commitments could well lie "not a million miles from Reading," at the base of Frank Williams Racing Cars, although not one would comment on the matter at the present time.

Stories on Monday of this week suggested that a sponsor had been found and Harvey and Bubbles Horsley would run a new team using the Hesketh 308C and possibly offering the drive to James. Bubbles said he didn't know anything about it on Monday while later reports suggested that the sponsor was industrialist Walter Wolf and the 308C project had been acquired, along with Harvey Postlethwaite, for Frank Williams to run. Frank refused to be drawn into any form of comment, although he did say "that I hope to have two cars on the grid in Argentina." With what drivers? "I can't say at this stage." James Hunt is a possibility we are led to believe.

It's a curious situation, punctuated with truth and perhaps a little fiction. We doubt the latter because of the number of reliable sources who brought the matter to our attention in the first place.

Bubbles Horsley, James Hunt and Dr Harvey Postlethwaite, all late of Hesketh Racing. What chances of them joining forces again?



Big March F1 plans

Max Mosley, March Engineering's super smooth managing director, told us late last week, prior to going on a week's vacation, that his company had some very ambitious Formula 1 plans for next year and he confirmed that they would be running a pair of two car teams in the World Championship, although based separately.

"We'll have an 'A' team and a 'B' team, or 'under 23s' if you like," said Mosley. We wondered whether he'd get Don Revie to manage it. "The 'A' will be based at our factory in Bicester and we'll run Vittorio (Brambilla) and Lella (Lombardi) from there.

"The 'B' team will be run from Reading (where March have an engineering facility) and you'll probably see Hans Stuck in one and another driver, depending on sponsorship arrangements, in the other."

We queried his decision to run Miss Lombardi in a Grand Prix car once again, considering that the novelty of her sex had now worn off and she looked unlikely of making any further progress. It is thought that March have Gunnar Nilsson, their new Swedish F2 signing, lined up "as a reserve" as it is known the new BP F3 champion is anxious to compete in Grand Prix racing next year as well. His chances look quite good at this stage.

In the "B" team, Mosley said that Stuck would drive "for at least the first three Grands Prix next year" before they reviewed the situation regarding additional support, be it commercial or otherwise. No mention was made of who the second driver might be. Mosley concluded by saying that Stuck would compete alongside Nilsson and their second "as yet unnominated" driver in the works F2 team at selected races as he has done this year.

Ickx signs for Porsche

Jacky Ickx, the Belgian Grand Prix driver who's been lying low since his "rest" from driving for John Player Team Lotus, has been signed up by Porsche to co-drive with Jochen Mass in a G5 Porsche Carrera (Silhouette) next year.

Originally it was intended that Rolf Stommelen would partner Mass in this all-German team, but it is thought that the former Embassy Hill Grand Prix driver couldn't arrange suitable financial terms.

The inclusion of Ickx in the Stuttgart-based team means that the Belgian is, in no way, contemplating retirement. Sources suggest that he has been back in touch with Team Lotus with regard to their plans for next year. Ickx is still a John Player Team Lotus contracted driver until the end of the year and, if Lotus aren't able to satisfy themselves with a suitable replacement, then Ickx may well be offered the second seat once again.

Laffite is quick but Ronnie stars

Four Grand Prix teams took the opportunity of spending last week down at the Paul Ricard circuit in southern France in preparation for the forthcoming World Championship series which starts with the Argentinian Grand Prix at Buenos Aires on January 11.

Fastest of all yet again, although we must emphasise that they were running on Goodyear's soft tyre compound, was Jacques Laffite in the Ligier-Matra JS5. With rain hampering tests during the early part of the week, conditions improved towards the weekend although they were not as good as when Laffite recorded that eye-opening 1m 10.1s a couple of weeks ago. However, the European F2 champion lapped at 1m 10s according to most watches, although the French may have seen him scrape into the nines. On the harder tyres, the same type that all the teams will use in the two South American and South African Grands Prix, Laffite did a 10.8s. Incidentally there was not a sign of Jean-Pierre Beltoise and according to unofficial reports from Ligier-Matra team manager Gerard Ducurouge, Laffite's their man.

If Laffite was pleasing the French, then Ronnie Peterson was pleasing both himself and John Player Team Lotus greatly. Running with the narrow track suspension on the team's new Lotus 77, the Swede (on hard Goodyear tyres) lapped in 1m 10.7s, the fastest time recorded so far on these tyres. He was "very happy" when we spoke to him earlier this week. Not far behind Peterson and Laffite and the hard compound tyres was John Watson in the Penske PC3, the Ulsterman posting a 1m 11.0s without any undue worries.

Slowest, and also running on the hard tyres, was the ill-fated Embassy Hill team whose new car was lapped in a modest 1m 12.2s by Tony Brise.

Kauhsen to run Alpines in 1976?

Willi Kauhsen, the bearded German ex-racing driver who this year ran the "works" Alfa Roemo team and brought them the World Sports Car Championship, has been in touch with the French Alpine-Renault concern.

Kauhsen has expressed a strong interest in running the French team next year which, if the deal came off, might leave the French company with more time to develop their projected Formula 1 programme.

Prior to his Alfa deal this year, Kauhsen had talks with Matra-Simca about running one of their MS670s, but it came to nothing in the end.

Vic Elford: constructor

Due to postal disputes in France, we are unable to bring you photographs of Vic Elford's latest sportscar. Yes, the former race and rally ace has turned into a race car constructor in his own right.

Elford has acquired a large French sponsor to back his new project at Le Mans next year where he hopes to run two cars, both powered by Ford V6 engine so we're led to believe.

More details next week.

Can-Am is forgotten

Any thoughts that may have arisen of late suggesting a rebirth of the Can-Am sports car series can be forgotten. Next year was to have seen the series (which folded in 1974) relaunched with 3-litre racing and 5-litre stock engined cars taking part. Because of a lack in interest shown mainly by American competitors, any thought of having an 11 race American/European season have been forgotten.

Player's to quit Canada

The Canadian Formula Atlantic series is without a sponsor, certainly from 1977 onward. Player's, through their parent company, Imperial Tobacco, are pulling out of motor racing sponsorship in Canada as from the end of 1976. However, next year's Atlantic series is not in jeopardy and will continue to be sponsored and supported by Player's.

This unfortunate news was announced late last week although Rob Tanner, coordinator of the Canadian Player's Atlantic series, said on Monday of this week:" "Nothing is changed for next year except that we now have 18 months to find a new sponsor. Player's have offered to assist us in the search and we hope to announce a new sponsor for 1977 before the start of the 1976 series". The six to eight race series next year will continue to have a $20,000 prize fund at each event and there is a chance that a race may be held at a new 1.2-mile track, St Celiciea, near Quebec.

Player's have been sponsoring races in Canada for the last 15 years starting with the Player's 200 at Mosport in 1961, an event won by Stirling Moss in his Lotus 19. They sponsored the Grand Prix from 1967 until 1971 at Mosport and St Jovite, while they have supported the Formula B/Atlantic series since 1971.



John Greenwood, winner of the Daytona IMSA GT race in his amazing Chevrolet Corvette.

The 'Batmobile' scores

There was no stopping John Greenwood's incredible "Batmobile" Corvette at Daytona last weekend. Starting from the pole, Greenwood led away at the start of the 65-lap (250-mile) IMSA/Camel GT finale and, apart from a brief seven laps following his first pit stop for fuel, the Chevrolet was always in complete command. So great was Greenwood's lead that when he had to make a second scheduled stop to everyone else's one, he was still able to retain the lead and won by 39s, averaging 117.90 mph. The only car's who came anywhere near the Corvette were the pair of DeKon Engineering Chevrolet Monzas and the works BMW CSLs. The Porsche Carreras, which have dominated most of the IMSA races this year, were totally outclassed on this high-speed and banked track.

Supporting Greenwood on the front row was USAC and F5000 star Al Unser, having his first run in one of Horst Kwech's Monza GTs. Behind him was the second Monza driven by Aussie team-mate Allan Moffatt, the latter having driven for BMW at Sebring earlier this year. Alongside the second Monza was the first BMW CSL, that of Hans Joachim Stuck.

Unser chased the Corvette away at the start and ran well, although only for three laps before an oil union cracked and that spelt retirement. Moffatt then took up the chase before water starting spraying itself into the fuel injectors and that, too, eventually caused retirement.

Now it was Stuck in second place chased by team-mates Brian Redman and Sam Posey but it was soon to be just two BeeEms for the leading car had the diff pack up. This left Redman and Posey to cruise around, well behind the Corvette, but comfortably clear of the Porsches. They were eventually led home, albeit two laps down, by Peter Gregg's Brumos version. In doing this, Gregg was able to clinch his third IMSA GT title in as many years.

Hurley Haywood's Carrera, also two laps down, headed the remaining top runner which consisted of John O'Steen, Elliott Forbes-Robinson and Jim Busby, all in RSRs.

Peter Gregg – third IMSA title.



Shellsport 5000 plans announced

The details of the Shellsport 5000 European championship were confirmed by MCD this week. As already published this will be open to single seaters complying to FIA G9 specification up to five litres. The only "house" rules will be that the over two litre cars use RAC defined 5000 tyres and the under two litres Atlantic spec rubber.

With a number of teams and manufacturers anticipating running F1 machinery a 107 per cent qualifying rule will apply at all races. If entries are sufficient there will be heats and all meetings in the Shellsport championship will be two day affairs.

Points will be scored on a 20-15-12 . . . 1 basis for the first ten and double points will *not* be scored at the final round. The best 15 scores will count.

The prize money scale has been increased slightly on this year with an extra £400 being shared at £100 per person from 16th to 20th place in the big money (£9,400) races and by £200 in the smaller (£5,200) races, with £50 for each of the last four out of the first 20 finishers.

There are separate end of season championship prize funds with £1,250 being divided among the first six drivers and a similar amount for the first six entrants. When travel money is paid for overseas events it will be distributed to the fastest 20 competitors in practice regardless of whether they race or not.

So far 14 rounds of the series have been announced (£9,400 races in bold type): March 21, Mallory Park; March 28, Snetterton; **April 16, Oulton Park; April 19, Brands Hatch; April 26, Zolder (Belgium);** May 31, Thruxton; June 7, Zandvoort (Holland); August 1, Snetterton; **August 30, Brands Hatch;** September 12, Thruxton; September 18, Oulton Park; October 10, Mallory Park; **October 17, Nurburgring (Germany); October 24, Brands Hatch.**

Extra overseas dates and venues will be announced later.

● Camel cigarettes are to renew their agreement with IMSA to sponsor their GT series for next year with options for the following two seasons.

Embassy pay tribute

Mr J. B. H. Wilson, chairman and managing director of W.D. & H.O. Wills, paid this tribute to Graham Hill early this week: "Everyone at Wills connected with Embassy Racing shares in this terrible loss to motor sport and indeed to Britain. Above all, we think of the personal tragedy to Bette Hill and the children, and to the families of the other members of Graham's team who died with him. We are proud to have been associated with Graham Hill over the past three years and with his young team so full of promise."

Plans were being finalised between Embassy and Graham Hill Racing as to exactly what format their Grand Prix racing activities should take next season when this sad event occured last weekend. Naturally, W.D. & H.O. Wills are going to review this situation and their position within motor sport over the next few days and a further statement is expected at a later date.

Graham Hill's funeral will be tomorrow (Friday, December 5) at St Alban's Abbey, at 2.30 pm. No flowers please but donations to Stanmore Orthopaedic Hospital, which is where Graham made his miraculous recovery from his Watkins Glen accident.

The funeral of Tony Brise will be today (Thursday) at St Michael's Church, Wilmington at 3 pm. Cut flowers only please to Francis Chappel, 48 High Street, Sidcup, Kent.

Craw's title

Nick Craw, who won an early British Formula Atlantic race at Castle Combe a few years back, clinched the 1975 American B.F. Goodrich Radial Challenge (the US version of our production touring car classes) in his BMW 2002 at Daytona, despite finishing behind Gene Felton's winning AMC Gremlin. The only driver who could beat Craw was Amos Johnson and he was debuting the new AMC Pacer. He led for a while before brake problems and oil pressure problems forced retirement.

Unser splits with Gurney?

Stories in the American press suggest that Bobby Unser, who has been with Dan Gurney's All American Racers team for several years now and who won this year's Indianapolis 500 for them, has quit. Unser is reported to have gone over to Bob Fletcher's Cobre USAC Racing team. He is supposed to have taken two of Gurney's top mechanics with him.

Gurney has apparently suggested that Unser's replacement will be Wally Dallenbach, who this year was Gordon Johncock's team-mate in the Sinmast Wildcat USAC team.

The split between Gurney and Unser has been brewing for some time.

Grand Prix dates

Now that the CSI, race promoters/organisers and the F1CA have come to a temporary agreement over the monetary race funds for next year's Grand Prix races, the CSI has issued a list of qualifying Grands Prix for next year's World Championship. It totals no less than 17 races with dates for the Grands Prix of Canada (Mosport) and Japan (Fuji), a surprise inclusion, not yet settled.

The list of races are:

Jan 11, Argentinian GP, Buenos Aires; Jan 25, Brazilian GP, Interlagos; Mar 7, South African GP, Kyalami; Mar 28, US GP (West), Long Beach; May 2, Spanish GP, Jarama; May 16, Belgian GP, Zolder; May 30, Monaco GP, Monte Carlo; June 13, Swedish GP, Anderstorp; July 4, French GP, Ricard; July 18, British GP, Brands Hatch; August 1, German GP, Nurburgring; Aug 15, Austrian GP, Osterreichring; Aug 29, Dutch GP, Zandvoort; Sept 12, Italian GP, Monza; Oct 10, American GP, Watkins Glen.

Just like Eddie

Following up his win at Hockenheim a few weeks ago and a fine second place behind F3 sensation Gunnar Nilsson at the televised Thruxton race recently, 18 year old American Eddie Cheever socked it to the Germans once again at the same German circuit last weekend. This time his win in the Shand Mills Modus M1 was even more convincing.

After a wet unofficial practice session on Friday, where it was evident that there was a rift growing between Cheever's Ron Dennis-run set-up and the Germans, Saturday's official session was damp and very short.

Up until the last lap of practice, Eddie had been fastest but then Bertram Schafer slipped in a 1m 5.5s lap in his Ralt-BMW RT1, just 0.13s slower than the Modus. The race was being run on the short club circuit.

However, although Ernst Maring's Maco-Toyota looked to have recorded a 1m 6.2s, the organisers gave him a 1m 2.6s and "pole", ignoring the fact that the conditions were still damp and Maring's "time" was 3.5s under the F3 lap record!

All this failed to deter Cheever who took the lead of Sunday's extremely wet 20 lap race at the second corner and was never headed, winning by 8s and setting fastest lap too.

Maring was next up ahead of Schafer, who made a quick pit stop to investigate a misfire, but didn't lose a place.

This was Cheever's third international F3 win in three months and it remains to be seen whether he makes the bold step into Formula 2 (with Ron Dennis?) for next year.

Canadians want GP

The Canadian Grand Prix organisers, who failed to come to a suitable agreement with the Formula 1 Constructors Association a couple of months ago and subsequently lost their F1 race at Mosport this year, have reacted to the recent decision taken by the CSI in Brussels to the "compromise" figure of $285,000 reached between the organisers, CSI and the F1CA.

"The whole thing needs more explanation" they have said, referring to how the monies would be split up. "We noticed that the F1CA have decided to honour all FIA sanctioned races and we feel that this is directed toward Mosport" they added. Hope is beginning to rise that they may be able to re-stage the Grand Prix at Mosport next year, although until they know how much is required and how it is to be distributed, they claim they won't be able to talk financial terms with prospective sponsors for the event.

Already the Mosport organisers have an IMSA race booked for June next year while a question mark still hangs over proposed world championship sports car, F5000, NASCAR and Formula Atlantic races scheduled to take place at the circuit.

With regard to the legal action currently being sought between the Mosport organisers and the FICA, it is expected that it will take up to two years to settle the monetary matters which raised their ugly head at this year's American Grand Prix.

Magee's G9 Palliser?

It seems likely that Palliser will be involved in the new G9 championship next year. The South London concern had a F5000 chassis on the stocks for this year, but the idea now is to convert it for use with a DFV and the factory is currently closed while that work takes place.

Palliser have a 99.9 per cent sure sponsor for the G9 series, and the programme is to include three Formula One races, including the British GP. Although no drivers have been officially mentioned, it is known that Damien Magee is still very much involved with the concern.

In fact Magee will drive a new Palliser venture at Brands this weekend. It is a modified FF2000 chassis with a twin cam (not BDA) engine in which Magee has lapped Brands Hatch in 45.8s. The purpose of this exercise is to demonstrate that a modified FF2000 chassis is just as competitive in Atlantic as a car costing £2,000 more. Pallisers, of course, won the first-ever Atlantic series with Vern Schuppan at the wheel of an earlier model when Hugh Dibley was involved in the project.

Petty doesn't rate NASCAR/ Le Mans idea

There would appear to be a certain amount of scepticism among the top NASCAR crews and drivers as to whether or not, their Grand National stockers racing at Le Mans next year will ever become a reality. "I think that's somebody's dream," said newly crowned NASCAR champion Richard Petty. "I can't see any particular advantage in running there — it sure would not be financially feasible, all the Grand Nationals I'd have to miss, plus even if you won the thing you wouldn't win nuthin'." Petty then added that his sponsors STP mught like to compete there "but it would cost 'em almost as much to run there as it would to run a car for a season over here." Cale Yarborough basically agreed with Petty's views although Bobby Allison, who drives for Roger Penske, said "I think it would be neat but we're planning on running the NASCAR circuit and I don't think we'll have time to do both."

● Derek Bell headed a team of circuit inspectors to Brands Hatch last Friday to preview some exciting plans being announced shortly.

Neve tries F1 Surtees

Belgian Formula 3 ace Patrick Neve had his third taste of Formula 1 power at Goodwood last Wednesday. Neve, who has driven one of Bernie Ecclestone's F1 Brabham-Ford BT44Bs at Silverstone recently, was given an outing by John Surtees in his F1 TS16, the car that has been seeing a lot of service over the past couple of weeks with extensive driver test programmes down at the Sussex circuit.

Neve, who told us last week that he still has to make up his mind about who he drives for next year, is thought to have been jetting down to the Paul Ricard circuit this week to try the new F1 Brabham-Alfa BT45. We hear the Martini & Rossi sponsored cars are now a nationalistic shade of red. There are also signs that Carlos Reutemann has expressed a wish to forsake the Alfa Romeo flat 12 engine for a Ford Cosworth V8. It may well be that Reutemann's wishes won't be granted, providing he felt that way that is.

Unknown wins FSV

Supporting the IMSA GT race was the final round of the Bosch/Formula Super Vee series, a title already won by Eddie Miller. It proved a bit of an upset for although the German ATS Lola team went across from Europe, the race was won by a relatively unknown driver, 25 year old Herm Johnson in the same Lola T324 which he'd finished second to Freddy Phillips' Elden in the Road Atlanta SCCA amateur championship run-offs a few weeks earlier. Johnson's winning margin was a cool 5s.

On the receiving end were regular American FSV front runners Tom Bagley (Zink) and Howdy Holmes (Lola T324), who had to make do with the next two placings. Fourth was newly crowned European Super Vee Champion Mikko Kozarowitzky in his ATS Lola ahead of team-mate Jochen Engel. Then came Jerry Jolly's Lola T324, Helmut Bross (ATS Lola), Bill Scott (Royale RP19A) and a subdued Elliott Forbes-Robinson, last year's champion.



Stuart Graham — off to Daytona

Graham's Tarmac title

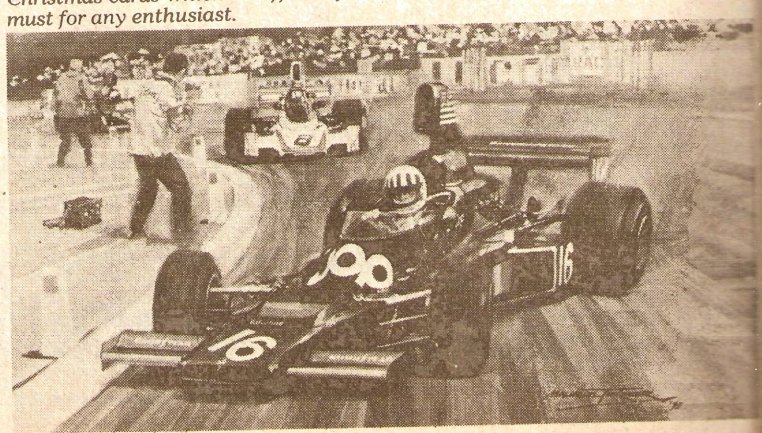
Theodore Racing failed in their quest to get the final results of the Riverside F5000 race changed and this means that Stuart Graham becomes the 1976 Tarmac-sponsored British Racing Championship for the second year running. Graham, who again has run a Chevrolet Camaro in the RAC Touring Car series sponsored by Faberge, collects the first price of £2,000.

Graham told us on the telephone recently that "naturally I'm very pleased. Now I shall probably take two tickets for that Daytona trip your magazine's advertising."

Graham pipped Tony Brise for the title by just 3 points for the young British driver, so tragically killed last weekend, ran him close throughout the year and would have taken the title had his F5000 Lola not run out of fuel on the last lap at Riverside.

● Following the appearance of their silhouette G5 BMW CSL at the Kyalami 1000 kms recently where Ronnie Peterson and Hans Stuck lapped very quickly, we hear that Stuck, his car fitted with wings, lowered his time down to 1m 23.4s around the Johannesburg track. That's over a 2.5s improvement.

This superb action shot of Tom Pryce opposite locking his F1 UOP Shadow at the British GP is just one of artist Michael Turner's superb selection of Christmas cards which he offers up, in a series of six, each year. They are a must for any enthusiast.



Mike's party

At a small, very informal and enjoyable party last Thursday at Nick Syrett's (remember him, past secretary of the BRSCC) excellent restaurant, Brett's of Bramley (midway between Guildford and Horsham), Mike Hailwood had almost his last (there were one and half days to go) leaving party (there had already been four) before departing for South Africa and New Zealand for good.

Among those present were David Hobbs (who, after his post lunch performance should be banished to the world of comedy immediately instead of NASCAR), Peter Gethin, Denny Hulme, Dickie Attwood, Jackie Epstein, John Wyer and John Horsman. The latter pair heard many stories of how Hailwood and Hobbs particularly went about destroying their Gulf cars at Le Mans — Wyer eventually offered to buy Hailwood a first class ticket out of the country so that he would never, ever hear or see him again.

Seen at last weekend's Jochen Rindt Show in Essen was the new BMW colour scheme on the March 762 (right) which Hans Stuck and Gunnar Nilsson will drive for the works in 1976. (Below) Niki Lauda, Rolf Stommelen and Jochen Mass surround the beautiful Nina Rindt soon after the opening presentation.



Baker wins, Petty's title

Buddy Baker, driving the Bud Moore-prepared Ford Torino, ended this year's Grand National NASCAR championship trial at the Ontario Motor Speedway on November 23 by winning the 500-miler. However, while Baker climbed on to the winner's rostrum, it was the living legend, Richard Petty, who took the NASCAR title yet again despite retiring with a dropped valve in his STP Dodge.

Pole had been won by David Pearson's Woods Brothers' Mercury at 153.525 mph just ahead of Baker. Also well up were Dave Marois (Dodge), Bobby Allison (Matador), AJ Foyt (Chevelle), Petty and Cale Yarborough (Chevelle). The early laps were disputed by Pearson, Baker, Petty and Foyt in typical NASCAR door-handle-to-door-handle style. Baker soon managed to force a gap over Petty who had Foyt, Allison, Yarborough and Pearson tucked in behind.

Foyt then dropped away with tyre problems but Petty had pulled in Baker and the pair of them swopped places continuously in a stirring battle. As the race progressed, Allison split Petty and Baker while Yarborough, Pearson and Marcis were still very much in contention.

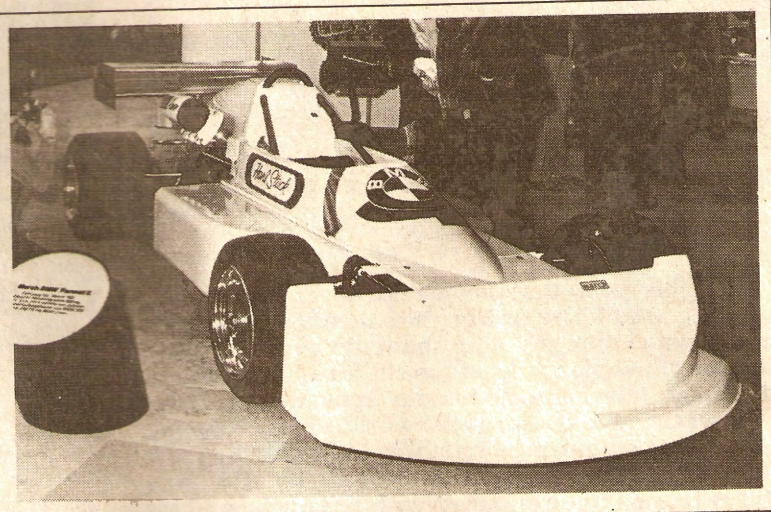
It looked as if Baker had the race nearly sown up as it approached the late stages although Petty managed to make up almost a lap's deficit after an enforced pit stop and closed to within 6s before the engine blew up. Any chance Allison may have had of making it a close finish was ruined by a confused pit stop and this eventually dropped him down to fifth, a lap behind.

Nursing low fuel pressure, as his car ran short of fuel during the final laps, Baker was able to bring his Ford across the line from a fast closing Pearson. Marcis was next up ahead of Yarborough, the latter being a lap down.

Wardle's Surtees team

Formula Atlantic entrepreneur Peter Wardle is to continue to race his trusty Surtees T15 in the class next year and may even be part of a three car team of similar cars. 'Why should I spend thousands of pounds on a new car when the Surtees is still very competitive and reliable."

Driving one of the other cars, the ex-Hesketh F2 chassis, will be Steve Carvill, the young ex-kartist which did a few races this year. He recently underwent an operation to stretch the Achilles tendon on his right foot, which has been given him trouble this year.



Briefly . . .

● The 1976 RAC "Blue Book" is now available and is currently being circulated to Recognised Clubs and Officials. The book, which contains all the rules, regulations, fixtures and any other relevant items connected with next year's motor sport, is priced £2 and is available from the RAC Motor Sport Division.

● Bruce Hill has been declared NASCAR's Rookie of the Year by Carling Breweries. Hill contested this year's Grand National trial in a Chevrolet.

● American driver Bob Tullius hopes to continue racing the Jaguar marque in the SCCA B Production class next season. Although the glorious Jaguar E V12 is no longer eligible, Tullius hopes his Group 44 team can convert the new 5.3-litre fuel injected XJS into a race winner for next season.

● The decision to award Jac Nellemann a 10s jump start penalty in the Danish Grand Prix, held at the Jyllandsringen on August 24, has been finally dropped and the Dane has been officially declared the winner in his Texaco-sponsored F3 GRD 373 over Swede Conny Andersson.

● The new Ferrari 312 T2 F1 car has bettered by 0.4s the best time achieved around their Fiorano test track by this year's championship winning chassis.

● Tom Pryce is thought to have recorded an astonishing 1m 18.3s in his F1 Shadow at Silverstone recently. Jody Scheckter was also reputed to have been timed at 1m 19.3s in the six-wheel Tyrrell. Hmm.

● Bad weather, both last Friday and on Monday, prevented John Surtees from carrying out further tests with his short list of drivers. Expected to have a go down at Goodwood were Richard Scott and F3 ace Conny Andersson.

This weekend . . .

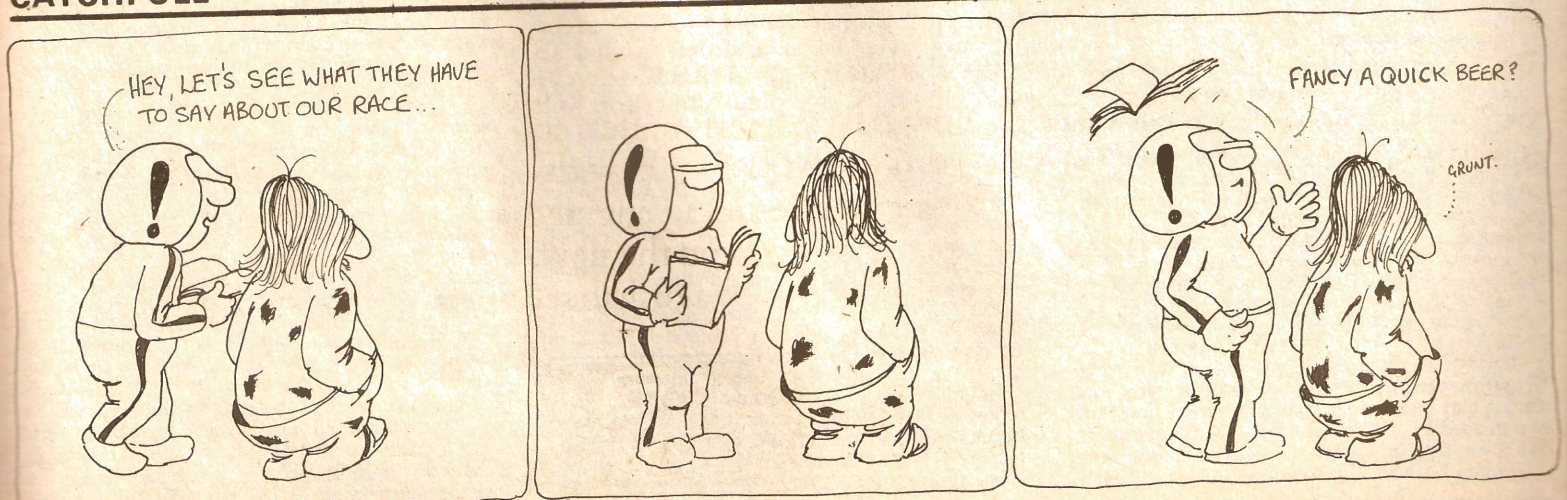
BRANDS HATCH

Hoping that the weather doesn't interfere this weekend the MG Car Club are in charge for Sunday's Brands clubbie. Races cater mainly for MGs but there are Modsports, Special Saloon and *Libre* events as well.

Racing starts at 1.00 pm.

CATCHPOLE

By Barry Foley



© Autosport 1975



Graham Hill

When Graham Hill decided in July this year that he would never race again, everyone who knew him and everyone who knew of him, breathed a deep sigh of relief. Here was a man who, to anyone who knew anything about motor racing at all, was Mr Motor Racing. He thrilled a lot of people while on the circuit and he amused many millions more with his frequent television and radio appearances. After acheiving more than any other man on the race tracks of the world, he was hanging up his helmet after 20 years to concentrate on putting something back into the sport which had given him so much, both in wealth and pleasure. Not six months since making that decision Graham Hill is tragically dead, killed with the nucleus of his team in an air crash near Elstree aerodrome last Saturday night, while returning from a test session with their new car at the Ricard circuit in the south of France.

It is tragic that Graham should die in such circumstances after his glorious career in motor racing ended with him still very much an alive person, and that is what he was. It is unbelievable that a man who showed more courage and determination in motor racing over the past two decades is gone. Not just motor racing, but sport as a whole will be a much poorer world without him.

Norman Graham Hill was born in London 46 years ago, son of a stockbroker. It was 24 years before cars of any sort came into his life. His previous form of transport had been bicycle while apprenticed to a technical firm. His sport in those days was rowing and as a successful member of the London Rowing Club he adopted their colours for his racing helmet. That dark blue with the white stripes became the most famous colours in motor racing.

Shortly after the purchase of a Morris 8, Graham passed his driving test and then joined a driving club and for a pound secured his first four laps in a racing car round Brands Hatch. Graham has always been known as a good talker and undoubtedly he put this to good use in those early years to get a job as a mechanic to various club racers and then ultimately to a job with Colin Chapman, who was just starting to get his Lotus operation off the ground. Having forsaken his job and gone on the dole, motor racing became his sole means of survival in 1954 and he had his first race in a 500cc Cooper-JAP.

His early years at Lotus were spent mainly as a mechanic but his non-stop nagging at Colin Chapman earned him several drives in works cars and the results came almost immediately.

Hill made a record 176 Grand Prix appearances following his F1 debut at Monaco in 1958 driving a Lotus 12. Both Lotus and the Monaco circuit were to play a large part in Graham's success in the succeeding years. Although he left Lotus in 1960 he rejoined them eight years later and won his second World Championship for them in 1968. Driving for the same team he won his fifth Monaco Grand Prix the following year — fittingly perhaps this was the last of his 14 Grand Prix victories.

In the period between his stints at Lotus, Graham became the number one driver for BRM and it was Hill who gave them their one and only World Championship when he took the title after a cliff-hanging season in 1962. It was indeed a patriotic occasion.

Hill's years with BRM were undoubtedly his finest. After winning the championship for them, he then took the runner-up spot for the next three years, twice to Jim Clark and once to John Surtees, notching up wins (three in the American GP) and many good placings consistently.

As well as Grand Prix racing Hill was involved in many other forms of motor sport with similar success. He scored many long distance sports car victories like the Tourist Trophy, the Rheims 12 hrs and the Paris 1000 kms. It was in single seaters, however, where he achieved the second prong to his amazing, unequalled feat of the motor racing 'triple' crown. It was in May 1966 that Graham took the lead of the American Indianapolis 500 classic just 9 laps from the end in the Team Mecom/Red Ball Special Lola Ford to win the richest race of the year and the most publicised victory of his career to date.

People may have claimed this to be a hollow victory but nothing could be further from the truth. Graham was not a 'natural' driver in the accepted sense as it was applied to Fangio, Moss, Clark or Stewart; he was a trier, a real fighter. That famous smile by which he will always be remembered disappeared when he donned that famous racing helmet. His lips closed tightly and that famous slim moustache would straighten above his mouth in a grim determined manner. If Graham couldn't lead he'd be sitting on your tail throughout just piling on the pressure, waiting for a mistake or a failure. His Indy victory was just reward for a typical Hill race — he was one of only six finishers from the 33 that started.

There are few 'naturals' in motor racing and the majority are triers — Graham was the hardest trier of them all.

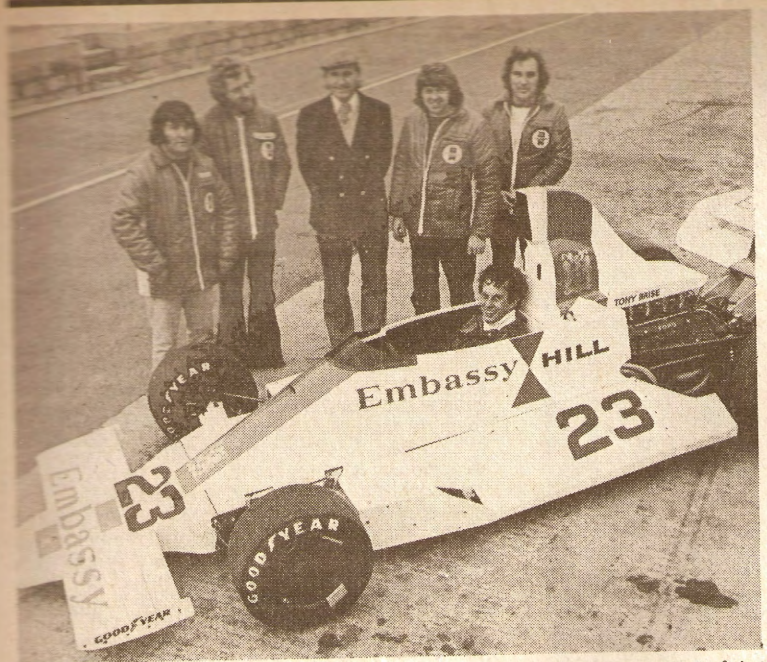
Hill was also a brave man. At the Belgian Grand Prix in 1966 he defied all sorts of hazards to rescue his BRM team-mate Jackie Stewart from his crashed BRM which was drenched in petrol. Stewart had only won one Grand Prix at that time . . . if it hadn't been for Hill he may not have won the other 28.

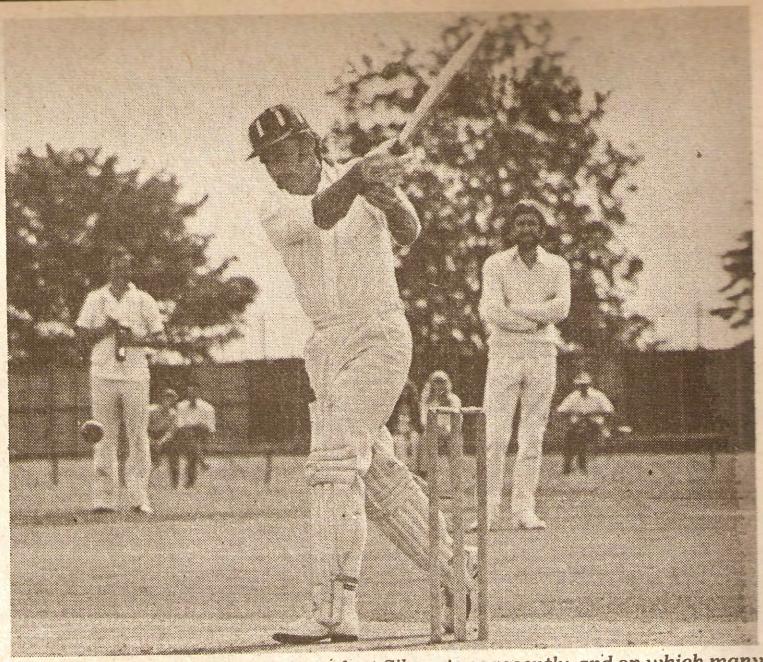
Hill's strength of character, some would have called it stubborness, he was so obstinate in his ambition to succeed, brought him his second World Championship and Lotus their third in 1968 and an OBE for services to motor racing. The Team's number one driver Jim Clark, was killed in April and then they lost Mike Spence at Indianapolis. Hill carried the team through that year by sheer application and out of despair came success. That was all down to Graham Hill.

He started 1969 as the reigning World Champion at the age of 40. The first part of the season was successful with a second place in South Africa and then his last GP victory at Monaco. The results faded after that and then came the fateful American GP at Watkins Glen. He'd struggled through the race with handling troubles and then spun. He got out of the car to push himself back onto the track (outside assistance would have meant disqualification) and noticed the tyres had started to chunk. Unable to strap himself in he set off for the pits to change the tyres. He didn't make the pits. A tread flew off the tyre and flipped the car. Hill was thrown out and badly broke both his legs. "He'll never walk again," they said. Hill's reaction to that was not only to walk again but to drive racing cars as well. Hill's reaction was: "I enjoy racing, and as I wanted to get back to something I enjoyed it is not surprising that I made a bit of an effort to do it. Apart from that, who wants to be a bloody invalid."

His efforts to speed his recovery amazed the medical world and it was so remarkable that they became a TV documentary. It's recent history that Graham was on the grid for the first Grand Prix of 1970 in Rob Walker's private Lotus and despite being lifted in and out the car with considerable pain, he drove it home to sixth place. Although suffering for most of the year Graham competed in all the Grands Prix with ever improving results.

Rob Walker pulled out at the end of that year and everyone expected Hill to quit as well. But as all journalists found out to their cost that was one





Whatever Graham Hill did he put in maximum effort and enthusiasm. Left is the team with the new GH2 at its launch at Silverstone recently and on which many hopes were pinned. Right is the maestro striking out at a charity cricket match for the Springfield Boys Club of which he was president.

question you *didn't* ask Graham. "The only time I think about it is when journalists like you come up and ask me this constant bloody question," being the usual reply.

In fact in 1971 he silenced the critics. Now driving for Brabham he set fastest lap at the Race of Champions, won the International Trophy and the Easter F2 race at Thruxton. There was little more in the way of success that year and in 1972 Hill managed to hold down his Brabham F1 place but turned to running his own F2 team which gave him his last ever race win when he won the Monza Lottery. Graham's penultimate win though was the third prong of his "triple" crown. With Henri Pescarolo he won the Le Mans 24 hour endurance race for Matra-Simca. Now Graham had won everything there was worth winning. Surely he'd give up now. Nobody who knew him would dare ask for fear of the inevitable chastening and, of course, he didn't. He formed his own team for 1973 with backing from W. D. & H. O. Wills tobacco concern under their Embassy brand name and at the beginning of this year he eventually turned racing car constructor. In July he made the expected announcement that he would finally give up driving, although in fact he had not driven a racing car since Monaco where he sadly failed to qualify.

By the time of his retirement he'd formed the nucleus of what was beginning to look like a world beating team. Not only did last Saturday's disaster take Graham, it also virtually wiped out the entire team he'd built up: Tony Brise, team manager Ray Brimble, designer Andy Smallman and mechanics Terry Richards and Tony Alcock.

The world knew Graham as not only a great racing driver and a very courageous and determined man but also as a very witty and intelligent man. Because of his tremendous radiant personality Graham Hill was drawn in many other walks of life where he acted as the greatest ambassador that the sport has ever and probably will ever, know. Among the many things he was deeply involved in were Road Safety, Invalid Transport, Boys Clubs (he was president for very many years of the Springfield club in London's East End). Undoubtedly he made a great deal of money from racing but unlike the majority of other British drivers in a similar position, he never forsook Britain for European tax havens and by staying in Britain and doing so much good work in the country he earned tremendous respect from everyone. Graham was very much a British gentleman, although addicted to having fun which some may have considered to be unbecoming of such a character. He was brilliantly funny after-dinner speaker and through his diverse interests he spread the word of motor sport in this manner to a very wide audience.

I remember my first meeting with Graham was at Rouen in 1971 when I was on my first European sortie outside British Club racing. He won the first F1 race I ever raw at an Easter Goodwood in 1962. He was still a hero in my eyes and the prospect of having to question him was a little over-awing, especially as I'd heard that if you approached him at the wrong time he could be rather short with you. I lingered around his team's transit van for what seemed like hours while he sat on some tyres and pondered his gear ratio chart. Eventually he folded it up. Nervously I moved in and hesitatingly introduced myself. "Sit down and tell me about yourself. Where do you come from? Who do you work for? How long?" I got a real grilling, or that's what it seemed like at the time. When he'd found out all he wanted to know he said. "Now what do you want from me." I got all the help I could want then and every other time I met, or spoke, to him. If he could help he would. He was quite sensitive to cricitism though and you had to be able to justify it to him afterwards. Graham was a hard man, he worked himself hard to get into his position and he expected the same of others and he'd got little patience with time wasters inside the sport itself.

Flying his own aeroplane was Graham's big passion outside motor racing, along with shooting and playing golf. He was one of the first racing drivers to own and pilot his personal plane (which, incidentally, he bought with his Indy winnings). Therefore it makes it all the more tragic that Graham should be killed pursuing something he enjoyed immensely.

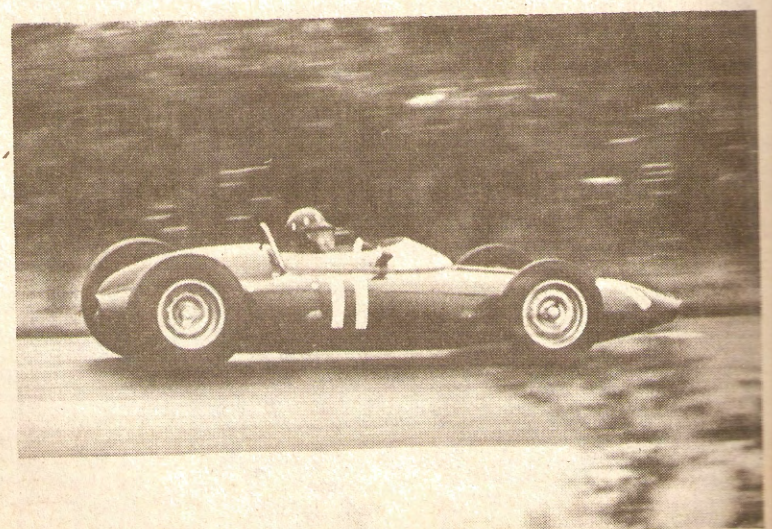
Motor racing will never be the same without Graham Hill. He was the last of the doyens from post-war racing to still be very much involved. Graham had a great deal of personal success and enjoyment from motor racing, but he, more than any other individual, had worked very hard to put something back into the sport.

To his wife Bette and children Damon, Samantha and Bridget, his parents and all his family, AUTOSPORT extends its deepest sympathy on behalf of all sportsmen throughout the world. We all felt we knew Graham. We all admired and respected what he achieved, both for himself and what he did for the sport. Thank you Graham for all the pleasure you have given to millions throughout the world. Nothing will ever surpass the aura of your presence while you lived. Graham Hill will never be forgotten, for how can you destroy a legend?

IAN PHILLIPS

If Hill had been in the entertainment business his wit would have undoubtedly matched that of Eric Morecombe (left). On his way to a win at the German GP for BRM and his first world championship in 1962.







Tony Brise

It is often said that it takes a Grand Prix driver five years to achieve maturity and become a consistent winner and statistics bear this out generally. This being the case, Tony Brise would have become one of the world's best by the end of the decade. Undoubtedly he would have done, but a great many believe that he was a cut above the average Grand Prix driver and many, including Graham Hill, reckon he could have got there much sooner. It is indeed tragic that he should have died in Hill's Piper Aztec last Saturday because not only was a brilliant driving career brutally severed, but also the off circuit qualities which made people compare Tony Brise with Graham himself and other greats, like Jackie Stewart, are gone too. Tony was an intelligent man, forthright and honest about all matters and confident enough in his own ability to assess a situation and come out and say what he thought.

Motor racing has lost not only a potential world champion but also an ambassador and champion to the sport.

Tony Brise's motor racing career is comparatively short, just five years, and yet although he was only 23 years old, he had 14 years of competition behind him. Born in March, 1952, he found his background and environment with a distinct motor racing flavour. His father, John Brise, was a successful 500cc racer and later went on to be thrice stock car world champion. It was a hectic schedule for the Brise family and Tony soon became immersed in motor sport. John Brise moved into the karting world and at the age of eight Tony joined him and for the whole of the '60s he was winning races all over the country ending 1969 as joint British champion. He'd had enough of karting by then and wanted to move into racing but funds did not run to this until the end of 1970 when he acquired a Formula Ford Elden. This was not a fashional marque to have in this Formula, but it soon became one as Tony marched to the local Townsend Thoresen title. Towards the end of the year the family bought a Merlyn and Tony became virtually unbeatable.

Bernie Ecclestone was the new boss of the Brabham team by this time and he quickly had Tony in a semi-works F3 car for 1972. It was a poor car and Tony didn't get on with it at all and towards the end of the year, bought a new GRD and a proper Holbay engine. Suddenly it all began to click.

Roger Williamson was the king of Formula 3 that year and he's gone virtually unchallenged through the year. Then towards the end of the season, with identical equipment, Brise was challenging Roger all the way. That season was the most enjoyable I have ever been involved with and to see Roger and Tony battling hard in F3 was a joyous experience. I thought both were destined for greatness and it's sad to think that golden year will never bear fruit. As a young journalist you grow up and gain your experience with a generation of drivers and follow and identify with them through their careers. I count myself lucky to have been involved with two drivers who were so obviously destined for the top. It leaves a dank void now that I know it will never happen.

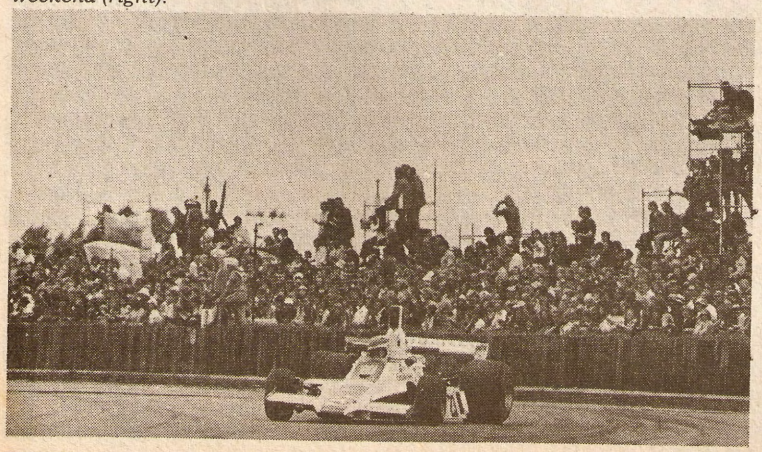
After promising so much brilliance towards the end of 1972, Tony's career stagnated really for two years. He did F3 the following year, first with a GRD and then a March, winning two of the three championships but at the same time acquiring a reputation for being inconsistent and rather arrogant. This is something which Tony himself disputed in a recent interview: "When I was 17, I went to University and I was a big head. The reason for that was that I was shy and I was using it to cover up my shyness. University changed me a lot — I didn't need to shout about myself any more. However, whereas I 'd been shy personally, I'd always had confidence in my own ability, karting gave me that. Although I got rid of my shyness, my confidence remained. Confidence and arrogance are two different things. I think everybody's idea of a racing driver at that time was Jimmy Clark. Quiet and unassuming. I didn't fit that mould and a lot of people couldn't swallow it. I can't say I blame them; when I see it in other people I find it hard to take. I really don't think my self-confidence was arrogance. Loud mouthed maybe . . . confident maybe . . . but not arrogant."

The reason for Tony's inconistency at the beginning of 1973 was that his finals at Birmingham University were coming up — being the intelligent person that he was, he stuck to his academic studies before putting racing first — but once he'd secured his degree he put a great deal more into his racing and consequently the results started to come and he was a far more approachable person.

He was unable to secure sponsorship for Formula 2 in 1974 and rather than stay in F3 he did little more than swop engines and move into Formula Atlantic. At the first race he scored a sensational victory at Silverstone and suddenly offers were there, still for Atlantic but at least he wasn't privateering. He joined Teddy Savory's newly formed Modus set-up for the rest of the year. It was a tough year, the team was new and they had their problems but working with Jo Marquart on producing a race winning car was good for Tony. Then at the end of the year he married his long-time girlfriend Janet Allen, all of which seemed to mature him immensely as a person and it showed at the beginning of this year.

He won the first race of the year in great style after spinning and then he crashed during the second while leading. He'd reached a crisis point in his career. He knew that if he didn't put it together in 1975 he never would and Modus couldn't afford

Brise during his brilliant opening laps of the British Grand Prix in the Embassy Hill (left). Enjoying himself with his wife Janet in his Canon trials car on a free weekend (right).





a year of not winning with their works car. It was the new, mature Tony Brise who worked this out and disciplined himself to overcome the problem. A year earlier it may not have happened. It's recent history that he went on to win the next seven races. He didn't just win those races, he dominated them throughout and finally his class shone through, for he undoubtedly was a class driver.

His Formula 1 chance came with Frank Williams at Barcelona. After just a few laps testing at Goodwood he went to the Spanish GP. That race was, of course, torn with strife among drivers and teams, something that would put off a hardened professional let alone a GP debutant. But in the style which those who had watched him develop in club racing, he adapted in a calm and confident manner. Tony impressed a lot of people with that drive and soon plenty of F1 offers were coming in. He made the choice in his own time and plumped for the Embassy Hill team, an unproven outfit compared to some of the other offers but he was confident he knew what he was doing.

It's too recent to detail his performances but suffice to say that he was immediately at home and mixing it with the world's best Grand Prix drivers. Wisened critics may have put his performances down to beginner's luck or initial enthusiasm, but I would like to think, in fact I sincerely believe, having watched his career right from the start, that it was Tony's ability that put him there and another season with a new car would have seen him winning races.



Listening to his respected boss.

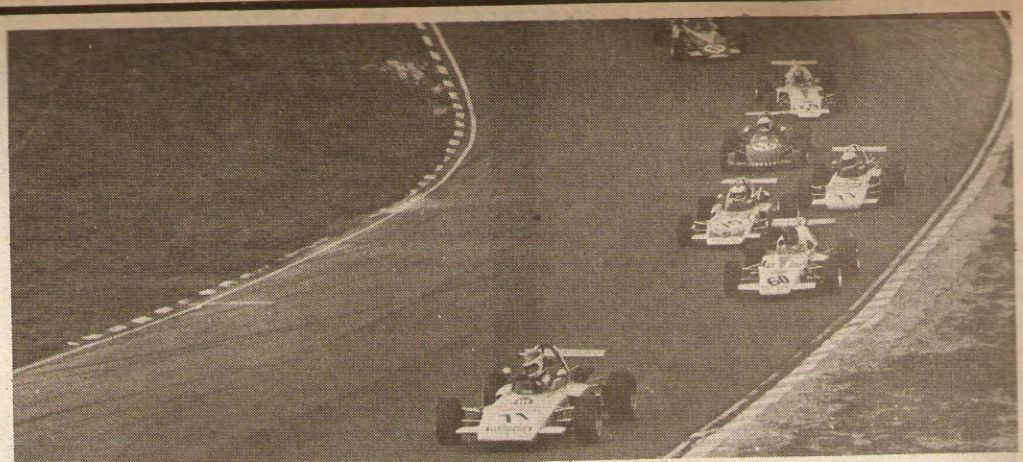
To keep faith with Modus, with whom he'd got an exclusive contract for this year, he carried on in Formula Atlantic and won the Players' title. It was potentially damaging to his F1 career and he realised it, but he didn't want to let Modus down. Later in the year he turned his hand to F5000 racing and then rallycross and in both, especially the former, he just confirmed his ability and skill of adaptation. During the winter months, too, he kept his hand in by some accomplished trials car driving. That was another thing about Tony, for although he may have appeared to be a little aloof, when it came down to it he'd do anything and at any level. One of his new aims was to learn to fly. He may have changed in later years but he enjoyed doing these things and was a strong willed man — if he'd wanted to do something generally regarded as unbecoming of a GP driver he would have done.

Tony found driving an F1 car easy, but there were things about it that he didn't like. He didn't approve of the GPDA — in fact he wanted to resign from the organisation but on Graham's advice, which he respected, he remained a member. "It's a committee of 26 and each one is more interested in themselves than improving racing as a whole," he told us in September. He was very much aware that he was a new boy and that he shouldn't make too much noise, but he felt strongly about safety and promotion and thought deeply about it. He was distressed at the rather stony reaction his fresh ideas received from other drivers and was unhappy that the system didn't allow for them to be discussed. Time would have changed that.

Not only do I find Tony's death a sad, personal loss, he was somebody that I liked and respected, but I feel that motor sport has lost a potential superstar from the Clark/Stewart mould. It would have taken a few years but I'm convinced that the sport has lost somebody who would have been as great a credit to it as Graham Hill was.

To his wife Janet and his parents, who gave him all the help and encouragement he needed, and to all his family and friends, AUTOSPORT offers its deepest sympathy for this tragic loss.

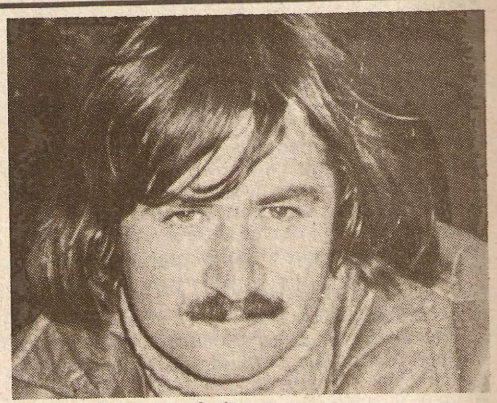
IAN PHILLIPS



Early promise: Brise leads a highly competitive F3 field at Brands Hatch in 1972.



Ray Brimble – team manager



Andy Smallman – designer

What makes last Saturday's air disaster in which Graham Hill and Tony Brise lost their lives so tragic is that virtually the entire team perished as well. The men who died along with Hill and Brise were not public figures, they were men who worked behind the scenes, engineering the success and failure both on and off the race track.

RAY BRIMBLE

Ray Brimble, 34, was Graham Hill Racing's team manager, the man who worked under Graham but who ran the actual racing division. He was born in Epsom, Surrey, and spent nearly all of his life involved in motor racing.

In the late '50s, he took part in British club racing before moving across to the United States where he worked as a USAC mechanic. He returned to this country in 1963 before journeying back to America two years later. He took part in many lesser forms of American racing as a race driver, before setting up his own race shop in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1968.

When Don Nichols' AVS Shadow team began their efforts in American Can-Am racing, Brimble joined the team, later moving onto the Formula 1 programme with Jack Oliver and George Follmer in 1963. At the end of that season, he joined Graham Hill's newly formed Grand Prix team and had been with them for the past two years.

Brimble lived at Radnage, Bucks, and is survived by his wife Pat and their two children. AUTOSPORT offers its condolences.

ANDREW SMALLMAN

Next season may well have seen Andy Smallman leap to the fore as a race car designer for the new Hill Grand Prix car, which the team had been testing down at the Paul Ricard circuit in southern France last week, was his first real effort at designing a Formula 1 car.

At 24 years of age, the quiet spoken Smallman was very young by current race car designer standards. It was only when Hill decided to construct his own cars that Smallman's name came to notice. He was a placid and patient person according to those who worked with him and rarely travelled abroad with the team. His presence at Ricard was purely because of the new car.

Born in Stafford, Smallman left school to work at Vanden Plas coachbuilders as a trainee. He came into motor racing in 1970 when he joined Race Cars International and worked as a draughtsman on their F3 Nemo project. The following year he joined Lola Cars as a designer/draughtsman and assisted on the Can-Am Lola T260 and then subsequently on their T270; T280; T290 and T310 sports cars plus the T300 and T330 Formula 5000 projects. From Lola he moved to AVS Shadow in 1973 were he worked on the DN1 and DN3 Formula 1 cars plus the DN2 and DN4 Can-Am cars and their current DN5 F1 model before joining Graham Hill Racing in October last year.

Smallman was a bachelor and lived in London. To his family and relatives, we offer our sympathy.

TERRY RICHARDS

It's ironic that Terry Richards should have been with the team last weekend for following Rolf Stommelen's crash in the Spanish Grand Prix earlier this year, he expressed a wish to stay behind in the future and not travel to races.

Richards, 26, was born in Southampton. He left school and became a garage mechanic. In 1970 he applied for a job at Tyrrell and spent that year working on the F1 March 701s of Jackie Stewart, Johnny Servoz-Gavin and Francois Cevert. He also worked on the prototype Tyrrell. He moved to Team Surtees the following year were he worked on F1/F5000 production and then joined Brabham in 1972 where he spent two years on F2 and F3 cars. He took up his current position at Graham Hill Racing at the beginning of this year.

He lived near Woking, Surrey, with his wife Linda. To her and all his relatives, we offer our sincere condolences.

TONY ALCOCK

Tony Alcock was the newest member of Graham Hill Racing. At 35 years, he was an Australian race mechanic with a lot of experience in motor racing. He joined the team at the beginning of last month.

When he first came over to Europe, he worked for Brabham, Cosworth, McLaren and Cooper before rejoining McLaren. He then returned home where he spent time working for Elfin and Neil Allen before moving over to Birrana Cars. He returned to Britain this year with the Bob and Marj Brown Thermax-Birrana Formula Atlantic team before joining Graham Hill Racing.

Tony Alcock was married and to his wife and relatives, we extend our deepest sympathies at this tragic waste of life.

CHRIS WITTY

Correspondence

The editor is not bound to agree with readers' opinions

Readers' tributes to the Embassy Hill team

May I, through your magazine express my deepest regret of the tragic accident of Mr Graham Hill, and members of the Embassy Hill Racing Team.

This dreadful loss will be felt world-wide — robbed of a man who had done so much for motor racing, and with his new team was about to do so much more.

To Mrs Hill and her family, and to all the relatives concerned, my most profound condolences.

EAST PRESTON, SUSSEX — M. H. WILLIAMS

That this world in which we live is devoid of all justice has been amply demonstrated during the weekend just past. It is so totally unfair that a man who has risked everything in the most dangerous sport yet devised by man, has taken the World title on two occasions, won Le Mans and Indianapolis and then retired with an honour bestowed by the highest in the land of his birth, should die in so futile a manner. A world without Graham Hill will be a much poorer place in which to live. I cannot be the only one who feels a deep sense of personal loss and utter desolation at the untimely passing of this tenacious, charming and unassuming man. One is forced to wonder why such a man is allowed to die when there is so much evil in other quarters.

What makes the tragedy so much harder to bear is that it has robbed England of her rising star in Formula One, Tony Brise. As if that were not bad enough, virtually the entire Hill team has been wiped out. Truly it has been written "The good die young."

To the bereaved who are, regretably, many, I and many thousands of motor sport enthusiasts, offer sincere sympathy.

STOWMARKET, SUFFOLK — PETER SWINGER

I'm writing this while feeling shocked at last night's great tragedy for motor racing. Graham Hill was one of the best things ever to happen in British motor racing. Young Tony Brise has thrilled us this year in Formula Atlantic and F5000 and no-one who was there will ever forget his brilliant driving in the first stages of this year's farcical British Grand Prix. Ray Brimble was the other main man in the Embassy team who kept them going. The loss of these three men alone could just about end the Embassy team — along with the others who were killed, the team has now been decimated.

The Embassy team improved in leaps and bounds this year despite the setback in Spain. My one hope is that the Embassy team will be able to carry on racing, depleted as they are, reminiscent of the Manchester United air crash way back.

If they cannot carry on, 1975 will have seen the death of both the Embassy team and Hesketh team. Even as it is November 29, 1975, will be remembered as a black day for motor racing for many years to come.

NORWICH — MASTER ROBERT CARTER

The news of Graham Hill's most tragic death over the weekend has shocked not only the motor racing world as a whole, but also many ordinary people who found a spot in their hearts for this amazing man.

I am writing to AUTOSPORT in the hope that this letter will be published as something written by one of his many loyal fans throughout the world.

Since many years ago at Public School when my tuck money was spent on buying motoring journals in order to keep up to date with the Formula 1 scene, from the times standing out in all weather to see my own hero at work behind the wheel, all this and more shall be memories that I will always remember and cherish whether at Druids, at Brands or the Gas Works at Monaco; that distinctive helmet of his rowing club colours will go down in the history of racing as one of the great all-time drivers.

One must imagine that my own feelings could be endorsed by many thousands of people in this time of deep grief and sorrow.

There is no more to say except I am pleased to have been alive and seen with my own eyes this man of many parts at work. Thank you, Graham Hill.

LONDON EC3 — JONATHON FINCH

Through your magazine, I would like to offer my most sincere sympathy to the families of all six men who died in the 'plane crash, which must have shocked everybody in motor racing, whether they are drivers, managers, mechanics or just a spectator like myself. In my opinion, and obviously people will disagree, it would have been Graham Hill and Tony Brise and the rest of the Embassy Hill Team who would have put British motor racing back on top, and for someone who lived close to Tony Brise it would have personally made his triumph even greater.

LONDON SE9 — M. V. BORE

The other side

I'm sure Emerson Fittipaldi will come in for a lot of stick about his decision to leave McLaren — accusations of greed and disloyalty flying thick and fast, but surely there is another side to the decision.

If I had one season of racing left by my own choice, and my brother had built a car and wanted me to drive it — I think I could be forgiven for succumbing to a blend of fraternal affection and patronism — or is Hesketh Racing's example of patriotism not to be followed by anyone else? I would imagine in my naivety that Fittipaldi had enough money for it not to be an overiding motive for his move.

TAMWORTH-in-ARDEN, WARWICKS — GERRY FERGUSON

British?...

One of the saddest aspects about the closure of Hesketh Racing was that they were the only all-British team involved in Formula One today.

It is true, of course, that their star driver James Hunt had recently taken up residence in Spain. This does not, however, detract in any way from his achievements. But imagine, if you can, the reaction if he was proclaimed to be one of the leading Spanish drivers. This may appear ludicrous, but it is a similar point of nationality that I write about.

While listening to a BBC report on the RAC Rally, I was angered and astounded to hear Billy Coleman being constantly referred to as a "British driver".

Now as far as I know Billy Coleman has not gained British citizenship, indeed, he comes from the northern province of Eire, so in no way can he be termed as being British.

It is true that he drives mainly in Britain but this does not alter the facts. Do we see or hear of Gunnar Nilsson, Alex Ribeiro or Kenny Gray being referred to as British? Certainly not.

At a time when Mr Gill was elated, and rightly so, at the success of the British drivers it seems hardly fair, not to mention accurate, not to recognise the fact that there was a top class Irish driver present.

SWORDS, CO DUBLIN — B. SCANLON

...and what about the others?

Why do we always hear so much about James Hunt in the motoring press and on the BBC. Do they not realise that there are other top British drivers aside from Hunt who thoroughly deserve recognition from the public but who do not get it because of the amazing bias by journalists towards Hunt and Hesketh.

Apart from an article in the Daily Express there was no acknowledgement of Tom Pryce's amazing feat in the German Grand Prix when he battled on with petrol pouring over him. And when both Hunt and Pryce led the British GP at Silverstone, Barry Gill enthused far and wide over Hunt's performance but not over Pryce's, who not only led but also took pole. And what of John Watson, he and Pryce, are equal to Hunt in ability yet the general public has never even heard of them.

I acknowledge that Hunt is Britain's leading driver and has won a Grand Prix whereas the others have not but please, and this applies especially to *Motor* and the BBC, let's hear some more of Britain's other great drivers and not just of Hunt.

BRENTWOOD, ESSEX. — DAVID BURLEY

The Chairman replies on Group One

Whilst not wishing to disagree with Robin Eyre-Maunsell's argument, as presented in his excellent letter (*Correspondence*, Nov 6th) and aptly titled "Chairman of the Flat Earth Society", I would, however, like to re-state my main points — hopefully with more clarity — in view of the letter, for I do not think there were "several categoric statements which are simply not true."

On cost, I was not meaning to compare a competitive group one car with a competitive group two car. The majority of rally drivers in Britain are clubmen; people who would find the running of a group one car — on a straight performance to cost comparison — unfavourable with their present hybrid vehicles. I am upset that so many people might expect something else of group one. In this light, to state that Robin Eyre-Maunsell and Paul Faulkner are the only drivers able to afford to go competitively rallying G1 cars is quite true — even if it is an over-simplification, as I deliberately stated originally. Of course there are many people able to afford these cars, but they aren't competitive, or if they are — where are they?

As for roundly abusing British makes for being more competitive than their foreign rivals — nonsense. Putting things into what I believe to be correct perspective, I endeavoured to present the case that group one (because of a variety of problems of regulations and type of event that we hold in Britain) is of little benefit to the majority of competitors. Most clubmen will never be competitive and can save money, and gain some speed if shrewd, by running a vehicle more suitable for woods, quarries and farmyards etc — i.e. suitably beefed-up. The few "names" that have driven G1 have passed through as a means to a professional end.

Surely the criteria for judging standard cars being driven against each other (at what the average motorist would regard as very high speed) over rough roads would be to leave them be, enduring these conditions, until the last one breaks down. That is surely the essense of running standard cars in the simplest, most easily measured and unadulterated terms. In this situation I believe that cars similar to those I mentioned — Peugeot, Volvo, Saab etc would run further. A positive result on which advertising could be justly based. The general public are more likely to understand this simple demonstration than understand the complexities of G1 rallying in this country and why there is some manufacturer involvement.

As Mr Eyre-Maunsell is a director of one of the largest volume Chrysler outlets in the UK — I would imagine his claim that the group one Avenger GT is the best value in rallying today could be slightly biased; though I would not hesitate to agree that it is certainly very good value. It is the state of the art that is at fault; regulations not strict enough and manufacturers too eager to follow the easiest path.

CHAIRMAN OF THE FLAT EARTH SOCIETY
CAMDEN TOWN, LONDON

PRIVATE EAR



NICK BRITTAN

Failed hero

The final act of the long-running, but not best-selling, West End show *"Watch the S.S. Hesketh Sink"* was performed without much dignity in front of an evening-suited audience in the Edwardian elegance of London Quaglino's.

It happened in a week when the portly, port-swilling racing peer was running level peg with Franco for headline snatching. By the time the late-arriving, tired and emotional Lord Hesketh bounded Bunter-like on to the stage to announce that it's "all over," one had the feeling that the Nation was past caring.

In his somewhat emotional state he astounded the audience with the statement "even if we were offered a million pounds tonight we couldn't do the job." Four days earlier he had launched a contrived appeal to raise £300,000 in a wave of patriotic fervour in order to keep his team in business. Four days later to say that he couldn't do the job for a million sowed doubts in the minds of many of us that he'd never planned to do anything other than fold his red, white and blue racing team when he became bored with it all.

Hesketh — launching a contrived appeal.



While one potential sponsor that week was on the verge of putting together the asking price other members of the Hesketh clan were holding their heads. One clansman who sits close to the till said, "Christ I hope he doesn't screw this one up. He's probably the greatest deal-buggerer in the business. We've lost more potential sponsors than most other people talk to in a lifetime."

Hesketh is not renowned for his business acumen and it is not insignificant or coincidental that his financial empire is not what it used to be.

But the English are strange. They have always lionised those who fail. Other great bunglers, like Guy Fawkes, who also failed in their mission have days named after them. And in any other language that's what Hesketh did. He failed, Not as a sportsman; as a business man. In a £2.4 million a year industry he failed to do what eleven other teams manage to do.

With all his social advantages and his ability to amuse the media he failed to do what Bernie Ecclestone did. Remember the Ecclestone who ran his all-white Brabham cars without commercial support for a year and a half?

Was the nation about to mourn for him if he went under. No way. Is Bernie a hero because he kept his team together? No.

But he did all the things that Hesketh failed to do. All he gets is money, success, the right to continue doing his chosen thing. Hesketh becomes a hero because he failed. The English really are a strange bunch of nuts.

Please do not misunderstand me. I liked having Hesketh and his jolly bunch of Bears about the place. They provided colour, focused the attention of the media on motor racing and in general terms did no harm. And patently they enjoyed themselves doing it.

I think it churlish and childish of him to stand up in distinguished company and blame his downfall on the fact that nobody would give him money to keep his flamboyant, champagne-guzzling corporation afloat.

Lavatorial

The Quaglino's fiasco started off as a good charitable idea. Run as a fund-raiser by the Lord's Taverners it was to take the same form as previous International Sportsnights; dinner and then through the port and cigars an open discussion with notables of the sport perched on the stage. They've done it for cricket and rugby and by all accounts it's worked well.

Panelists included Colin Chapman, Walter Hayes, Graham Hill, James Hunt, the late-arriving Hesketh and Barrie Gill in the chair.

Even before it was turned into an unofficial requiem for Hesketh the dignity of the evening was exploded by a table of loud plum-in-mouthed rugger club yah-hoos who could not be controlled by their table host Peter Hunt, brother of James. In their bigoted support of their hero Hunt they sprawled, brawled, cat-called, heckled and even embarrassed James.

The increasingly boring Hesketh man brought the evening's discussion to close by engaging in a verbal battle with John Webb over the matter of whether he has more loos at his Towcester racecourse than Webb has at Brands.

At this point confused charity supporters started to head for the door unable to work out whether they were at a rugger club brawl, a wake or a meeting of sanitary inspectors.

Senior British Officer of the Grand Prix circus.

On the Monday before he died 350 people stood shoulder to shoulder in the Café Royal at the National Sporting Club dinner to honour Graham Hill.

They were there to pay tribute to a great sportsman. Statesmen, ambassadors, princes, friends, fellow sportsmen and admirers.

After an evening of brilliantly funny and often touching speeches, Graham rose to speak to acknowledge the tributes that had been showered upon him.

Every person in that room strained to catch every word that Graham said. He was at his brilliant after-dinner best. Superbly timed understated throw-aways. Guffaws, side-splitting laughter and then total silence while the distinguished audience waited for the next *bon mot*.

That's just one of the ways I shall remember Graham. Doing one of the many things he did so well and enjoying it.

I shall remember watching him playing table tennis with and taking a genuine interest in the boys at the Boys Club which he supported. He was a man of great charity.

I shall remember his campaign for better invalid tricycles and the table-thumping sincerity that went with it.

I shall remember him for his sheer bloody-minded tenacity in making his broken legs heal so that he could race again.

I shall remember him as the Senior British Officer of the Grand Prix circus and how he always counseled and advised the new young drivers.

I shall remember him for the example he set of total professionalism in everything he did.

But most of all I don't want to remember Graham with sadness because that wasn't the way he lived. He was a man who took everything from life with great gusto; and gave back with the same vigour and always with humour.

One of the ways I'm going to remember Graham is with the paragraph that *Expressman* David Benson wrote as a tribute in the programme for that dinner last Monday:

His win at Indianapolis . . . "Graham's victory was slightly marred by a huge pile-up at the start of the race and later by a mix-up in Jimmy Clark's lap scoring. As Graham went through the time-honoured Indy formalities in Victory Lane — including drinking a whole pint of milk for the TV cameras — arguments waged among officials over who had really won. When an official suggested to Graham that he may not be the winner, Graham looked at him deadpan and said, "No way mate — I drank the milk."

Graham Hill: "No way, mate — I drank the milk."



All change Internationals

Problems in store for new host towns?

Now it is official — the Lombard RAC Rally moves to Bath next year. It comes as no surprise to students of the nomadic habits of internationals however, for a number of British events in the international calendar have been on the move recently. The shift to Bath is a logical one for the sponsors who naturally want to see the rally spread around a bit in the interests of nationwide promotion; and in any case "you can outstay a welcome" as Jack Kemsley put it. Prices in York were, not surprisingly, higher than in previous years but there remain serious misgivings in the move to the picturesque South West Spa town.

On Friday preceding the start of the RAC this year, it was reported that 2,110 beds had been booked in York in connection with the rally. Latest reports from Bath indicate that there are at least 2,500 beds available – a confident first step; but we wonder whether all will be entirely satisfactory. Presumably the Beaufort Hotel will become the Royal Station's successor; an admirable hotel to be sure, but do Bath and its hoteliers really appreciate just what they are taking on? The Beaufort was scarcely able to cope with the influx of rally personnel brought about by the Avon Chieftain recently, and the experience of Tour of Britain competitors two years ago was not dissimilar.

Three year rota

Further, where are the Bath nightspots which must take over the lucrative and very necessary job of late night entertainment? "Naturally we shall try to use more of the South West stage areas and we are looking for a third site which must be made known in the next two or three months" says Jack Kemsley. Major towns need at least two years to prepare for the arrival of an event as big as the RAC – we hope Bath has done its homework.

The idea behind these RAC moves is of course to foster a rota system which works in three year cycles. Thus RAC centres will be in the South West, the Midlands and in the north. The obvious choice in the Midlands is Birmingham, which generally has enough of everything to cope – but is it really a city in the best traditions of the RAC and one with which the organisers and sponsors would wish to be associated? There is certainly comparatively little in the way of pageantry or latent traditions of history wreaking from the street corners. We hope Bath turns out to be a good choice, and in terms of rally route, it does not make that much difference to the length of the event; but alternative suggestions to Bath, such as Torquay, which from the Imperial Hotel downwards, has both the capacity and the atmosphere which the organisers are seeking on behalf of the sponsors seem at face value, at least, to be better equipped.

Selby exodus

Meanwhile others are getting in on the act; the Mintex International, after some distasteful experiences at the Selby Fork Motel, have moved to Scarborough where they should have no trouble finding accommodation in February. The Circuit of Ireland of course remains substantially the same as ever, even though it is to be run in reverse; perhaps the only objection here is in regard to the prices of basic necessities in Killarney itself; however of the moves of the Welsh and Scottish there is some disquiet. From the horror of Barry two years ago, the Welsh suffered an equally disastrous experience last year at the hands of the Centre Hotel in Cardiff — an establishment which appeared not only to be inadequate in terms of facilities, but appeared not to care about this position one iota either. This year there is little to do save hope for the best, encouraged by the thought that the service could hardly be worse.

rooms to spare?

Which brings us to the Scottish and the new centre in Ayr – where are the accommodation facilities there? Ayr has a booming tourist trade – it is at its height over the duration of the Scottish and while the RSAC may well follow the somewhat questionable example of the RAC and block-book the principal hotel, where does that leave everyone else – we hope the answer is 'under another roof.'

Laine's Saab takes over after Lampinen and Rainio fail

The sixth event in the seven round Finnish Championship took place last weekend; called the Northern Lights rally it was based in Oulu in the northern part of the country; the first snow and ice rally of the winter. There were 25 stages in the 1000 km route and principal seed was Simo Lampinen in his Saab who retired before half-distance with mechanical problems. Tapio Rainio, in the second of the works Saabs went off twice and did not figure in the overall result. Antero Laine won the event in (not surprisingly) another Saab while second was new Volvo star Hannu Hilden. Jussi Kynsilehto, the rallycros and Escort yump record holder was third in an Escort GT loaned from a friend while he awaits the return of his own car which is being repaired in England after his monumental 1000 Lakes shunt.

WCR ranking

Final positions in the World Rally Championship for makes, 1976, after the RAC are as follows: Lancia 96 points from six events; Fiat 61 from five; Alpine Renault 60 from five; Opel 58 from seven (the maximum number of events it is possible to score from); Peugeot 40 from 2; Ford 35 from five; Toyota 32 from 2; Saab 30 from 2; Datsun 26 from 4; Alfa Romeo 25 from 4.

● Russell Brookes: "My best moment on the RAC was when I took 19 secs off Clark on two stages immediately before Carlisle. Then, on Ae, we put on the wrong tyres and, coupled with loss of back brakes, dropped 50 secs to him. Such is life."

● Hill climber Nicky Porter tried to keep his Mercedes going with the aid of a pair of Wellingtons when an engine mounting broke on the second day. But the weight of the Teutonic engine was too much, even for a pair of good old English 'wellies' and eventually he was forced to withdraw.

Secret weapon

The lastest moves in the tyre war were put into action on the RAC recently. As a result of Dunlop's experiments in rallycross, principally with John Taylor, a new special stage weapon has evolved from Birmingham which is code named A2. The tyre is very much a hybrid combining the best points of the D30 – a thick tread, strong sidewall tyre used for tarmac and rallycross, the D42 – a construction with the same basic qualities but with a flexible shoulder which was deemed better for precise control in rallycross, and the D52 – a combination of the best of these two. The slicks tried out on the Manx are just another derivative of this family using a thick sidewall and deep tread.

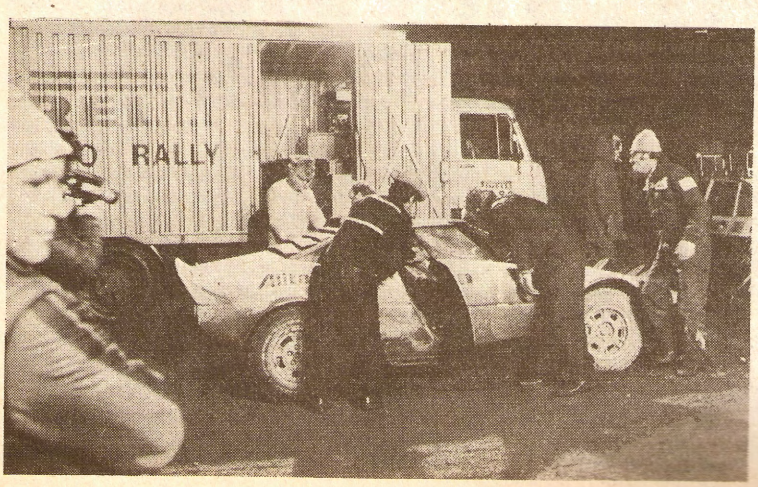
The A2 has a 'Z' pattern and utilizes a "common or garden intermediate wet compound" on a cross-ply construction. It has turned out to be *the* premium forest tyre for smooth stages and in the New Year Dunlop plan to market three sizes. Although it will cost more than M&S there is the added bonus that it wears far better — "a really useful improvement" according to a Dunlop spokesman. On smooth stages this is now the tyre to beat, for it has been conclusively proved to be "appreciably quicker" than a conventional tyre. But the A2 will not do away with the M&S, for rough surfaces will still require a tough radial compound of this nature. Dunlop are naturally chary about saying just how good this tyre is, but unofficial sources indicate that it is rather more of a breakthrough than they care to admit in public at present.

RAC say thank you

The organising committee of the Lombard RAC Rally would like to take the opportunity of using your paper to try and thank the thousands of club members and their friends who volunteered to help us. As some 7,000 were involved it will be impossible to personally thank all of them, but at least all of us on the Committee would like them to know that without their help it would not have been quite so efficient;

Jack Kemsley (Chairman-Organising Committee).

The contrast in service style – left Lancia: air conditioned comfort, hot meals and a masseuse for drivers. Ford (right): a road side open air spot by torchlight.





Three Opels for Monte Carlo

Regulations for the Monte Carlo Rally are out now and the principal new stipulation is that competitors must use the same type of tyre throughout the event, having made a choice beforehand. M. Sobra was out scouting for possible entries in York last week and there is to be no start in Monte Carlo for the first time in years.

The Euro Handler Team are planning to enter three Kadetts on the Monte, for Walter Rohrl, Anders Kullang; and Hannu Mikkola/Claess Billstam. Rauno Aaltonen is apparently to be put in charge of the team's ice notes on this occasion, Jochen Berger, Walter Rohrl's co-driver is to take up a position as assistant team manager shortly, but may still co-drive for Rohrl. The team's transmission bothers on the RAC are expected to be cured by a change from ZF to Getrag gearboxes.

Toyota give snow rallies a miss

Toyota have no plans to do the Monte, the Swedish, or the Arctic in the next few months. It is not merely a case of Post-RAC blues, for plans to contest the Swedish have been aborted because the regulations do not permit any recce, and restrict the number of studs for a car like the Celica to 240 per tyre. Neither Andersson nor Mikkola have driven the Swedish for some time, and are unfamiliar with the roads. It is felt that their relative lack of knowledge of the terrain as compared with that of locals like Stig Blomqvist, plus the stud handicap, make it scarcely worth their while to attend.

The Arctic has also been struck off the list, again because of the regulations which state that only six tyres per car are to be allowed throughout the entire event. This stipulation makes it rather less than satisfactory to run a conventional front engine, rear wheel drive car. Ove Andersson also feels that the Monte is simply not the type of event on which a Celica would shine. He may well however take up the offer of the Monte's orgainisers to go through the stages with a car complying to '77 regulations (restrictions to length and number of studs). At this stage it also seems possible that Mikkola may be given a Corolla/Levin to contest the Finnish Championship.

Makinen stays in Ford world

Another Major team to be in contention for the Monte are Ford, who are starting their World Championship programme with this event. Although the bulk of Ford's motor sport programme has yet to be officially ratified and drivers yet to be nominated, it appears that Makinen has already signed for them next year, and Henry Liddon will have scarcely time to unpack from the Bandama before he is off again to recce the Monte. It seems likely that we shall see a big effort from Boreham on the Safari, with perhaps four cars entered.

● "All somewhat embarrassing" reported Norman Jones, co-driver with David Grainger, when told the computer had retired them before setting off from York on the final leg. Grainger and Jones were placed 41st and third behind Sclater and Cowan in their class at the finish in their Escort TC on Grainger's first RAC.

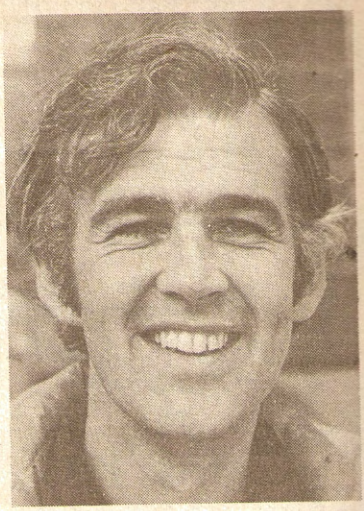
● Castrol will continue to back the Canadian Rally series next year.



"Good heavens, John, I'm shattered – are you sure it was growing there when we started out!" Pentti Airikkala looks on with concern as JDFD surveys the ravages of the Ford at Sutton Park.



Roger Clark – brilliant season.



Robin Eyre Maunsell – a great success.

Life without RAC Champ?

The final RAC Championship positions are published below. The remorseless onslaught of the 'Master' in recent months carved progressive chunks off Billy Coleman's lead; and the consistently quick Irishman was this year not able to respond to the challenge with the flair which both he and everyone else knows he possesses in abundance. Thus the title returns to Roger once again—and he has proved conclusively to be still head and shoulders above everyone else on the National scene. It is almost of academic note to record that only repeated mechanical trouble (which was reported to have lost him as much as five minutes 20 seconds in stages, and slowed his times appreciably in the early and middle part of the rally) contrived to rob him of his second RAC win.

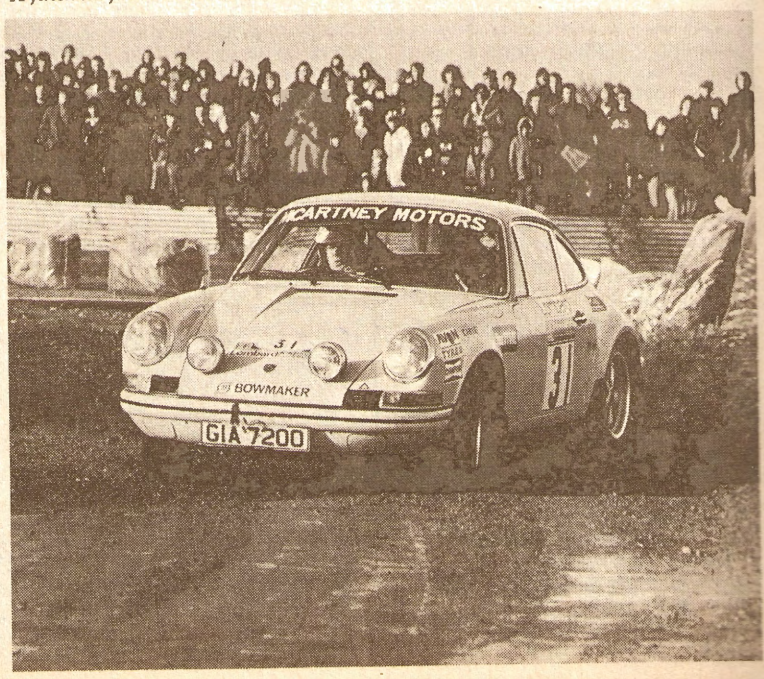
It must all be most demoralising to the challengers, who, if we are to believe what we hear, will not have Roger around next year. Suddenly it may become difficult to know who is going really quickly in international terms.

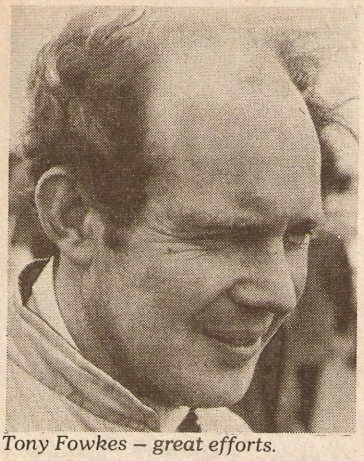
In G1, Robin Eyre Maunsell has achieved one of his prime ambitions by winning the standard car class in his beautifully prepared Chrysler Avenger. A pity that the moribund corporation have not appeared to notice his, or the Competition Department's achievements — if ever there was a suitable platform for selling cars, or someone as promotable as Robin—this must be it. In fact he may even be able to tell *them* something about it himself, being the director of the most profitable Chrysler outlet in the UK.

Final positions are as follows: Roger Clark 69 points; Billy Coleman 62; Tony Fowkes 44; Russell Brookes 39; Nigel Rockey 38; Brian Culcheth 27; Tony Pond and Andy Dawson 22; Dessie McCartney 18; Bob Bean 16; Will Sparrow 13; Brian Evans 11; George Hill, John Taylor and Timo Makinen 10.

Group one—Robin Eyre Maunsell 60; Paul Faulkner 57; Ian Gemmell 36; Russel Brookes 20; Chris Field and Dan Grewer 18; Russell Close 17; Gavin Waugh and Michael Bowcott 16.

A fine run from the talented Ronnie McCartney





Tony Fowkes – great efforts.

Unanimous—it's Fowkes

Ford's Rallyman of the Month was easily chosen last week — by a unanimous decision the vote went to Tony Fowkes, whose drive on the RAC must have been a great inspiration to clubmen throughout the country and deserves all round high praise. Tony's plan throughout the year has been to build up slowly towards having a real go on the RAC and once on the event, his strategy was simply to go as fast as he knew how on the stages he was most familiar with. It has paid off handsomely and in terms of prestige at least, the result must have been most satisfying.

Ice master

Coventry's Bernard Banning and Bob Parrot mastered treacherously icy conditions in their Avenger GT to win Port Talbot MC's Red Dragon rally in West Wales at the weekend.

In their first road rally for 18 months they finished almost nine minutes ahead of the RS2000 of Danny Owen and Alun John, of the local Gwendraeth Valley MC, despite the "handicap" of having only racing tyres available.

Banning's stage experience this year obviously paid dividends on roads which claimed half of the event's 83 starters after a midnight shower of rain turned into sheet ice. In the last two-thirds of the event, they took 20 minutes off Ted Cowell and Colin Francis in another RS2000.

Owen's result was a personal triumph. On previous Dragons, he has won the novice and semi-experts classes and has now pulled off the triple with a top experts' award.

The result also assured Francis of the BTRDA Silver Star award for the third year and second place in the *Motoring News* series.

Ice caused havoc among 83 starters for the 190 miles event which started and finished in Saundersfoot. A cold wind from Carmarthen Bay blew over the competitors in the Harbour Car Park and frost first appeared about 8.30 pm.

But what really upset the form books was a shower of rain at midnight. In the conditions, this quickly turned into sheet ice.

An early casualty was the *Western Mail*/Team Howells 1750 Allegro Sport of Pat Jerome and Lee Vincent who hit a bank on a tight right hand bend.

Water on parts of the first selective through Canaston Woods drowned the electrics of Eric Davies and Mike Cowburn's Escort RS1900 and they were never able to make up the lost time.

The V6 Escort of Mike Brown and Derek Tucker and three-litre Capri of Welsh Speed Champion Pete Waldon and John Canton were at a disadvantage in the conditions and never could make use of their available power.

The less powerful cars were ideally suited and Peter Reynolds and Lyn Jenkins were able to take a comfortable third place in their Mexico.

Cowell and Francis were fourth ahead of Peter Gerbez and Dennis Osborne in a Mini Clubman while Davies and Cowburn had to be content with sixth place.

Pessimistic RAC figures

The earliest provisional figures received for RAC crowd attendance at the first seven spectator stages; that is to say Bramham, Harewood, Olivers Mount, Croft, Sutton Park, Cirencester and Longleat were given as 160,000. This figure is obviously understated, deliberately so in many cases, and we expect to get a fuller picture of the vast numbers who attended the RAC next week when the official figures are announced.

While reports of the rally in the national press were often of questionable validity in view of the previous years of neglect, radio coverage was of a very high order and undoubtedly contributed greatly to the success of the Lombard RAC promotion.

Editorial brainfade is an unfortunate hazard which strikes just when one is least expecting it; just how it is possible to confuse Dessie and Ronnie McCartney is beyond the bounds of imagination—but we managed it. Ronnie would like it made known that he is not in fact Dessie, and further, while business back home is certainly not a bed of roses—he is not quite as hard up as we rather crudely intimated . . . er yes well . . .

Gold Star '76

The BTRDA have just announced that their Gold Star Rally Championship for 1976, will be fully sponsored by Esso Uniflo. They are renewing their successful partnership from 1973 in an even bigger way. Esso, of course, with their previous sponsorship, helped the BTRDA pioneer the national clubman special stage series. The series will be called the Uniflo BTRDA Gold Star Rally Championship. The rounds are as follows:

14 Feb	Gwynedd	Caernarvonshire & Anglesey MC
7 Mar	Dukeries	Dukeries MC
21 Mar	South-west Stages	Exeter MC & Taunton MC
3 Apr	Plains	Knutsford MC
24 Apr	Tour of Lincs	Lincs AC & Louth MC
26 Jun	Rali Bro Myrddin	Teify Valley MC
18 Jul	Lancia-Pointer	Sporting Car Club of Norfolk
4 Sep	Lakeland Stages	Morecombe CC & Kirby Lonsdale MC
25 Sep		York MC
10 Oct	Ouse Valley Stages	SODC
23 Oct		Soar Valley MC
7 Nov	Wyedean	Forest of Dean MC

As well as giving an added boost to the generous prize fund, it has enabled the BTRDA Rally committee to assist the organisers of the events with cash where necessary. As well as giving the normal cash awards for overall placings for both drivers and co-drivers, it has been decided to add awards for classes, and the committee has split them into three capacities — up to 1000cc; 1000-1300cc; 1300-1600cc; and over 1600cc. Materials such as arrows, control boards, etc, will be continued to be supplied by the association as in the past, and where necessary, at the rally committee's discretion, donations will be given to organisers to assist their costs, as well as purchasing equipment for the event. As is the normal practice of the Rally Committee, each event will be allocated to a committee member for supervision as Liaison Officer between club and the association.

Regulations will automatically be sent to BTRDA members. New entries can be obtained from, Mrs D. Green, 5 Cambridge Avenue, Wilmslow, Cheshire.

The arrival of the moonbug – the absence of rear bodywork heightens the impression of short wheelbase dramatically. Waldegaard on Sutton Park.



Kleber — tyres, birds and cash in new rally deal

On the Thursday following the RAC, the Kleber Scholarship judges met to discuss the future of the project. It appears that the deal, albeit in a different form, was narrowly kept alive, and Kleber, although suffering from the unsatisfactory exchange rate of the Franc relative to the Pound, have determined to continue to support rallying, feeling that in this branch of the sport has more to offer in terms of promotion than other media such as motor racing.

The patronage however will take a different guise to that of previous years. There will be no scholar as such, but rather three awards donated to the best performance by Kleber users in national rallies. The awards will be based on whether the driver is at the wheel of a British, Continental or Japanese car and the awards will be money and tyres. Kleber have calculated that at present their penetration into the British rally scene is now at a pitch where 20 per cent of competitors are using their tyres.

The second part of the promotion has a typically French ring to it and also makes good sense in terms of publicity. They will be looking for an up-and-coming lady driver (with the very eager and able help of the panel of course). This young lady (who may be hard to find) has to be a British competition licence holder, who, in the opinion of the judges, makes the greatest impression in '76. The award is to be tyres, help with entry fees, and a trip to the Kleber trest track at Miramas. The lucky winner will also have the avid attention and prompt advice of the friendly panel on which to rely.

Des O'who?

Overseen/heard in the queue for tickets to the post-RAC party was a sad saga enacted between Des O'Dell, Competitions Manager of Chrysler, and the wife of a prominent RAC official who was overseeing proceedings. The dialogue went something like this — Des: "Two tickets for the party please."

Wife: "What number are you? peremptory reply: "Well actually I don't have a number, you see I'm an" . . . "Oh I see an entrant; where did your car finish?" "Well we did *have* a car entered but you see it didn't actually start. . . ." "Oh well we only issue two tickets to finishers. . . ."

"But you see, I'm Competitions manager of Chrysler" remarked the self-effacing Des to which the astonishing reply ran . . . "Well, we all have our problems(!)"

Suffice to say that poor Des did get his tickets in the end, albeit not without considerable loss of face and an identity parade – it must have been that Chrysler rally jacket which fooled them – perhaps the RAC should have indentikit 'fotofit' pictures of 'prominent people' displayed at all ticket kiosks and barriers.

Stig: magic moments

By PETER NEWTON

The atmosphere is electric, the winter Yorkshire sun is fading fast, spreading its deepening red glow among the tall pines; the blue stratosphere is turning remorselsly to indigo, highlighting the forgotten vapour trails of some far-off aircraft. The first touch of evening chill descends on the assembled ranks of multi-coloured rally-jacketed watchers; its unseen tendrils catching at the throats of the company, turning the breath from their lungs into a thousand white clouds which hang for an instant in the deepening gloom before dispersing among the stoic phalanx of trees.

The first cars have already been and gone, their noses ablaze with shaking, shimmering light which scalds the retina with its intensity. A thousand eyes are concentrated on a fast lefthand bend at the top of the hill, it is arrowed, blind, and very very fast and leads into a successive right kink and a junction left almost immediately on top of one another. Necks craned, the watchers shuffle uneasily in the half-light, ears strained to catch the first pulse-quickening sounds of the next car starting the stage. The trees close around the company as the blood red western horizon gives way to deepening star spangled blue above an endless vista of treetops. Suddenly, there it is, the gutteral uneven beat of a V4 — Stig!

Almost before they can reshuffle into position the Saab is upon them — it rockets into sight, and in an instant Blomqvist has become immortalized on the minds of the watchers. The car is impossibly far right, its sloping rear end in the bushes, snuffing out the warning arrow with insolent sensationalism. He must be off; the Saab blasts onward, teetering on the edge of the deep ditch, stones and mud pouring from the front wheels like high pressure steam. The car tilts to an ever more crazy angle but the front wheels stay nervelessly in line with the body of the car — the entire machine is now impossibly sideways and the brake lights leave streaks of red etched for a instant in the trees and in the white faces all around as though they had encircled a camp fire.

Blomqvist now has the junction-left under consideration, the engine note never changes, the harsh growl of the V4 drags the perpendicular machine onward-it might almost look ridiculous were it not for the shattering speed. Blomqvist lifts his left foot an instant and with a shake of its tail the little car is straight again and being flung right and into the ruts, it bounces high in the air, more brakes, two clutchless changes and it is hidden behind the trees, front wheels spewing stones, the beat of its gruff engine gradually receding down the long straight — there is silence for an instant as friends turn to one another, mouths agape, eyes alight; then a ragged cheer breaks out and a fit of spontaneous laughter and clapping echoes out in the unnaturally quiet aftermath — the entire scene has occupied perhaps three seconds, yet the unadultered fantasy and dream-like quality of it all remain for the human videotape — the British spectator is alive and well. . . .

The Blomqvist phenomenon is nothing new of course and the saga has been re-enacted throughout the duration of many RACs in recent years. Perhaps this year however he has had to work harder than ever to keep his extraordinary steed in touch with the leaders. Blomqvist's stage times show a not unnaturally close affinity with the terrain encountered; if the going is twisty, slippery and/or downhill, the combination of him and his Saab remain almost unbeatable, and the best that the World is able to offer must give best to him; this just 25 years after the first Saab and a tribute to the magic of Blomqvist's skill.

Currently he is regarded as the World's best on snow and ice, yet he can set quick times everywhere, switch on quickly, maintain the pressure indefinitely, and chase ruthlessly; in short an almost perfect rally driver for the '70s. He is a man of few words and retains a typically tacitern, phlegmatic approach to the sport-an outlook which is shared by many of his fellow Swedes. This year it appears as though Saab, with two engine failures on the RAC to underline the point, have finally reached the end of the life span of the Cologne-designed V4 unit as a rally engine. Each year they have returned to this country having coaxed something extra from the car; now it appears as though they can go no further. The obvious step is the 99 series, and the twin overhead camshaft Dolomite based engine which is currently being developed.

"I've driven the 99 twice this year, and only with the standard engine; the twin cam has around 220 or perhaps a little bit more now — I think it must be good. But the 96 is good for you — if you don't have the horsepower enough, you must have help in other things". . . He is sitting comfortably relaxed in the Viking Hotel, a quiet figure looking around him with a half-imagined trace of a sardonic smile that almost hints at arrogance . . . the secret of Saab success comes as a refreshingly simple explanation . . . "I think cars like the Lancia Beta may be too wide to transmit the horsepower properly to the wheels; the 96 is tall and narrow; the 99 perhaps a little wider but not so wide as the Beta." He has been driving the 96 series for almost certainly longer than anyone has ever competitively driven the same marque of rally car — 11 years, in fact ever since the days when he was a compatriot of Ronnie Peterson at college and he is more than happy to remain with the same firm who gave him the breaks after his father had inspired the initial interest; the more so now with the 99 poised to alter the balance of power once again. He is employed full time at Saab and these days, although his responsibilities with the company also involve the spare parts sphere, more time is spent during the week testing and developing rally cars; sometimes the ratio of rally testing to spare parts managing is gauged in weeks, two weeks testing to one week in the factory. One thing is certain neither Stig or Per are ever short of practice; the deserted forest kilometres around Trollhattan are for ever alive with the sounds of rally cars as the two of them set about testing the latest modifications to the design.

To get him to talk about his driving requires some coaxing, but a short reference to his roof bending activities bring a momentary smile and the comment "You must do it one time every year, if you don't do it, you are not quick!" Last year on the RAC he managed to put the slippery cat over three times in all, continuing with undiminished vigour after each inversion, a phenomenon which leads one to postulate that perhaps the familiar Saab shape has other hidden qualities besides those which so obviously bestow it with excellent aerodynamics, after all it was designed by an aircraft draughtsman. It is hoped to have the first TC 99 ready for rallying by the beginning of next year. So far there have been just two outings in the car, on the German championship Hessen and Nordland rallies; Stig maintains that the car feels very similar to the 96 on loose surfaces and there are no apparent problems involved in trying to transmit over 200 bhp through the front wheels. He learnt some of his technique from Eric Carlsson but the most important single feature of Stig's success — left foot braking — was something he picked up from Simo Lampinen, as Eric never used the technique. He became a works driver for Saab in 1970 and he remains firmly convinced that properly engineered, front wheel drive is still the quickest way to go and he is quietly confident that the 99 will prove him right. Meanwhile it seems that we have not yet seen the last of the 96 which is expected to continue for some time next year alongside the development programme of the new car. How did the RAC rally, his favourite among them all, including the snow and ice outings to which the car is best suited, compare to previous British events? "It was especially hard this year — there were so many good English drivers . . ." Per Eklund, who has been watching the scene in silence for some minutes, chips in . . . "next year we come back with Saab engine-this year it was Ford, and that is the problem!" It seems that the days of past glories may well be revisited soon, for no two people are as determined as Stig and Per.

Look again – the angle of the road and that of Blomqvist's Saab are in complete disagreement. It was the way to record quickest time at Bramham.



THE RACING SCHOOLS — MOTOR RACING STABLES

Back to school . . .

Why? especially in these days of "hyper inflation" and the supposed "ecological awareness" the coming generation are ideologically equipped to save the world with . . . waste money on something so frivolous as motor racing or rallying? How can any reasoning individual be so, so — flippant in view of our bankrupt state?

There are perhaps 12 paid motor racing drivers in this country and even fewer rally drivers enjoying a similar situation; yet there are motor racing "schools" and there would be equivalent rally schools if the basic working was less prohibitive on a cost comparison. What causes this irrational thinking? Are all racing school pupils rich wastrels and layabouts . . . or is it the age-old Walter Mitty complex that is at the root of this phenomenon? This writer would think neither, but reckons that a bit of both plus a large measure of ingredient X might go some way in constructing the recipe. He was despatched to find out for himself and would appear to have failed dismally in presenting a clean, cold "insight" appraisal but insists that he has found out something worthwhile, though largely on a more personal level than anticipated. He chose the easiest route between A and B, going to Motor Racing Stables, the school nearest Britain's largest population centre.

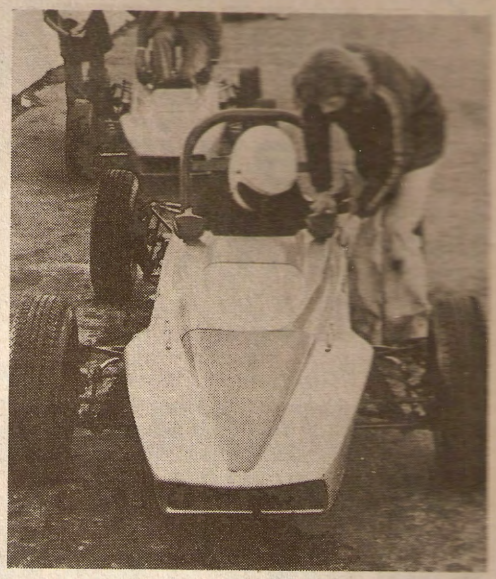
Motor Racing Stables, generally referred to as MRS, operate on Fridays and Saturdays at Brands Hatch. There is also a limited operation at Croft. It is by no means a new-fangled idea; MRS first starting racing tuition 16 years ago at Finmere, moving to the facilities and convenience of Brands in 1963. Geoff Clarke is Managing Director and Brian Jones the very active General Manager. The school does not operate at other times due to restrictions on track availability.

Back to school

The idea is that you first have your driving evaluated from cold — not how quickly you drive — just *how* you drive. This takes place in a saloon car provided. Initial laps follow with a school Formula Ford car provided that you have achieved a score of 60 per cent on evaluation. You are asked what you thought of the single seater experience and once the usual "fantastic-super-wonderfuls" have been sorted out you decide whether to continue. Assuming you do — and a fair proportion of applicants only sign initially to sample a single seater as their goal — a lesson in one of the saloons is next on the agenda, the instructor endeavouring to put you on the correct lines through corners and have you operate the car in what soon becomes clear to be the only correct way before, during and after each corner. Once the second lesson is completed (this personal instruction session perhaps the most valuable key of the whole course) lesson number three puts you back in the Formula Ford car to drive around the track in your own time, hopefully demonstrating just how much of the personal instruction you have remembered; driving the car on what would be racing lines but in considerably slower motion. This writer has muddled through thus far and, with a tremor of his typewriter fingers, will attempt to lie back and tell Mr Freud how it all began . . .

Lesson One

Arrive at Brands Hatch a trifle late (predictable) on a clear and sunny November Friday morning after an extraordinary early start to the day (things begin to get underway at 09.00hrs). Thankful to have been driven down by understanding fellow Haymarket motoring journalist who is anxious to start a rest period in lighthearted mood with a few belly laughs and has agreed to act as photographer — providing I get the negatives. Already have urge to rush to the nearest toilet which I put down to lack of bacon and eggs then have to go through signing-on process selfconsciously trying to hide a very shaky writing hand.



A typical school car – ugly but strong.

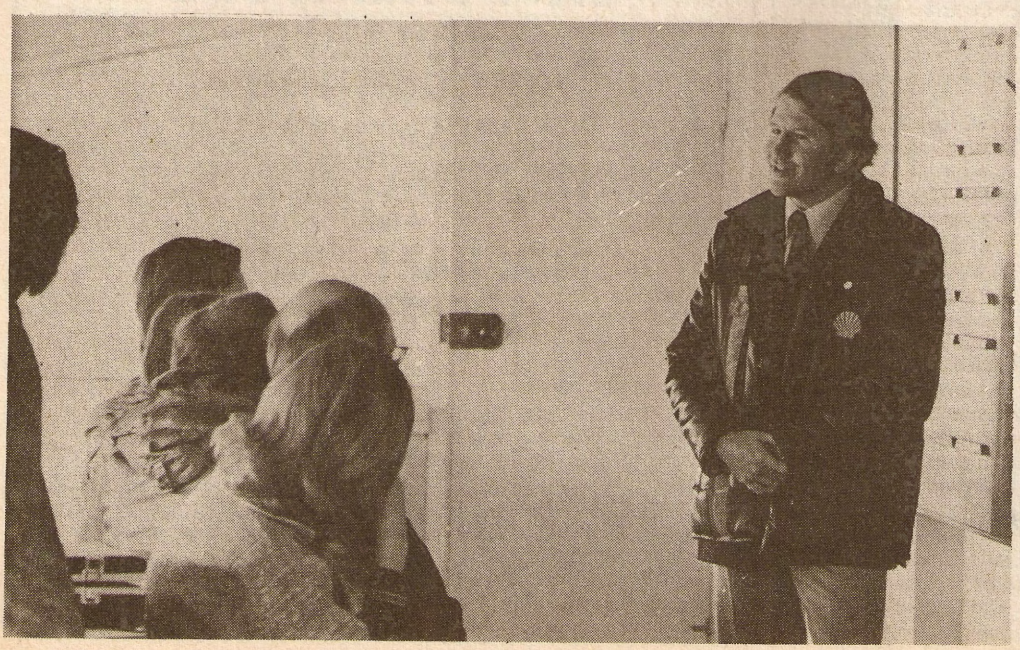
Luckily, there is soon time to relax and regain some control of normally autonomic functions, as this morning's first-timers cluster around the backboard in the press-box. Brian Jones is equipped with pointer and chalks and soon gains our undivided attention. Brian talks in that smooth, reassuring manner of the surgeon who is just about to perform a delicate open-heart operation and tells you there is "absolutely nothing to worry about". His blackboard instruction goes through all the basics of road positioning, braking, not doing anything violent with the car, to be mindful of flags and others on the track etc. above-all safety is most reassuringly shown to be paramount — rather like the preliminaries to a flying lesson.

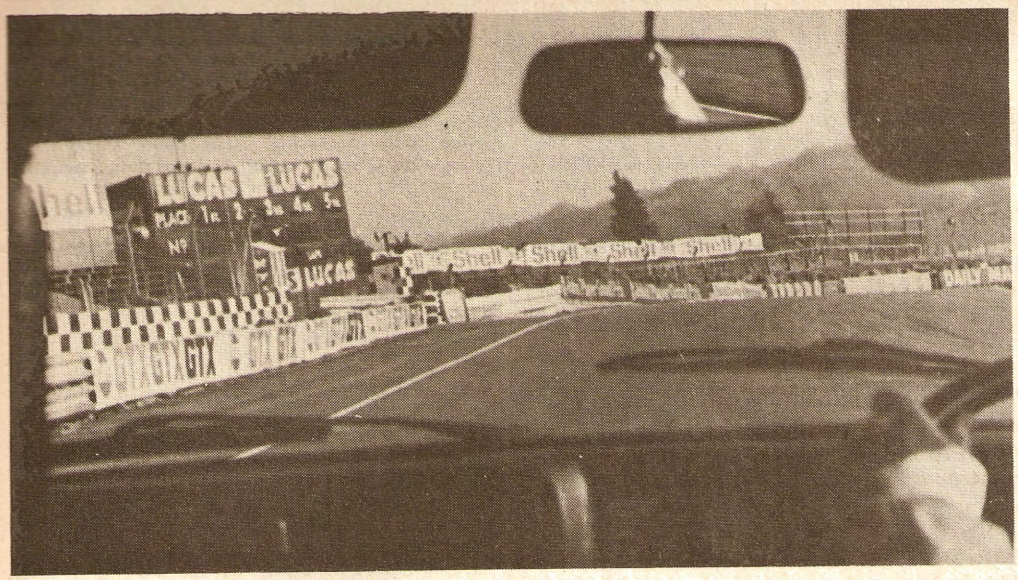
Next comes the evaluation in one of the school's Vauxhall Magnums. One standing start lap followed by two more with the instructor busily ticking off a list of minus-points, 100 per cent being perfect and 60 per cent the basic minimum. A score of less than 60 does not mean no FF drive, just that the instruction will be modified until more than 60 per cent is achieved.

This test followed after a brief wait in the Brands pits, with time to drink-in the atmosphere or go to the toilet again before the dulcet tones of Tony Lanfranchi boomed eerily from the control tower, "Fred Bloggs, your time is up".

I was installed in a Magnum Coupe with one of MRS's most experienced instructors, John Stevens, and set off for my first ever drive around Brands Hatch. Sure enough, after that first lap John's felt-pen squeaked into action and I started wondering what I would tell the Editor about failing this check. The analysis of faults was most enlightening, after scraping through with a lowly mark. Six points were immediately knocked from the 100 for having only one hand on the steering wheel when initiating braking; another five were ruthlessly removed for braking on corners; another three for incorrect hand positioning and many many more for "in too early", "in too late", "approach on too tight a line" and "no clipping points." All this was achieved in only three laps, plus a "must drive single seater much slower" in the remarks column.

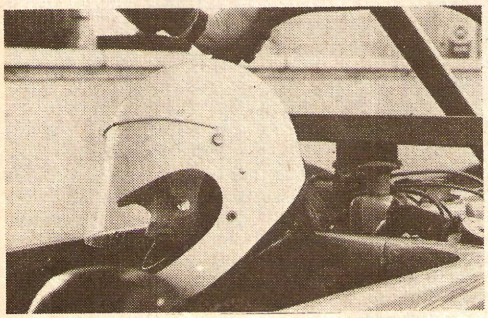
Brian Jones begins lesson one in the "operations room."





Already this MRS course was proving to be quite a benefit. Not just that I had failed to heed John's words about speeding being irrelevant, but that I had picked up faults which had been developing for years, mainly through scurrying around minor roads on rally reportage duties, which certainly had no place on a race track.

After changing an open face helmet for another school supplied one, a full face one



The gnome sets forth . . .

with visor this (by now very subdued) reporter was installed in one of MRS's own built and maintained FF cars, strapped in, shown the ignition switch and sent off after a reminder that a 4000 rpm limit telltale was in operation. Nearly a first lap disaster changing down to second gear on the first approach to Druids. Quickly dipped the clutch and back into third before the blip of throttle would have knocked the indicator over 4000 rpm. I had forgotten that only top gear is used at first with one change to third for Druids. Sensible helps towards safety for first time drivers. A chequered flag signalled the completion of five of the most insipid laps ever witnessed at this circuit. Still, it had been more of an experience than anticipated, nearly as enjoyable as a few laps of an airfield with the Chequered Flag's Lancia Stratos earlier in the year. Very worthwhile whether you have an interest in motor sport or not.

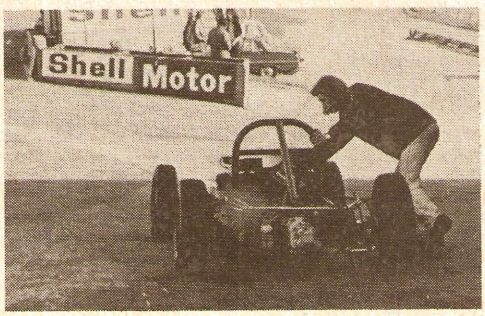
Lesson Two

The personal instruction of the second stint with MRS proved to be considerably more hectic, and quite an eye-opener. Once again my instructor was John Stevens and after a considerable number of laps in the Magnum I had the greatest respect for his patience and teaching technique.

Starting off the drive very slowly John will start to tell you where to place the car, when to brake, change gear etc, and when you don't follow with a satisfactory manoeuvre you will

John Stevens lines the Magnum for Paddock.

be shown and shown again. My lack of consistent lines proved quite a bugbear ("in too early", "no clipping point") and John took over the driving to drum it into my head. When I did occasionally manage a copy-book corner the thrill was mush greater than obtained from the first single seater tour around the track. This lesson showed the real



faults, the ones which have to be eliminated if you are ever to drive around the circuit seriously. It also does much for road driving as an added bonus.

The initial desire to sample a single seater had been satiated with the in-at-the-deep-end first five FF laps, and the Magnum became *the* vehicle — it wouldn't really matter if it were a fire engine or a Ferrari — *it* must be taken around the track just one way, obviously the correct way, and any vehicle on the wrong line will begin to feel fast or dangerously getting nearer an out of control situation if the driver does not do everything possible to smooth-out the corners and reduce side momentum. As John instructed "If you are on the correct line it shouldn't even feel fast" As an instructor who has driven works Royales and Dulons and still holds the FF record at Thruxton, which he set in 1972, the pupil can take it as read that you are being shown precisely the right way.

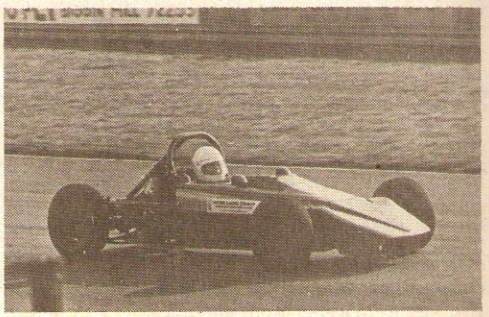
Lesson Three

This one was fun. Arrived very late with the rigours of life at RAC Rally time in York being the excuse (substantiated by a very second rate pair of eyes). Back into the same FF car as first tried (one of a fleet of seven — "mishaps" are responsible for such a number being necessary to keep two or three mobile) and off on a streaming wet track for eight untimed laps. The rev limit was up to 4,500 rpm now with just one gear change as before. The object — to practise negotiating the circuit on the correct lines wherever possible and to forget any ideas of going quickly.

This driver showed his memory retention to be somewhat lacking, driving every corner wrong (you are always being watched) and becoming so annoyed that he decided to pit after only three laps to fiddle about with the mirrors — hoping to regain some composure before trying again. Back out again into the rain spending the five remaining laps wondering if Jacky Ickx ever has such visibility problems. Eventually consoled by the thought that of the six corners on the short circuit at Brands one was driven right on six different laps and he now only needs to become six times more consistent. The fun really starts with the next lesson (if they ever allow me back inside the gates) where laps will be timed. Speed must be increased in controlled increments — altering the rev-limit and gear changes etc — and times must be bettered to change "grades".

Conclusion at this point? It has been a far more traumatic experience than this writer anticipated. Equally, it has been most fascinating hard work. There has been some "magical", indefinable, pleasure obtained and, above all, it has been of a great benefit mentally, even for someone who does his fastest driving around Marble Arch, unlike former MRS pupils of the Tom Pryce and James Hunt ilk. Rally driver and Tour of Britain winner Tony Pond has also benefited.

IAN SADLER



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- **Tuition continues with eight lap timed sessions, the target times gradually reducing until those who might "make it" can reassure themselves and those who have doubts about their ability can see this clearly — and will have saved a considerable amount of time and money over those who have bought their own car to experiment with.**
- **An important part of the MRS course are monthly private race meetings. Entry fee is £30 and participants must possess an RAC Restricted Racing Licence.**



". . . it would seem that the press are flattering only to deceive for not everyone whose interests have been awakened by their unique powers is as au fait with Tony Drummond's throttle pedal as they are with Gerry Francis' book, George Best's brain strain or the condition of Alan Ball's squalling brat."

By PETER NEWTON

Human interest?

Wasn't it gratifying to see all that media interest rekindled for the RAC this year? There must have been few people indeed who were not aware of the rally's presence throughout its duration — and for those anarchists who were out plotting the downfall of the government during the broadcasts of that great British institution, the 9.00 News, there was always last Saturday's afternoon film of the event which can hardly have failed to have propped up those imbibers' eyelids as they slumped into armchairs for the sobering-up, "between-bouts" neutralisation period.

As far as television is concerned, the subject under review can often be skilfully manoeuvred to sell itself through the medium of visual stimuli so that little background knowledge of the subject needs be appreciated by the somnambulent audience. The effectiveness of the "box" can be illustrated with telling effect since it was primarily through the cathode ray tube that Americans discovered the Vietnam War to be a harsh reality involving the backbone of their society, and not "some colonial war for which they had no conceivable cause for concern, means of access to it, or desire to know more about it."

For a spectacle as dramatic and skilful as top-flight rallying, precious little needs to be said, but it was with a deepening sense of *déja vu* that we read the very evident reports of the rally in national dailies. The RAC Rally perhaps does not deserve to be treated in any way as a special subject, it is just another sporting event, but the cynical repetitive clichés with which the reports were liberally daubed showed a singular lack of concern for the readership unfortunate enough to come across them, and classic bigotry over subject matter.

Perhaps it is the contention of the national sports writers that Russell Brookes is as familiar a name in Tesco Crescent as Gerry Francis (Gerry's just started writing a book, you know, a superior James Bond saga, we are informed with ill-concealed relish) and a Special Stage is as nostalgic a battleground as Elland Road; but if one can generalise for a moment from the reaction of the Minister of Transport, who was conducted around the first day of the rally and driven through both Bramham Park and Wykeham before the arrival of the first car, it would seem that the press are flattering only to deceive for not everyone whose interests have been awakened by their unique powers is as au fait with Tony Drummond's throttle pedal as they are with Gerry Francis' book, George Best's brain strain or the condition of Alan Ball's squalling brat. The Right Honourable gentleman's reaction was one of bemused diplomacy which rapidly gave way to incredulous interest as the aims and action of the sport were carefully demonstrated. One would gather that he had no idea how "big" (in every sense of the word) rallying was. Of course there are those who would contend that the greater number of people who become rally followers, the more hazardous the sport becomes to organise and run. Certainly the attitude of some road rally organisers in the past has been to shun public exposure for the simple reason that "we have been getting away with it for years, why come and draw unwanted attention on our fun now," but if our national media were to bother to handle the exposure in a responsible fashion with regard to the RAC at least, then there still remains the feasibility of a chance that both organisers, spectators and competitors can live at peace with one another.

The assorted press flotsam who began to jostle together in the cocktail bar of the Royal Station Hotel over the week prior to the rally had about them the bored, shell-like listlessness which only years of living with ruthless sub-editors and copy deadlines can bring. The vultures had gathered for the shock drama about to break; perhaps a rally car plunging out of control into a frozen crowd? In the event the vultures appeared to have had their beaks and talons removed, or perhaps they had just lost their appetites, for they missed the two principal "horror dramas" of the event and concentrated with sickly aplomb on the mundane. A typical report might have gone something like this:

Last thing Great Britain's No 1 Rallyist Roger Clarke (24) expected to put the stoppers on his RAC victory challenge were his brakes; but in an exclusive interview with me, Roger revealed how they stopped working as his flame-red 120 mph Ford Escort hurtled headlong for a bank, out of control.

Shocked spectators saw him career off Cirencester Park's tricky tarmac twists; and with him crashed the hopes of thousands of his anxious followers.

Super slick teamwork soon had the Knaresborough garage owner back and running, but vital seconds had ticked away . . .

And those seconds were enough to keep the dapper English maestro firmly behind teammate Tim McKinnon (the Flying Finn) as he raced to a thrilling hat-trick of RAC Rally triumphs.

British drivers stunned the previously unbeatable Scandinavian Stars by grabbing five of the top ten places at the finish of this gruelling 2,000-mile bonanza.

The rally bred a new star in Ruislip garage owner Tony Fowkes, a previously raw young unknown who campaigns in a Ford Escort he built and paid for himself. The Ruislip roustabout defied the might of the works teams to battle through to a gritty third place.

Lancia's no-expense-spared, all-out effort with the sensational shark-like Stratos racing car crashed to nought and all their carefully laid plans were dashed as first, Italian superstar Sandy Munary crashed off the road, and then slick Swedish ace, phlegmatic Bob Waldegaard, suffered crippling mechanical problems. He fought back with shattering verve from 106th to a staggering seventh overall, but was then tragically disqualified for being late at a check-point.

The five-day marathon was drama-packed to its climactic end. Experts had predicted a "sting in the tail" of this year's event, and they were right.

In freezing ice and blanket fog after 24 gruelling hours of non-stop gruelling driving, luckless competitors hit the grim gruelling Northern forest — labelled "Killer Kieder" by the rally fraternity — and the fearsome forest marked the end of bright British hopefuls, etc, etc (continued P.94).

Not as bad as that maybe, but the public may have wondered what was going on around Britain for five "gruelling" days. It is a reflection of the state of our national media that most of those recipients of the shock news who were not asleep, still probably did not know what was happening.

On a more serious note it must now be imperative for rally organisers and officials to act in an attempt to avert just the kind of tragedy which the men in the cocktail bar were awaiting. Interest in rallying (and particularly the RAC) is now at the sort of pitch where it is not sufficient merely to have a few marshals at strategic points on the stage route. Serious attempts must be made to control spectators, whose sheer numbers, if not collective intelligence, are often their undoing. The situation at Heaton Park was apparently most unnerving to drivers who would have had little chance of avoiding a disaster had mechanical failure intervened; but the problems are not solely related to the paying-spectator stages, where at least they can be politely but firmly catered for; it is as much in the forests themselves, and this is the area where the problems are all but insurmountable. Rallying may soon depend on spectators and they deserve to get a good look at competing cars; indeed this facet of the sport is just one of its principal attractions — no standing behind hundreds of yards of catch fencing, tank traps, sleepers, barriers and other paraphernalia — but it is now a facet which *has* to result in a tragedy with all its consequent side effects, if only because sheer weight of numbers forces those spectating to take risks which they may feel are justified but which look very different from inside the cockpit of a jinking, bouncing rally car approaching at over 100 mph.

Ever increasing crowds brought the spectator control controversy.





Low-drag shape is very evident.

Porsche traditions continue

The first Porsche, if we except such things as the 1902 model with electric transmission and front wheel drive, was a sports version of the Volkswagen, which was also designed by Dr Porsche. Gradually, the sports car became more specialised, until it bore no relationship to the VW, apart from having a rear-mounted air-cooled engine. Manufacture of Porsches to this formula continues, but the VW is now a water-cooled front-drive car.

When it was decided to add a new Porsche to the range, with a price more in keeping with present economic realities, it seemed reasonable to use components from the VW-Audi collection. However, front-wheel drive was not favoured because traditional sports car handling was desired. The mid-engined configuration is so wasteful of space that it was not considered, but the orthodox front-engined layout gives insufficient weight over the back wheels for good traction.

The answer to that problem was to split the engine-gearbox unit, the engine remaining in front but the gearbox joining the final drive at the rear. Such a design gives a high polar moment of inertia, avoiding twitchy handling and ensuring straight-line stability. A front-drive transmission unit could be moved to the rear without alteration, but there was the problem of propeller shaft inertia, which would increase the effective weight of the clutch plate, thus putting an unreasonable load on the synchromesh.

This was overcome by joining the engine and transmission by a rigid tube. This tube contains a propeller shaft in the form of a tension bar of very small diameter and great length. Such a shaft would be unacceptable because it would bow out of line and vibrate, but by calculation its points of maximum whirl were determined, ball races being located in these positions, tightly fitted and lubricated for life. These four races positively prevent the shaft from going out of line, though its diameter is only 20 mm (0.7874in), but it's their inequal spacing that does the trick, the computer choosing their exact positions.

The engine and 4-speed gearbox, joined by the tube, are treated as one unit, with two rubber mountings in front and two behind. The exhaust system is slung beneath and thus no provision for relative movement has to be made. The same applies to the short central gearbox and its linkage, located on top of the tube. This arrangement ensures a 50/50 weight distribution, giving good handling and traction.

A 2 + 2 seating arrangement has been chosen, providing rear space for children, or two adults for very short journeys; the seats will usually be folded, when the luggage space is excellent, in spite of a fairly high floor level, dictated by the transmission arrangement. Immense trouble has been taken to galvanise the body panels against rust, advanced metallurgy having produced welding materials that cannot corrode at the joints — the most vulnerable areas. This has permitted the long-term guarantee of the 911 to be extended to the 924, though the latter costs 10,000 Deutchmarks less. The front wings can be unbolted for rapid replacement.

MacPherson front suspension is used, with high-geared rack and pinion steering, the rear-end geometry being by transverse torsion-bars with trailing arms having a slight lateral offset. The optional anti-roll bars, and light-alloy wheels with broad, low-profile types, were on my test car. Disc front and drum rear brakes are used, with a horizontal hand-brake lever just inside the driver's door.

The engine is a slanted in-line 4-cylinder unit, with a belt-driven overhead-camshaft operating inclined valves through rockers. Bosch K-Jetronic fuel injection ensures freedom from pollution and renders the new car suitable for the USA market. The machine is solidly constructed and not outstandingly light, but its aerodynamic shape ensures exceptionally low drag, aided by disappearing headlamps.

I was able to test the 924 in France, on roads ranging from autoroutes to narrow lanes in the hills and crowded village streets. The seats seemed rather low and it is likely that production cars will have them raised a little. At present, the height of the scuttle prevents one from seeing the bonnet at all, as it falls steeply, which makes exact judgement of width difficult.

The seats are very comfortable and it is at once obvious that the car has plenty of power, right through the range. Top gear is really an overdrive and prevents the engine from approaching peak revs, but I was able to exceed the claimed 125 mph quite easily. The high third gear is used a good deal on country roads and has a maximum around 100 mph. Porsches have never been silent cars and this water-cooled model is not particularly quiet, but the level of engine noise is acceptable for a sports car.

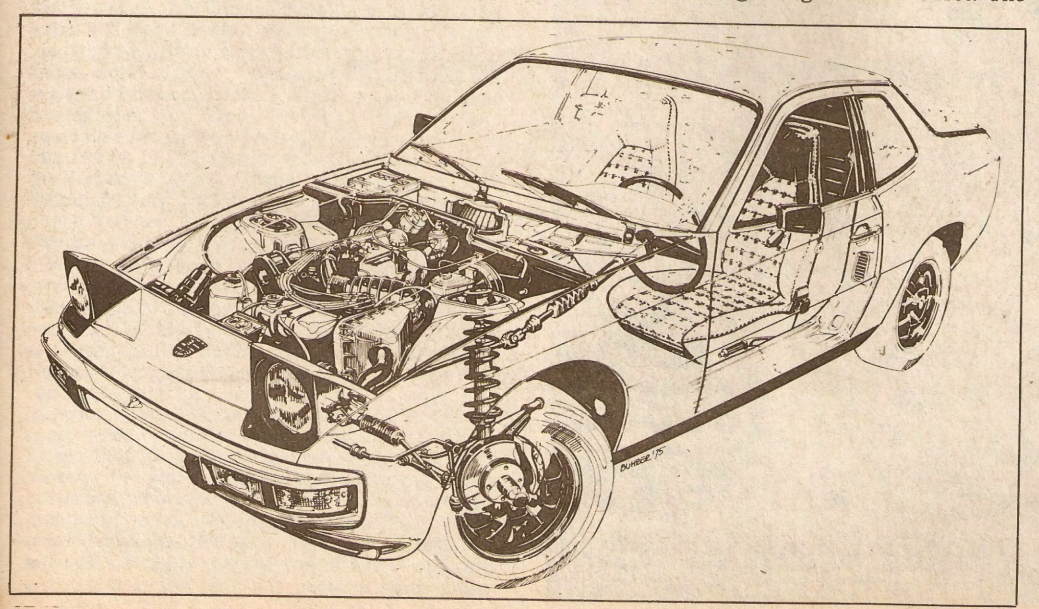
Wind noise is very well subdued but the worst feature of the prototype that I drove was the road noise, bump-thump, and booming, which should be reduced before production. It was too easy to start in reverse instead of first, while second to third could be missed if sufficient care was not exercised. Some spring bias on the lever might do the trick, for the other changes go through very nicely.

The cornering power is very high, the car getting round without a sign of roll or tyre scream. It's a bit hard to judge cornering speeds at first, for the 924 gives no indication that one is approaching the limit. However, few owners are likely to get anywhere near this point, the great reserve of cornering power being a real safety feature. Bumps do not throw the car off its line and the traction is very exceptional, with a remarkable absence of wheelspin during hard acceleration on first gear. There's a fair gap between the lower gears, but to make a special 5-speed box could nullify some of the price advantage over the 911.

The brakes are very potent and can achieve some remarkable crash-stops without skidding the wheels; they give a splendid feeling of security, compared with too many modern brakes, which lack "bite" in sudden emergencies. The hand brake is well up to its work, too.

I was lucky to drive the 924 at this early stage, for its unlikely that we shall see the right-hand drive versions for a year or so. Obviously, it has all the speed that anybody can use nowadays and its low-drag shape should give useful fuel economy. Its roadholding and handling will appeal greatly to sporting drivers, but if there is an area where a bit more development would not come amiss, it's in the field of road noise insulation and general refinement. The car will be marketed by Porsche themselves and not by VW, and though this will be a less expensive model, the famous engineering quality will be maintained.

JOHN BOLSTER



Car Described and Tested: Porsche 924 2 + 2 coupé.
Engine: Water-cooled in-line 4-cylinder, 86.5 x 84.4 mm (1984cc). Compression ratio 9.3 to 1. 125 bhp (DIN) at 5800 rpm. Overhead camshaft and rockers with toothed-belt drive. Bosch K-Jetronic fuel injection.
Transmission: Single dry plate clutch. 4-speed synchromesh gearbox with central remote control, ratios 0.9667 to 1, 1.3600 to 1, 2.125 to 1, and 3.6000 to 1. Hypoid final drive, ratio 3.4444 to 1.
Chassis: Integral steel construction with complete galvanising. MacPherson independent front suspension with coil springs. Rack and pinion steering. Rear tailing arms with transverse torsion bars. Anti-roll bars (optional extra). Servo assisted disc/drum dual diagonal circuit brakes. Bolt-on steel wheels, fitted 165AR14 tyres. Optional extra: light alloy wheels fitted 185/70 HR14 tyres.
Equipment: 12-volt lighting and starting. Speedometer. Rev counter. Oil temperature, water temperature, and fuel guages. clock. heating, demisting and ventilation system. Windscreen wipers and washers. Headlamp washers. Heated rear window. Reversing lights. Flashing direction indicators.
Dimensions: Wheelbase 7ft 10.5 in. Track 4ft 7.8 in/4ft. 6in. Overall length 13ft 9in in. Width 5ft 6.3 in. Weight 21¼ cwt.
Performance: Maximum speed 125 mph. Acceleration: 0-62½ mph 10.5 s. (makers' figures).

Rupert Keegan—going up?

We are often accused of not giving enough support to British drivers in the Editorial pages of AUTOSPORT. It's our fault, we're told, that all the exposure of up and coming drivers goes to the foreigners. Whether this is the case or not it's another argument, but one of the reasons, if that is the case, is that there is not, in our opinion, much in the way of British talent around at the moment. As well as driving ability we're looking for something else, character and a promotable personality; in Rupert Keegan we may have found one.

Just 20 years old, Keegan has been racing for two-and-a-half years and in terms of results has very little to show for it. He led just one race this year, the final race of the season at the televised Thruxton meeting recently. He didn't win that race, in fact like so many of his races, he didn't even finish it. But, be that as it may, that drive was a fine one, a culmination of three months of ever improving performances. He's staying in Formula 3 next year and could just turn out to be a British champion. It's difficult to tell at the moment but the signs are there . . .

Born at Westcliff-on-Sea, "I think that's where it was, I don't remember too much about it though," in February 1955, Rupert is the son of Mike Keegan, wealthy boss of British Air Ferries. It was, in fact, the horror in Rupert's mind at the thought of actually having to work physically on aeroplanes that decided him to take up motor racing. "I just told my father out of the blue that I wanted to be a racing driver, I'd only ever seen it once, but I had to find an excuse to get out of doing any physical work. My father gave me £50 to go to Motor Racing Stables and it started from there really."

This momentous decision came after a none-to-successful academic career. "I really hated school. I decided — well basically was asked — to leave when I was 16." Swimming was something that he was successful at, representing Kings School, Ely, and occasionally the county.

Seven months on the Isle of Elba was supposed to be spent learning French from a Russian professor, "but all I learned was how to fish and swing through trees like Tarzan. Oh, and I built a house with my brothers."

A major distraction during his last years at school was that he and two friends had at their disposal a motor bike, a car and a power boat. "We were only 16 at the time, so it was illegal anyway, let alone at school. Still I never got caught so that must be some sort of achievement!"

Rupert's first visit to a race meeting was the Race of Champions in 1972 when he was still at school. "I'd never really thought about it before, I knew some names from reading the newspapers and I liked Scalextric — I had a lot of big accidents at that too — but nothing more than that. An uncle used to race an Elite but really none of the family knew anything about it. After seeing it I thought, 'I fancy that,' but didn't think any more about it until I was faced with the prospect of having to work."

Having made the decision to have a go, he enlisted at MRS and went down to do his course under the eye of Tony Lanfranchi and Ray Allen. "I don't know if they just wanted more money from me but they seemed impressed and I completed the course very quickly. Tony said to my Mum that I ought to take it up as a career; in fact he said that I was more promising that Tom Pryce and James Hunt at that stage — but that didn't mean much as we didn't know who they were!"

Rupert's first race came in a school event driving a Mexico in June, 1973, which he won, "All I remember is Ray Allen's face as I changed from fourth to third at full revs on the main straight — sheer terror! I still don't know why I did it."

After the schooling was over his father bought him an FF Royale. The first race was a *Libre* event at Snetterton where he was the first FF man home. His first championship race was at Thruxton later that year. "I was near the back of the grid but there was a pile-up on the first lap – I wasn't involved this time – and I found myself sixth going round the back, until we got to Church that is." Rupert went spinning off at that rather frightening corner the first time he went racing round it . . . it wasn't to be the last time either. Having restarted as he was being lapped by Ted Wentz he tried to follow that year's champion into the chicane. "There I was thinking this game was easy and suddenly I was into the barrier. I only had an aircraft mechanic working for me and neither of us had a clue on setting the car up – it just wasn't on."

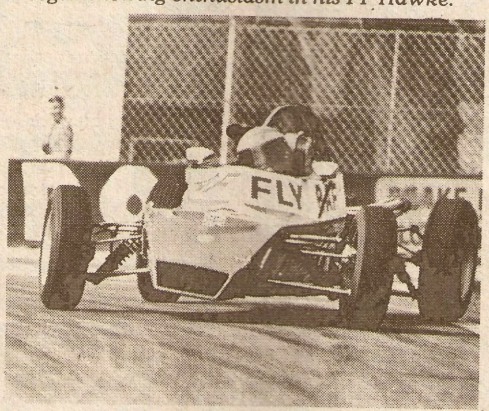
Later that year came his first hospitalisation as the result of a racing crash. It was Castle Combe this time. "As usual I started near the back and was making my way up the field when suddenly I forgot about the tight right-hander at the end of the straight . . . I tried to take it flat in fourth. The next thing I knew there was a big titted bird looking deep into my eyes at Bristol hospital."

For 1974 the plan was to run the works Dulon team with Tim Brise, but that fell through and eventually Mike Keegan bought his son a Hawke. It was at the Hawke factory that Rupert met South African Roy Klomfass and they decided to team up under the BAF colours. "I learned a lot from Roy, like the fact that springs could be changed and shock absorbers adjusted. We concentrated on the Townsend Thoresen championship which Roy won and I came fourth. Our best day was when we had a BAF-1-2 at Brands . . . I let Roy win, of course!" Rupert reckons his best race was at Snetterton when he led Richard Morgan until the penultimate lap. "He slip-streamed past but I stayed with him and on the run to the line I pulled alongside. It looked like a dead heat, but I was given the laurels and the lap of honour . . . then they reversed the results.

"I think I won about five races that year but I had a lot of accidents. I seemed to lose concentration . . . perhaps because I was trying too hard. But I felt I was getting much better. My father was very pleased with the publicity for BAF, although most of it came from spectacular accidents."

During that year Mike Keegan had bought a 51% share in Hawke, "it seemed like the cheapest way to go racing," says Rupert, and in fact Keegan junior is now a director ("non-specific") of the company, which is due to move to Southend at the end of this month.

Keegan showing enthusiasm in his FF Hawke.



Rupert finished tenth in his first F3 with his ex-Henton March race this year. "I was very disappointed, I'd planned on being in the first six in every race." In fact all his early season races were a little disappointing being punctuated with spins and a large accident at Thruxton when he broke a foot. This shunt though was not the fault of the driver; second gear stripped just after the start and he was punted into the barrier very hard. Because of the injury he missed a number of races, "I went to St Tropez for a . . . rest!"

Until the middle of the year Rupert's best performance had been at Monaco where he was the first English driver home, finishing ninth, after being sixth in his heat. "And at one point I slowed down because I thought it was raining . . . it was sweat on my visor, I was having to work so hard."

An ex-Eddie Cheever engine was acquired in the middle of the year and suddenly things began to go better.



First came a second row grid position at Brands and he lay a good third in the race until the clutch failed. Then came pole for his heat at Casale in front of notables like Eddie Cheever and Larry Perkins. After a terrible start he took the lead only to spin "while my brain was celebrating." He finished a good fourth in the wet final after "stupidly changing the car before the race."

Next race saw him on pole at Brands 0.4s under the lap record. A creeping clutch destroyed his start and "psyched me out for the race. I didn't drive well and fell off at Kidney." He was on the front row at the next Thruxton and was hit while in second place and then spun off at Church, again, while recovering from fourth place. "I stopped two or three inches from the trees, and that scared me." As well as damaging the tub underneath and puncturing all four tyres, his faithful mechanic Alan Docking, "one of the best," who prepares the car near the March factory at Bicester, had to find the eleventh nose cone of the year.

Then came the TV race where he led from the outside of the front row under strong pressure from champion Gunnar Nilsson. A puncture at two-thirds distance put him out, "I was going to win that race, you can tell Gunnar he had no chance. I expected to go well there. I go well if I'm in the right frame of mind. Everything went well for the two days before. I knew I was going to win that race."

As well as his FF and F3 exploits Keegan's had a couple of sports car outings as well in hired cars, the second being at Spa this year in an Alroy March. They qualified on the fifth row and were running fourth in the class when the fuel pump packed up. "I did a 90-minute stint, I really loved it, it's an unbelievable, incredible place."

For next year it's going to be F3 again. "I've had offers from March and Modus, but naturally my father wants me to drive the new Hawke. I'm not saying at the moment what it'll be."

With Hawke building an F1 car it seemed natural that Rupert would have his eyes set on that. His father was emphatic at the outset that Rupert wouldn't be allowed to drive it until he had proper experience. Rupert himself says, "I don't know if I'll be allowed to drive it, but I'm going to get into F1, you wait and see. I'll be good enough. When I've got there I'll decide what I really want to do outside of motor racing. I've got my student pilot licence and I want to get my PPL, other than motor racing that's all that interests me at the moment except women, and more women and (thinks hard) . . . I don't know really . . . and just enjoying myself."

Keegan lives in London, doesn't smoke or drink, and behind the generally carefree attitude is emerging a serious characher who gains confidence with every race and now believes in his own ability. He has an amusing, slightly arrogant attitude to life, he's good looking, easy to talk to, prone to be controversial and temperamental. All qualities that, if channeled in the right direction with his driving ability, could make him a big name in British motor sport.

IAN PHILLIPS



Timo Makinen led from the 10th special stage until the finish – but never by more than two minutes.

1975 LOMBARD RAC RALLY

Monopoly—played with Escorts

By JOHN DAVENPORT Photos COLIN TAYLOR PRODUCTIONS

The Senators were in a panic. With their togas in disarray, they rushed to and fro in the meeting place not a stone's throw from the Brentwood by-pass. Messengers from York had brought news that the barbarians were about to attack the temple of Ford domination and leave it ravished. Tribes from Germany and Italy had met in the country of the Helvetii and, supported by a number of mercenary Vikings, had brought their engines of war into the very country where Ford was supreme. The outlook was serious for once the temples and holy places were destroyed, the proletariat would no longer heed their masters and the Empire would be destroyed.

As the leaders of the Empire hesitated, there stepped forward the pro-Consul for Essex, one Ashcroftus, who with his senior legionary, Jonesus, offered to go into the northern lands were the barbarians had landed and give them battle. The Senators quickly agreed and with utmost speed arranged for him to have the help of the Russian Cossack and the formidable engineering abilities of the Allied Polymer Group. In order that thay might be able to have speedy news of the progress of their troops, Independent Radio News agreed to handle the despatches. Ashcroftus reviewed his legions and decided to reinforce his troops with a sprinkling of Finnish mercenaries with some shock troops from Ireland. But the centrepart of the attack he left to his stalwart Midlanders.

The battle, once joined, extended itself over five days and the pursuit and final extermination of the enemy covered much of the country, some of which was laid waste to prevent re-victualling or servicing of the troops. Casualties were very high on both sides and even the ultimate victors had sorry wounds to show for their heroism. The Germans were the first to flee the scene of battle but it was the Italians and Vikings that kept up the pressure until the fourth day and indeed the last of the Vikings, one Waldegaard, was only disposed of with the last thrust of the final conflict. Though their communications had been destroyed early in the fighting, the Senators heard what was going on by word of mouth from survivors that limped back from the field and in the last day made a sortie into the northern regions to welcome home their victorious troops into the walled city of York. The old religion and its proponents had won again; the barbarians had been banished once more into the uncilivised region of the world and peace and stability could be expected for at least another year.

Though perhaps not quite fought with the ferocity of our forefathers, the RAC Rally of Great Britian sponsored by Lombard was a pretty cut and thrust affair. Admittedly, the ultimate winners for the third year in succession, Timo Makinen and Henry Liddon, were in the lead from Special stage sixteen onwards but their margin was never too large to the second man. Makinen himself confessed uneasiness at only having two minutes advantage to Stig Blomqvist when he arrived back at York after the Welsh loop and this was soon to drop to a smaller gap before the Saab driver retired. At the finish, Roger Clark/Tony Mason were one minute and thirteen seconds behind the Royal Master and that could easily have vanished with a single puncture. Indeed, both Clark and Makinen had problems with their cars and it was Makinen's luck coupled with his vast experience that kept him ahead to the end.

For much of the rally when they weren't being harried by Blomqvist's Saab or the Lancia Stratos of Bjorn Waldegaard and Hans Thorselius, the two works Fords had other Fords to worry about. Russell Brookes/John Brown in the Andrews Heat for Hire Escort were having one of their fastest and most consistent runs ever and worked their way up to third overall, less than a minute behind Clark, before mechanical failure sidelined them half a dozen stages from home. The familiar Mk1 Escort of the Cables and Components driver, Tony Fowkes, had a rally of sheer delight with no serious trouble delaying him and consequently he was able to reward his talent with third place overall, something which is normally out of the reach of semi-private drivers. Showing that British is quite often best, Tony Pond/Dave Richards took the immaculate Dealer Opel Team Kadett to a superb fourth place overall and showed the official Opel team from Germany what serious rallying was all about. Pond was never out of the top ten and British Leyland must now be rubbing their hands together in anticipation of what this young man will do in their TR 7 next year.

Fifth place went to that rapid young Norwegian, Eric Aaby in a Mk 1 Escort prepared by David Sutton Cars but perhaps the most remarkable thing about it was that it was sponsored by Barum tyres, the Czech firm who supply the rubber for Skoda. Behind him was the fifth Escort in the top six places, that of Thomas Motors driven by this year's RAC Rally Champions, Billy Coleman and Donal O'Sullivan. They had to beat Roger Clark on the RAC Rally in order to win the championship again for this year and though they failed in this enterprise, they did a remarkably steady and safe drive to finish well clear of Bengt Nilsson/Lars-Erik Carlsrom in the Opel Sweden Ascona and present European Rally Champion, Maurizio Verini with Nini Russo in a works Fiat Abarth Spyder. The top ten finishers was rounded out by Will Sparrow/Ron Crellin at ninth place for Dealer Team Vauxhall in a Group 2 Magnum and Simo Lampinen/Ron Sodano at ten with the highest placed Lancia to be classified at the finish with the Beta Coupe. Waldegaard did finish the rally and would have been seventh overall but the Stewards ruled on his protest against exclusion that he had not proved anything beyond force majeure and thus he was omitted from the results.

The Datsun Violets finished well up with Harry Kallstrom/Michael Stedt finishing ahead of Andy Dawson/Kevin Gormley in eleventh and twelfth places respectively but there was little co-ordination in the Datsun effort and consequently they missed the team prize by omitting to enter for Jochi Kleint/Franz Boshoff who brought the South African example in at seventeenth overall, well ahead of the second two Vauxhall finishers. Private Porsches were not as much in evidence on the RAC Rally as on British tarmac events but those that did come finished well with Ronnie McCartney/Tony McMahon in thirteenth place ahead of Piggy Thompson/Mike Greasley in fourteenth and Brian Evans/Roger Rhoderick-Jones at nineteenth place. Indeed had these three boys entered a team, they would have taken the team award with ease but instead it went to Vauxhall who won their rally-long battle with Skoda by bringing home Pentti Airikkala/John Davenport in twentieth place and the Group 1 Magnum of Paul Faulkner/Monty Peters at thirtieth overall and fifth Group 1 car. The best Group 1 car was the Triumph Dolomite Sprint of Brian Culcheth/Johnstone Syer that finished sixteenth overall behind the incredible Group 2 1300cc Skoda of John Haugland/Fred Gallacher which won its class yet again. Robin Eyre-Maunsell/Neil Wilson finished eighteenth overall with their Ulster Dealer Team Chrysler Avenger and thus clinched the Group 1 RAC Championship for 1975 by a steady run though at one point they had pulled up to within a few seconds of Culcheth's Dolomite.

Just one of the top twenty was the sole surviving Toyota which was the Corolla of Chris Sclater/Martin Holmes. They had been placed well within the top dozen until Kielder when, lying sixth overall in a 1600cc car, they slipped off and spent over an hour getting out from the ditch. Normally they would have been excluded for going over their maximum time like Waldegaard but they were fortunate enough to have their mishap in a section that had its lateness extended by half an hour because of a traffic jam in the middle of the Kielder complex. They finished twenty-third behind the Datsun 240 Z of Kevin Videan/Peter Valentine and the extremely battered Escort of Tony Drummond/Ron Channon. Twenty-fourth overall was the familiar 1600cc Group 1 Avenger of Gavin Waugh/Peter Handy in its distinctive White Horse Whisky colours which yet again won its class for Chrysler. Rounding out the first twenty-five was the immaculate Derby Road Garages Mark 2 Escort of Graham Lepley/Malcolm Harvey proving not only its own reliability but the fact that its driver had now fully recovered from his broken wrist.

The Ladies Award went to Trine Jensen/Mette Brathen from Norway in their Escort 1600 Sport while Norway could also be proud of the fact that Arne Garvik/Geir Sveinsvoll won their class with the little Group 1 Honda Civic with the similar car of Kjell Melin/Ola Hellgren coming second in the same class.

In all, there were 104 finishers from the 250 starters which is a slightly lower proportion than normal and reflects the hard going in the latter stages rather than any increase in difficulty overall in the rally.

The Rally and its Organisation

Before the Lombard RAC Rally even started this year, most people knew that it was soon to shift its start and finish venue to the Roman Spa Town of Bath in England's sunny south. Since York cannot be faulted as hosts to the greatest motor sport event in Europe, the move evidently had other motives and these were revealed to a certain extent in the layout of the route this year. The question is that possibly more cars are sold in the south and the sponsors felt that their message was not perhaps reaching those people who might be most interested. Thus the rally swept into the South-West for the first time in several years and the Scottish section was pruned to a minimum. A lot

of competitors voiced the thought that this made for a lot of main road motoring for few stages but at least they conceded that the M62 does at least mean a quick transition from one side of the Pennines to the other and the organisers were quick to set the average speed a little higher on the motorway so that not too many hours should be spent hanging around at the other end. In fact, the best use was made of the stages available and though it was a bit out of the way to visit the parks of Sutton, Heaton and Cirencester, no one in their right mind could deny that these venues gave the general public an excellent chance to see the rally without having to trek into Wales, the Lake District, Scotland or the Yorkshire Moors. Consequently they are a necessary evil to the purist who would like to see the rally take place 100 per cent on forest roads. There was also a feeling amongst competitors that the rally had gone past some well known stages without using them. Examples could be Hafren in Wales or Cairn Edward in Scotland. However, it should be remembered that even though it is Britain's biggest and best rally, its funds are not limitless and thus it can afford a certain length of forest road and then no more. If ever we reach the exalted position where the government will subsidise our sport, perhaps they will donate the forests free of charge and then the RAC can become a marathon event using much more of the forests than it does at present.

This year, it used stages with reserve and yet contrived to give a hard tough event with plenty of interest for the drivers. One may have driven past Hafren but with thirty miles of Dovey waiting for one, there can be few complaints. Indeed the quality of the forest stages was also high which can also be a result of this selectivity. There were exceptions and many crews would have been glad to miss out Coed-y-Brenin 2 which was dreadful. Makinen took a puncture here while poor Nigel Rockey in the Pink Stamps Escort had two and went off the road as a result thus dropping him well out of the top ten where he had been vying with Brookes and Fowkes for a nibble at Clark. Greystoke was nowhere near as bad but broke a lot of tyres and suspensions nevertheless. Indeed, the Lake District sections had little to commend them and perhaps in view of the traffic problems around Keswick and Cockermouth it might be an idea to steam straight past on the M6 next year. At least that would give those stages a chance to recover and be used more by local clubs during the year.

As might have been expected, because of the fine weather at the weekend the crowds turned out in their thousands to answer Lombard's call to watch the rally. In very few places did their presence give any problems of access to stages largely due to a massive campaign to control spectator's cars, provide parking facilities wherever possible, and direct rally cars and spectators to use different roads. Cirencester Park was a golden example of how it should be done while Sutton Park was not far behind despite record crowds. The only hold-up there was when some clown in a course car suffered brain fade and rolled shortly before the rally cars were due. Even at Cricket St Thomas where a stage was combined with a main control in grounds with few access roads, the marshalling kept the thing moving and at no time was it impossible to drive a rally car in or out. Despite the fact that it was Sunday night and pouring with rain, the spectators turned out in their thousands, surprising the owners of the Nature Park who have never had such a large crowd even in the middle of a hot summer's day. One humourous thing was that Ford had laid on a superb caravan with beds and hot food in the car park of Cricket St Thomas but somehow Makinen and Liddon did not know about it and sat with the proles in the crowded cafe munching on fish and chips.

Naturally, the big crowds had to have some drawbacks and it was mainly on the stages themselves where they really became a nuisance. People who would never let their kids near a main road proved capable of walking into a forest with them and then standing on or close to a road where rally cars, strained to the mechanical limit, were trying to drive as fast as they could and often well beyond the overall speed limit that pertains on public roads. In Clipstone where Vatanen showed just how far and fast one can roll an Escort and Blomqvist fell over in his Saab, the people were standing in crazy places and at one point on Clipstone 1, there was a downhill right-hander with a load of mums and dads on the outside complete with kids in push chairs. In the Lake District, the spectators evidently considered that the road was the safest place since most rally



A drive of a lifetime was rewarded with third place behind the two 'A' team cars for Tony Fowkes.

cars that have accidents go off the road while in North Wales, they were trying to pacify their Monday morning blues by having a rally car run over their mind. Normally, places like Sutton Park and Cirencester and Longleat are well organised with fences to keep the crowds back at places where rally cars could have trouble — like everywhere — but Heaton Park was a bad example with people on the edge of the road even on the most dangerous braking areas. Pentti Airikkala lost his brakes at the second junction in Heaton and saved a dozen Mancunian lives by spinning the car to a halt with the handbrake. With a driver of less quick reactions, that could have been the last rally ever in Heaton Park.

One of the best areas of the entire rally was the Kielder complex where the spectators, though present in the middle of the night, in large numbers and in terrible conditions, had the good sense to stand back and in any case to stand on the inside. Just as well they did so as the roads were so slippery that Kielder notched up the highest record of cars leaving the road. Even well organised Kielder had its problems and it was a bus load of Boy Scouts that blocked the access road between the two lots of stages and caused the delay that put Sclater back in the Rally.

In the old days, it used to be the results and the times that gave the most problem with the RAC Rally but this is now virtually a thing of the past. Only one stage out of seventy-odd had to be cancelled due to duff timing and only one other hit the cutting room floor after Tony Stubbs rolled his Lada on Wykeham and further delay was prevented by short-circuiting cars through the stage to avoid the accident. At controls, eager men and women leaped out with leader boards to show the cars how the top ten at any rate were faring while back at York, the much slammed press office was producing a constant flow of information and times to satisfy the journalists and team managers based in York. It should be appropriate to mention in this connection that fabulous Fiat/Lancia bus which went round to many of the main controls and contained telephones and a telex machine for the use of journalists. This was real GP stuff applied to the rally field. The results were immaculate with so few queries that one could scarcely believe it considering that there were well over 100 cars still running at the finish. This was in no small way due to the aid and assistance of the University of York and their computer and one hopes that the University of Bristol will be no less forthcoming in 1976.

Certainly, the organisers of the RAC Rally, from Dean Delamont, Jack Kemsley, Jim Porter, Neil Eason-Gibson and Sue Winwood down to the humblest marshal in the wettest and darkest forest can pat themselves on the back for running an excellent rally. Considering the difficulties of running such a big event nationwide and of standardising procedures, it went off remarkably well. The only really difficult thing is to find a way of making it even better for 1976 for it sets such high standards already.

Ford

It goes without saying that Ford were a natural choice for favourites before the RAC Rally especially if you are a punter who places his money by the form book. However, conditions do not always favour the conventional layout of the Ford escort and in any case, there was Lancia with its Stratos, Saab with their injected 96 and Opel with a brace of quick Kadetts so that it was not entirely clear to predict a Ford win. Perhaps the single greatest factor behind the likelihood of a Ford Victory was the fact that their car was fully engineered, fully developed and fully supported. As far as the engineering goes, the Escort Twin Cam was launched on the rally world back in 1968 and since then it has gone through engine, gearbox and axle changes all of which have been thoroughly proved and tested as their previous three wins on the RAC Rally could testify. The engineering of these cars is near perfect as far as rallying is concerned for which Ford have to thank Peter Ashcroft and Mick Jones plus all the other mechanics who at present inhabit Boreham or who have been there in the recent past. It is indicative of the thought that has gone into the Escort that the mechanics were able to change Clark's gearbox in eighteen minutes between two

Russell Brookes ran out of luck on the final "Scottish" stage with a half-shaft breakage.



of the Clocaenog stages – eight minutes for the old one and ten to put the new one in. By contrast, the German Opel team were using the same box, the ZF five speed, in a similar car yet had not prepared it in such a way that it could be changed at all without two hours' working time and a ramp at their disposal. As far as support goes, the Boreham mechanics are second to none and the use of radio communication between the rally cars and the service cars ensured that they were never in trouble for long. Bill Meade's job for this rally was to tow around an enormous radio aerial which provided full coverage in the hilly parts of the country where he was able to relay messages from some hill-top eyrie.

Makinen's car like that of Clark and Vatanen was a 'tarmac' car with the new panhard rod rear end which required that the rear shock absorbers are mounted upside down and they have to have a rose-joint on the bottom. Ford suspect that this is less compliant than having two rubber mounts and this leads to breakages. After breaking a shock absorber in Greystokes as well as collecting two punctures, Makinen decided to try and change back to the old type shock absorbers and ignore the sound of their shells clattering against the panhard rod. To the mechanics' surprise they got them in and his car went to the end of the rally without further problem in that area. Clark would have liked to have his changed as well but decided that he could manage without for he seemed to be in enough trouble already with his car and did not want to miss the chance of going first through the stages in Northumbria. His problems had started back on the first day when the complicated mechanical handbrake mechanism had bent and he had done two stages with the handbrake caliper locked on so that the disc that side glowed red hot. As he commented gloomily, not only had the handbrake been pretty useless to start with but it had also lost him time. What he had not known was that alone of the works cars, Makinen had reverted to the hydraulic handbrake leaving the other Fords to make the tight hairpins as best they could. Billy Coleman in particular felt this to be a big disadvantage as he uses the handbrake quite a lot and would have liked a more effective one.

Going on with the saga of Clark, he broke a front strut and rear shock absorber on that famous jump in Clipstone that eliminated Ari Vatanen and the front strut that was put in promptly collapsed at the next loose surfaced stage in Cirencester Park. The bottom support for the spring just fell off and removed other such interesting things as the brake pipe so that Mr Clark's progress through the Park was not at all graceful and at one point he just could not steer round a corner and had to gyrate helplessly in a field. Then in North Devon, the engine suddenly fell to vibrating dreadfully and they felt sure that something had come loose from the crankshaft. The mechanics confirmed this and they looked around for a hotel into which they could retire. Not finding one to their liking, they limped out to Severn Bridge where Peter Ashcroft said 'clutch' and within a trice it was out and a new one was in. Actually the trice was forty-five minutes and Clark left thirty minutes late into the forest of Dean but at least was still runnung.

Ford's secret weapon for this rally had been the Dunlop A2 tyre. Before you rush out to try and buy it, one should explain that it is a hand-cut racer that originates looking like a slick and finally bears some resemblance to a sand racing tyre. John Taylor was the inspiration for this idea and when his head gasket failed on the first day, he kindly donated his A2s to Russell Brookes who made very good use of them especially in Wales. Clark wanted to use them in Dovey but decided to go along with the mass opinion which was that MS were safer. In fact, he regretted not changing as he reckoned that he would have had far fewer punctures on the A2s. His gearbox failed in Clocaenog and left him with only first and fifth and though service was near at hand, he still had to do two stages like that before getting it changed. In Greystokes, he broke both shock absorbers and collected a puncture on the same place as Makinen while in Kielder he was getting a clunk from his axle that felt as if the half-shaft tube was working loose, but by then a lot of pressure from immediately behind him had vanished and he drove through without changing it. Some evidence of how slippery Kielder was can be judged by the fact that Clark slid wide on one corner and bent his car for the first time in many years by bringing it into contact with a pile of logs. Certainly, Britain's rally king can never have had so much go wrong with his car in one event, and it is to his credit that he came through unruffled.



It might have won . . . the Stratos of the incredible Bjorn Waldegaard/Hans Thorseluis.

It was a shame that Vatanen did not last beyond the sixteenth stage for he was in sixth place at the time between Brookes and Fowkes which should have made for some even more exciting driving in the middle part of the event. As it was the two coming-men of British rally driving acquitted themselves extremely well and Fowkes in his Goodyear shod Mark 1 was rewarded with third place overall. He had very little trouble of any kind with his car though the clutch did play him up in the Forest of Dean and he was off for a short time in the Torr stage the other side of Longleat. For Brookes, the rally went much the same way despite a spin in Longleat and a dud starter through most of Wales. During the first part of the rally, he kept Fowkes at bay but on arriving back in York the second time the London driver had just pulled ahead of him something which Brookes rectified with excellent times in the Lake District and Scotland. However, on the last stage in Scotland, he had a half-shaft break 200 yards before the finish line and limped out to Craik to get the service crew to change it. This took time as the axle had to be stripped to reveal the broken bit but he got on his way and entered the Kielder area a bit behind time. All the Ford men were supposed to tighten their rear wheel nuts with a torque wrench before each stage if possible but with the pressure on to keep going so as not to have to pass too many cars, in the stages, this dropped down the list of priorities and Brookes sheared his half-shaft studs after three stages. He admitted the fault was his and a more depressed pair of gentlemen than him and Jim Brown would have been hard to find.

The Kielder area saw the end of Nigel Rockey's chances of a place in the finisher's list for he and Derek Tucker slid off and out of the rally. They had been right with the top runners through the first part of the rally and even a minor excursion in Longleat had not dropped them far but two punctures on Coed-y-Brenin 2 had put them up the bank for a considerable time and back at York they were thirty-third overall. Kielder too was a worrying place for the leader Makinen who discovered that his sump was leaking. The ever resourceful Mr Liddon promptly laid in stock a pile of full Shell cans and they set off to get through or bust. On one stage alone the car pumped out over a gallon through the two inch split that had appeared under the steering rack. It was impossible to weld so at Scotch Corner the mechanics removed the sump guard and filled up the offending slit with some special plastic padding purloined from the Saab mechanics. In addition to the split, the outlet pipe for the dry sump system was a little loose and there was a quantity of oil finding its way past that but the car made it to the finish with no trouble.

Erik Aaby was nearly on the point of giving up rallying six months ago and he must now be glad that he kept at it for despite rolling his David Sutton prepared Escort Mark 1 not a mile from where it had previously met that fate in his hands on the Welsh Rally, he kept it consistently in the top ten and finished a well deserved fifth overall. He found the going very slippery towards the end and in his effort to stop Billy Coleman closing with him, spent a few seconds behind the trees in Kielder as well as spinning on the last but one stage of the rally, the incredibly slippery Flass stage. Coleman was unlucky not to finish fourth overall ahead of both Pond and Aaby for his consistent run was spoiled in Glengap by a loose lead on the electronic rev limiter which cut his engine for seven minutes until he found the fault and got going again. A more permanent Ford inhabitant of Glengap was Ian Lawless who had worked his Group 1 Escort RS 2000 up to sixth place in category when a deceptive left-over-brow saw him off the road and bogged down. While waiting helplessly in the car for next morning salvation, he and Martin Coleman were entertained to a few spectacular rolls by Johnny Wiklund in his Finnish BMW 2002. When aided from his car, Wiklund was only interested to know for sure that his car was in fifth gear, anything less would not have been truly satisfying.

Tony Drummond started well with his Escort Mk 1 and after 12 stages was lying 11th overall but spoilt it with a short stop in Pickering. The South-West was not his favourite spot for he hit the rear end on Torr and created a leak in his oil tank while three stages later at Grovely he cut a corner, clipped a wheel on a hidden rock and inverted his nice new shell removing windscreens and wings. Co-driver Ron Channon recommended acceptance of an offer from a by-stander of a goldfish in a plastic bag and a balloon. However they continued and worked their way back up the field until in Kielder they ran out of petrol on the last stage, Fortunately the Yorkshireman had a spare half-gallon in the boot but while they were driving off the stage in fifth gear to save petrol, he took a brow with the mind in neutral and left the road which cost quite a lot of time and put them back to 22nd place. The same hole was visited but more briefly by such notables as Makinen, Pond and Waldegaard.

The normally unlucky Donald Heggie must have thought that his luck had turned when he won a rally a couple of weeks ago but it was back in force for the RAC. He had a fuel pump fail on the second special stage at Harewood and then suffered various brake and clutch problems until retiring with the head gasket gone in Bonny Scotland. On the other hand, David Hardcastle who has had bad luck of late with the Magpie Capri, reversed it on the RAC to have a most sensible drive rewarded with 37th overall and sixth in class despite having a cracked sump at one point. Among the more unfortunate of the Ford runners was Bob Bean whose Escort broke its gearbox on Boltby, absolutely the last stage of the rally. Gordon Batchelor in the Team Avon Tyres 1300cc BDA retired with no oil pressure one stage before his sponsor's own stage at Longleat. The David Sutton equipe lost Matti Johansson on the first day with a broken head gasket but at least his car was around to provide new windscreens for Aaby's car after he had rolled in North Wales. Poor Jill Robinson was extremely unfortunate in her first outing in the new Mark 2 RS1800 for a small piece of carbon had fallen into her distributor and the engine misfired and cut from



Only Opel survivor and a model of exceptional driving and good teamwork brought fourth place to the DOT Kadett of Tony Pond.

stage one until they were out of time at the third time control. It is suspected that a spectacular electrical display caused by engine-man Terry Hoyle forgetting momentarily that the car has a 24-volt system while timing the engine could have caused the piece to fall from the contact in the top of the distributor. The other Sutton car, an Escort RS 2000 for Colin Vandervell, acquitted itself well despite being savaged by a rampant corner early in the event and running with a very battered driver's door for the rest of the rally.

Lancia

The biggest threat to the end of Ford domination came from Lancia who had brought two full works Stratos with four valve cylinder heads for Waldegaard and Munari and a Beta Coupe for Lampinen. The Chequered Flag Stratos of Walfridsson had the more normal engine but the car had received attention in the Turin factory and all boded well for it finally shaking off the bugs that have assailed it. To deal first with the Beta; it had been decided to keep it with the high ratio steering rack and have the optional power steering and the only question seemed to be whether to use 15-inch or 13-inch diameter wheels. Lampinen spent most of the first part of the rally experimenting and finally plumped for the 15-inch wheels but an attempt to run the car with the power steering belt disconnected led to it being immediately refitted. The power assistance is very good but it does tend to deceive the driver when he is left-foot braking through long corners and cannot feel exactly what the front wheels are doing. After a slowish start, Lampinen gradually came up the field but was unable to make much impression on Will Sparrow and Maurizio Verini just in front of him. His biggest set-back in this crusade came when he lost three minutes changing a wheel when he got a front-wheel puncture just after the start of Whinlatter.

Waldegaard had a hard rally and it showed on his face at the end. He looked almost as bushed as if he had just done the Safari and the mental strain must have at times been even greater than the physical. He started well though a spin at Croft and a rearward exit through the chicane did nothing to improve his position. Still by stage 12 he was where most people expected to see him — in the lead and he kept it that way until the second bend of Clipstone 2 when a drive shaft failed. Hans Thorselius ran to the nearest junction and found a marshall willing to give him a lift in his car so soon he was at the Lancia service and loading a new shaft and Gino, the best mechanic, into the car. The whole incident cost them well over an hour and in their haste to leave for the next stage, they just abandoned mechanic and rear bodywork in the forest. Both were later claimed, but Waldegaard was more than an hour late at the start of Blidworth and was later told that he faced exclusion. Lancia filed a verbal protest over the phone saying that he had been delayed in a queue of cars at the stage start and the whole matter became sub-judice while Waldegaard had to be left to run in the rally. He was bothered by a misfire due to dirt in the fuel line at Heaton Park and the first stages of the Lake District but his progress up the leader board was truly remarkable for his maximum on Stage 16 had been added to by a long stop after the Sutton Park ford when the water had penetrated the defences of his uncovered motor. In the last Kielder stage, he swung off the road on Drummond's brow and badly damaged the rear end so that the car finished with the rear all tied up with wire and string and generally looking most inelegant. It was a final blow when the Stewards ruled that he as OTL at stage 17 and thus could not be classified as a finisher.

The other Stratos of Munari took it easy in the beginning but struck a problem at Oliver's Mount where neither Munari or Manucci realised that they had only to do 1¾ laps and went on to do 2¾ and were thus classified back in 18th place in York the first time. Cesare Fiorio, the Lancia team manager, was incensed that instructions for this stage had bot been given out in both French and English as required by international law but there seemed to be little that he could do, though the incident may cost the RAC Rally some support in the CSI where Mr Fiorio is a powerful figure. Anyway, Munari was up to eighth on entering Wales and fifth by the time the rally came to Covey but no one had told him about the terrible right-hand bend one mile after the start and he did not manage to escape its clutches though the car was virtually undamaged despite having several other cars pass very close to it including the Avenger of Roger Platt whose co-driver had to be taken to hospital with injuries suffered in the shunt.

"Crazy" spectators making life very fraught for this fast approaching Datsun crew . . .



Even less fortunate than the other Stratos, the Chequered Flag car started carefully only to have a valve let go and the cylinder head gasket fail after five stages. The car limped on to York where the Lancia mechanics made an attempt to change everything but when it started up, there was just a very expensive noise and Walfridsson and Jensen knew once again that retiring feeling.

Fiat

Without even the consolation of being World Rally Champions despite their efforts to defeat their child prodigy, Lancia, Fiat had originally decided to miss the RAC Rally from their schedule and save their pennies for a big attack with the 131 Mirafiori next year. But their number one driver, Markku Alen had missed too many rallies this year through Fiat deciding to cut back and he said that if they did not send a car he would drive a Ford. Thus Fiat arrived with two cars, both fitted with the new injection system, for him and the reigning European Rally Champion, Maurizio Verini, teamed with Nini Russo who has more experience of the RAC Rally. Alen hit bad luck from the beginning with an off in the first stage at Bramham Park and then after Croft the head gasket went and he had to boil his way through the Yorkshire forests followed by a cloud of steam. The Fiat mechanics changed the gasket once but it seemed to have no effect so it was decided to change the whole head at York. This was done and everything was just fine, but on Clipstone the belt driving the cams swallowed a stone and broke. At first it was thought that the engine had survived that traumatic experience and a Fiat mechanic was summoned into the forest to change the offending belt but when the engine was re-started — or rather wound over on the starter — it lacked any compression and there was a noise like bells ringing. Alen and Kivimaki headed for Finland.

Verini was more fortunate and possibly less hard on his car for he was content to play himself in gradually and work his way steadily up the field. His major problems centred on the lighting system which let him down twice but the most critical was in Kielder when Bengt Nilsson managed to overhaul him and finally pipped him for seventh place by six seconds. In all, it was a drive he could be proud of and if he comes back again, he will certainly improve on it. In any case, by all accounts the 131 should be a better car for unseen forest driving.

British Leyland

With a bigger programme on the way in 1976, the Lazy L contented itself with low key targets in the RAC Rally. Brian Culcheth achieved fully what was demanded of him by winning the Group 1 category outright in the Triumph Dolomite Sprint. He had his problems nevertheless and the front end received attention on several occasions

especially just before Carlisle where the ravages of the Lake District bumps were corrected with new tie rods and front suspension. Pat Ryan was an early victim to mechanical failure with the *Western Mail*/Howells Allegro while his companion in the up to 1300 class, Phil Cooper with a Marina, drowned out in Sutton Park's ford while suffering from gearbox maladies towards the end of the rally.

Still the most amazing of the Lazy L's proponents though outside their sphere of influence was the privately entered Cooper S of Terry Kaby/Bob Freeborough. They were doing well until a drive shaft broke just before the ford in Sutton Park whereupon the incredible Mr Kaby changed it for a new one in just 11 minutes with Freeborough passing the tools. The marshals wanted them to go off and find the service crew but they shot back into the stage and even overtook a car before the finish. Things continued well until the Lake District when the front suspension parted company after contacting a pile of logs on Whinlatter. Again the hard-working Kaby bodged it together and they drove four miles out of the stage and into the nearest service point where his brother got to work to make it like new again. Final problem was an off in Kielder with no one around to push and they finished 52nd overall, bruised but not defeated.

Toyota

There had been many hopes that Toyota would prove to be the revelation of the rally but in rallying, there is no substitute for development and the two-litre 16-valve Célicia has done very little competition since its debut in early autumn. Consequently Hannu Mikkola had an even more disappointing rally than he has done over the past three years of early retirements. Things started badly when a mechanic went off with the rally car keys in his pocket and Mikkola was nearly out at the start by being 14 minutes late on the ramp. One more minute and he would have been excluded. Then on stage one, still smarting from the delay, he clouted a fence on the outside of the first corner and had to borrow a door from Ove Andersson's similar car which had run its big end bearings on the same stage though it had managed to get out and on to the next service point. The Celicia had a bit too much rear brakes and Hannu spun on the second stage but they were then adjusted to his satisfaction.

Two more stages and a water hose parted where it passed through the bulkhead and this may have been caused by excess movement of the engine as the mountings are more widely spaced than in the Corolla and thus allow a little more movement. Then a half shaft broke on Broxa and he managed to drive out and change it but of course with loss of time in the stage. Finally, it came to rest with the rotor arm broken to pieces in the middle of Dalby and no spare. It is thought that the steel pin which retains the rotor arm on this car could have come loose and caught on the inside of the cap with disastrous results but whatever the cause, Mikkola was out — and joined Andersson.

This left the Toyota hopes with the two Corollas but at the Towell services on the next day, the South African brothers, Jannie and Christo Kunn, retired their Corolla with a suspected broken piston. The engine was consuming a lot of oil and it is possible that they had taken some low grade petrol on board by mistake and the pinking had done the damage. That left Sclater to defend the marque's honour which he did with great verve until one of Kielder's bumps followed by a sharp right put him in the ditch. Martin Holmes ran a long way before finding help and even Andersson and Hertz went in from the end of the stage to help them lift it back on the road. They profited from the extension of the lateness due to the traffic problem in Kielder to the extent of being included in the results but their 23rd place did not reflect their true performance. The only trouble that they had with the car was when the timing chain adjuster was turned the wrong way by mistake in the Forest of Dean and they ran two stages with the engine sounding very sick.

Vauxhall

With the rally team due to move from Coburn to Blydenstein after the rally, a lot of eyes were on the team of two Group 2 Magnums and one Group 1 Magnum from DTV. The two things that they were most interested in were the team award — which they won — and the RAC Group 1 championship — which they didn't — but Will Sparrow and Ron Crellin also finished an excellent ninth overall and disproved the Magnum's previous record of unreliability. Sparrow had



Full steam ahead for Per Eklund as he sets next quickest time to teammate Stig on the opening stage.

several punctures and a couple of broken alternators but apart from that a couple of shock absorber changes was all that were needed to keep the car running. Pentti Airikkala on the other hand was less lucky for his car suffered for the first two days from a mysterious intake of air into the petrol system which caused it to stall, misfire and generally misbehave on stages. This was finally traced to a leak on the tank plus a certain amount of foreign matter up the pipe and was sorted out under the lights of Severn Bridge by none other than Gerry Johnstone. Alternator trouble and punctures came the way of this car as well but after all the fiddling connected with the first misfire, the engine never pulled well again and when it broke the exhaust manifold in the Lake District, it lacked a lot of power. It still had enough to break up a rear wheel bearing which the mechanics changed at Ae forest and the car just made it into the subsequent sections within its hours lateness.

Sparrow had a bad start when the throttle cable broke on the very first stage and Paul Faulkner too had a similar problem but unlike Sparrow, he was unable to freewheel off the stage and had to lose time fixing it himself. His lights were never the best and it was not until the second night that a fault was discovered with the filaments. His biggest problem was when a half shaft went in Wythop and he had to push and struggle off the stage to get it changed. Never fully happy with the car, he was unable to give Eyre-Maunsell the fight for the RAC Group 1 championship that everyone expected.

The Martin Group Magnum of George Hill/Phil Short had an equally unlucky time for on the first day it was slowed with dirt in the fuel and then at Cirencester a turret top broke off and the shock absorber came up and destroyed the fuel filter thus cutting off supply to the engine until it was by-passed. The differential got very noisy as the rally progressed but their real trouble came with the clutch which was a single plate, mechanically operated type unlike the DTV cars which had a triple plate, hydraulically operated. This constantly needed adjustment until in Kielder that ran out and Hill started to bend the pedal in his efforts to get it to disengage. Before Scotch Corner, the Martin's mechanics changed the clutch but in their haste to build the car before the rally, it had not proved possible to convert the gearbox to the rapid blind fixing for the two upper bolts so that they ran out of time and did not finish.

Chris Lord had a couple of offs in the Lake District and by the time he was getting into Scotland the rear axle had discovered a new meaning for the expression "live axle" but he finished just behind Faulkner and just ahead of Pip Dale in the Leedhams of York Firenza which had also had rear axle problems and had torn out the anti-roll bar in Wales. Of the Chevettes entered, Peter Thompson had all kinds of problems including losing a number of gears in Wales so that he had to be pushed up that muddy slope in Clocaenog but he did finish though Dave Thompson did better with 59th overall and third in class with his example.

Opel

The German team had three of their new Kadetts and none of them lasted very long. Anders Kullang was out after two stages with a piston in the engine which had disappeared into its entrails while Rauno Aaltonen lost all but first and fifth gears and ground to a halt in the Yorkshire forests when even the other two failed to function. Walter Rohrl had a similar problem but his did not come until after Sutton Park when he was already up to third place overall and pushing Stig Blomqvist hard. Presumably the Opel mechanics would have attempted the long job at Severn Bridge but he crashed on the slippery Cricket St Thomas stage when the change from fifth to first locked the rear wheels and sent the car smashing into a stone wall. The fuel line burst and the car caught fire so they had to empty the powder extinguishers to subdue it and it was this powder that got everywhere and prevented them from starting it and driving out of the stage so they had to retire.

Tony Pond who was running late at that time after having a couple of rockers changed following the Grovely stage took him a petrol pump into the stage as it was thought that this might be the problem but the gesture was to no avail. Pond himself had been delayed once already when he had nearly met a marshal's car head on subsequent to the Vatanen accident in Clipstone and had been forced to stop to avoid it. Then in the Forest of Dean he had a rear wheel puncture and got stuck on a hairpin that he could not mount and dropped from fourth overall to seventh. He too had gearbox problems and decided to change it at York the second time but as DOT had prepared the ZF for a quick change, it caused him no problems. In the Lake District he had the front end of the torque tube let go at the end of Wythop and limped off the stage to have it fixed by the service crew but none of this cost him much time and he finished a good fourth overall, a credit to himself and his team.

The Swedish team of two Asconas lost Bror



Simo Lampinen spent much of the rally alternating between 13 and 15 inch wheels in his efforts to improve the lack of feel through the power steering.

Danielsson in the first two stages with a blown engine but Bengt Nilsson drove on, getting faster and faster and finally pipping Verini for seventh place just before the finish. Formerly Britain's most astounding Volvo driver and now our most electrifying Opel exponent, Colin "Dangerous Dan" Grewer broke a half shaft in Cirencester Park and could not get out in time to continue.

Saab

What can one say about the Saab team that had not already been said? Stig Blomqvist and Per Eklund are amazing drivers and ask the very most from their cars so it is not surprising that when they are putting them in contention with more powerful cars and indeed beating them, failures are more than likely. Eklund's engine went the first day but at least he and Bomqvist had the distinction of being one-two after the first stage. Blomqvist rolled on the second Clipstone stage on a left hander shortly after the level crossing and with the help of spectators, got going with the minimum time loss. He fought all the time for first place and most of the time was two minutes or less behind Makinen and indeed had started to narrow the gap when his crankshaft failed at the finish of the Whinlatter test. Europe's fastest driver finished his day on the end of tow rope.

Skoda

The incredible little car from Czechoslovakia is like a miniature Porsche and seems to give equally little trouble. Markku Saaristo was not on his usual form in the beginning and lagged behind his team mate John Haugland in York the first time. He improved on this as the rally headed south but a double right-hander in Kingswood Warren saw him off the road and into the trees. The front wheel was all-but ripped off and he and Colin Francis had to be content with walking off the stage. Still there was some consolation for him for when he phoned home it was to discover that his wife had just been delivered of a baby boy. Haughland was suffering from a broken little finger but still drove with all the verve that one expects of this Norwegian driver and he eventually finished fifteenth an easy winner in his class. Both the other works Skodas of Vlastimil Havel and Milan Zaplado finished without any serious trouble and the team came second in the Manufacturer's award.

Datsun

Harry Kallstrom took his Violet off the road and down a bank on the very first stage and from then on was not at all convinced of the suitability of Japanese Dunlops for rallying. Consequently he took the rest of the rally very carefully and finished without any great trouble in eleventh place. The other "works" Datsun Violet sent up from South Africa for Jochi Kleint and Franz Boshoff suffered a misfire in the early part of the rally which was finally traced to a coil but not until it had reached the West Country. In Glengap the axle seemed very noisy so it was changed in Laurieston and that was about all that went between them and a higher position than seventeenth.

We have all known for some time that Andy Dawson is a case but for this rally he went about with one riveted to his boot as he was sponsored by Custom Cases as well as Kleber Tyres in his Scholarship Violet. He had problems in Yorkshire when one of the shock absorbers seized in the up position and the replacement part he got from the Japanese refused to fit and had to be bodged into position. Because of the delay in fitting it he nearly went OTL and was forced to run in the worst condition through the last of the forests before York. In Wales he had one of his few punctures and suffered from the steering box breaking up inside. He had to wait for a Datsun dealer to open on Monday morning for his service crew to get the parts to rebuild it.

Barry Lee was entered in a Datsun Sunny and despite having a couple of minor offs in Yorkshire was lying second in class until the head gasket went in Wales and he only made it back to the service point in York by pouring in gallons of water. There the cylinder head gasket was changed and he had no more trouble until he came to Kielder when he went into the hole so recently vacated by Sclater and Cowan and stayed there too long to be counted as a finisher.

Mitsubishi Colt

A single example of this marque was entered and for their star driver Andy Cowan partnered by fellow Scot Hamish Cardno. The car was actually the 1600 cc s.o.h.c. car with which he had finished fourth in the Safari and which in the interim had been back to Japan for a re-build. It gave little enough trouble but it did have a thirst for limited slip differentials and went through two in the first three days. Cowan finished the rally driving on one acquired from a spectating friend but he said that there was no comparison in the handling between the time when the lsd was working and when it was not. On Kielder, he had the throttle pedal come adrift and flop in front of the brake pedal so that as he went to slow for the next corner, he got nothing but acceleration and went off. It took them a long time to get back and thus they had to be content with twenty-eighth place overall, and second in class to none other than Chris Sclater who rumour hath it was in that self-same hole just before them.

Chrysler

As if they didn't have enough problems already, Chrysler lost Colin Malkin on the way up to the start when a liner split in his sixteen valve Avenger and they thus had to concentrate their efforts on getting Robin Eyre-Maunsell home ahead of Paul Faulkner. This he did admirably despite a couple of moments early in the rally which included hitting a post on Sutton Park. The car gave no trouble at all and at one point he had worked it up to within nineteen seconds of the Group 1 leader, Culcheth, but decided that discretion was the better part of valour and eased back to ensure his championship crown.

An early sensation was Kyosti Hamalainen in his Finnish entered 1600cc Avenger who was beating even Eyre-Maunsell's 1800cc car but then a roll in Russells cost him fifteen minutes and he took things a bit easier after that to finish thirty-sixth and third in class behind Gavin Waugh and fellow Finn, Hannu Valkonen in another Avenger 1600.

Porsche

Ronnie McCartney set a fine pace in the opening stages with his Carrera and lay ninth just after Russell Brookes at the issue of Yorkshire but the odd puncture and a couple of close moments in Wales taught caution and he eased his pace slightly especially in the rougher north. At one point in the Lake District he was short of a bolt for the rear suspension and borrowed one off a spectating Irishman in another Porsche saying airily that he was sure that it would get him to the boat OK. Piggy was well established in the top twenty after Yorkshire and stayed that way to finish just behind McCartney, content to have a steady drive rather than do anything foolish with his car which now seems to be going just right. The same considerations apply to Brian Evans who was determined to finish and was delighted to do so within the top twenty. He feels that he needs to broaden his experience on dirt roads but would not like to broaden any roads while doing so.

Conclusion

This RAC Rally of 1975 was not a classic. It did not have atrocious weather nor any other kind of sensation. It will be remembered as Timo's hat trick as well as for showing that more than one British driver can keep pace in an international field. It also did much for the sport in showing it at its best before more people than have ever watched a motor sporting event before.

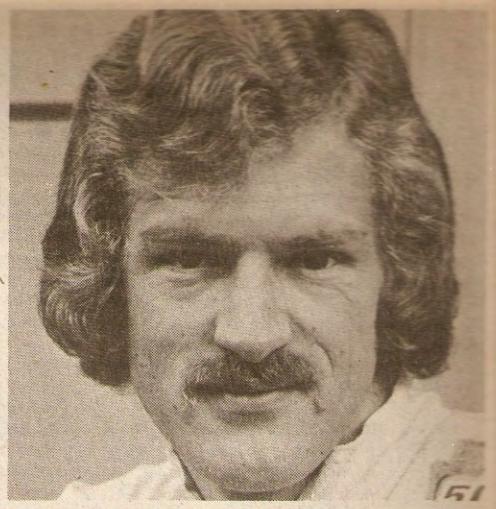
● **Results and special stage times — see p43**

Last day drama for Makinen as Ford service repair the split sump with borrowed Plastic Padding.



Not fade away

CHRIS WITTY talks to Escort champion STEVE THOMPSON



He used to be called "Stevie Wonder," a nickname earned through his superb wet weather performances driving a Formula 5000 Chevron back in 1973 and before that in an F5000 Surtees. A worthwhile future looked assured for young Steve Thompson. Success had followed him throughout his career from karting, where he learned the art of winning, right through club racing, into the tough competitive world of Formula 3 and then on into Formula 5000. The latter category was to prove that Thompson could beat the best, both in Europe and in Australasia where he wasn't that far from becoming the first Englishman ever to win the Tasman series, a feat achieved a year later by Peter Gethin.

On his return to Europe, Thompson maintained his form and began to accumulate a points lead in the European F5000 Championship. But then Steve's career suffered a set-back during a mid-week testing accident at Silverstone when a tyre collapsed while he was rounding Woodcote corner. The Chevron, out of control, veered off the track and into the earth bank at a speed in excess of 145 mph. Miraculously, Thompson was unhurt but it was the beginning of the end or rather, the expected progress upward for this young Briton was stunted.

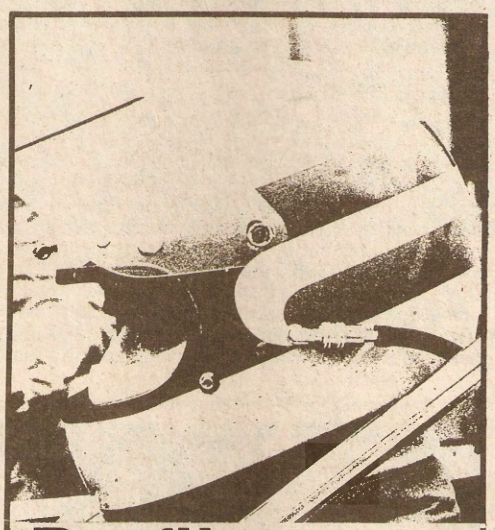
A replacement chassis never quite proved as competitive and Thompson wound up by losing the championship, his sponsor and ultimately the drive. When the British press came to review the year and reward those who they thought had shown promise and achieved something worthwhile throughout the season, Thompson found himself overlooked and the Grovewood Awards that year went to Tom Pryce, Tony Brise and Formula Ford star Donald MacLeod. Ironically, two of that trio became brilliant Grand Prix drivers in their own right. Had Thompson won that F5000 title, perhaps he might have been part of that threesome and perhaps he might eventually have gone on to become a Grand Prix driver.

Steve Thompson's career provides some very interesting facts. It's a career that every young driver could dream of and yet he never quite made it, not through lack of ability, there's no denying he never had that, but through lack of opportunity. At a stage where he needed that one clean break, a chance to bridge that strip of no man's land that awaits every young driver striving toward the top echelons of the sport, it never came and at 25 years of age, Steve Thompson was destined to become just another young promising British driver than faded from view.

Thompson is now 27 years old and married. He's at a stage in his life where many drivers are still trying to make it, still trying for that Formula 1 drive. But not so for Steve Thompson. He made the decision to build himself a sound foundation from which he could benefit in his later years. He wasn't prepared to hang around waiting for that opportunity so he concentrated on perfecting his business acumen and racing gradually became more of a weekend hobby.

This year he turned his attentions to saloon car racing and at the request of Martin Hone, he trounced all opposition in taking the Opposite Lock Club Ford-Mexico to win the *Penthouse* Escort series. Admittedly, it was a far cry from thundering around in 500 bhp single seaters, but it showed that no matter what he drove. Steve Thompson was a natural born winner.

Even at this stage, Thompson could still make the grade but he's a realist. It is doubtful whether he'd ever get the opportunity, knowing how fickle the Grand Prix circus is, but here we have a prime example of our narrow mindedness and our lack of patriotism. We must learn from drivers like Steve Thompson. His plight will no doubt befall others who are equally overlooked.



Profile

It was inevitable that Steve Thompson should get involved with motor racing at some stage in his life. The question was at what age? His father had a garage business near Pelsall, not that far from Birmingham, so Steve is very much a Midlands man.

Apart from his father's garage interests, a sure sign that all things mechanical would probably intrigue the little Steve, a cousin of the family was Alan Rollinson, then making strides upwards in the world of motor sport and looking set to make the grade as a Grand Prix star.

Ironically, like Steve, that opportunity never quite presented itself and Alan, only quite recently, faded into retirement.

The lure of motor racing started when Steve became involved with his cousin's racing activities. "I helped him build his first Formula Junior Cooper in his garage, although I was only a school kid then." Apart from boyish enthusiasm of wanting to be a racing driver, Steve could, even at that early stage, take part in competition on four wheels himself. Karting was the simple answer and it was to prove a very successful training ground, as it has done for many top class drivers racing today.

When you talk to Steve Thompson, and then think of the situation he's found himself in, it's difficult to analyse just where he went wrong, if he went wrong at all. We criticise most of our British drivers for being far too lazy. Many of them lack self confidence and are totally introverted in a profession which, in the changing time we live in, requires the exact opposite.

Thompson eased himself back into a chair at a Birmingham hotel and proceeded to recount his career in motor racing. He told it in almost a story-book fashion, recalling moments of delight and despair without the slightest hint of bitterness. To think of him as being still only 27 years old took a bit of getting used to. He needed little reminding of what had gone behind him and one got the impression that he knew where the future lay as well.

His introduction into the world of karting came through a venture with his brother. "What we'd done was to blow £100 of our hard earned pocket money on a lot of bits from a garage that used to build karts. From them, we managed to build up three full karts, some of which we sold which made us a bit of money, enough to be able to buy a reasonable class 4 kart, powered by a 197cc Villiers engine coupled to a 4-speed gearbox."

At that stage, their father hadn't taken any notice of their dabblings in the kart world. He'd always taken them both to the speedway and occasionally down to Silverstone for Friday practice sessions and so forth. It wasn't until he decided to go along and see if he was any quicker than his sons that the kart racing took on a "sponsored" look.

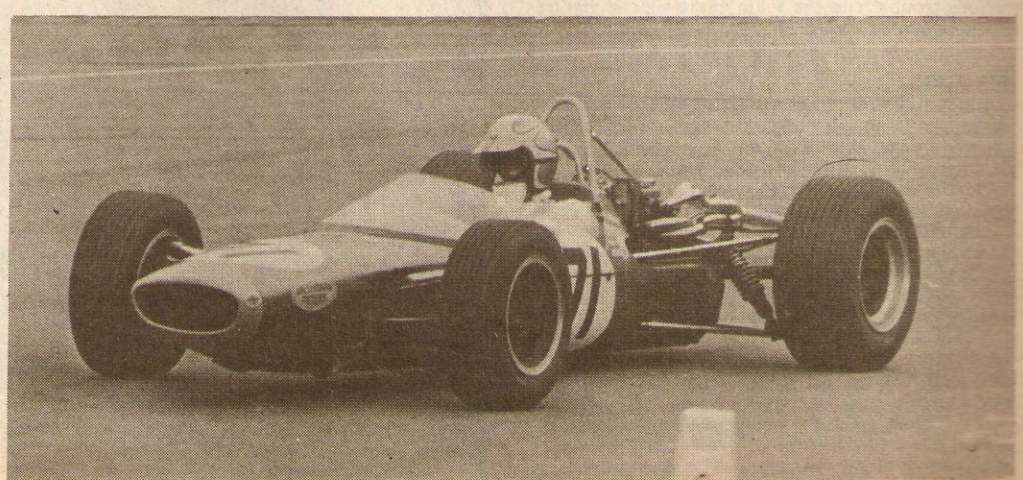
"We used to have these unofficial races on Saturday afternoons, this was before the days of junior kart racing, and I'd won a couple of these." Their father enjoyed his "day out" enough to buy them a better kart. It was entered for Steve to drive at a local race at Chasewater "and I won. I received this wonderful silver rose bowl and I thought, Christ, I'm going to be World Champion here." It was the beginning of a rude awakening, although only a temporary set-back in his career.

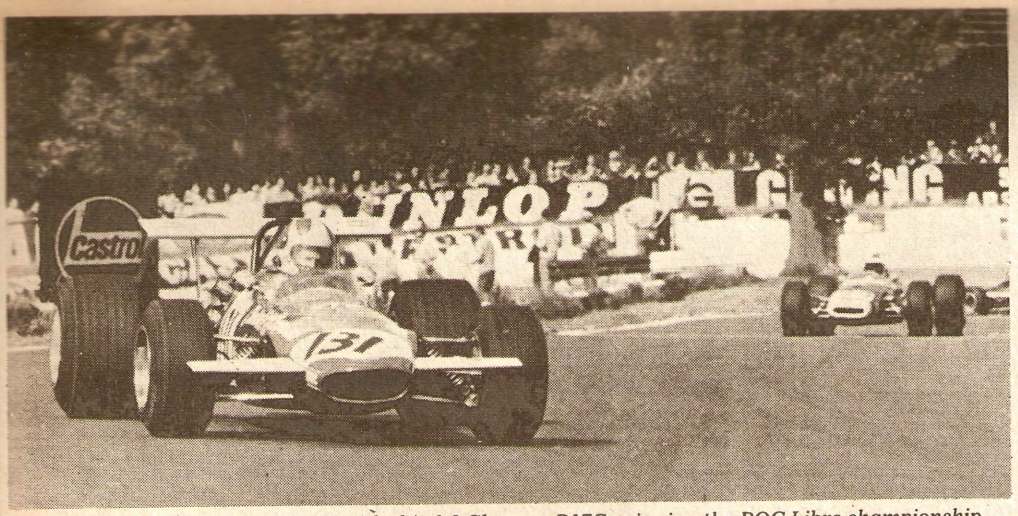
The next race was at Shenington, near Banbury. "I went off down there thinking I was the greatest thing on four wheels in the way of go-karts. I had to hurry up to be last! They drove all over me. That was an eye-opener and I was last but three, *and* I was working bloody hard for that."

Undeterred, young Stephen entered the British kart championships in 1963 where, in order to get to the finals, you had to take part in three qualifying rounds. Until then Steve was still running his elderly Keele kart and made the finals with some 2nds and 3rds but the man who was beginning to do all the winning in class 4 at the time was a certain Roger Williamson. Steve's father had really become interested in his 16 year old son's racing activities and a new Speedcraft Matador was bought off Mike Keele for the finals. Apart from the equally young Williamson, the man who was hot favourite for the Class 4 title that year was Chris Merlin. Both he and Roger ran demon engines so, in an effort to get on terms Thompson saw an advertisement for a 175cc Montesa which he bought off John Brise, who was even then Montesa's main agents in this country. Using a special manifold in order to fit the Dellorto carburettor, it was a rush job getting it ready for the finals. Steve was able to split Merlin and Williamson on the grid, although the latter was in a different heat. For the final, Thompson pushed Merlin hard all the way, until the latter's engine exploded. It left Steve with the series in the bag with Williamson the runner-up.

The following year, Steve began to get "choked off with people always trying to force you off." It was the kart demonstration at the British Grand

Steve Thompson's early racing was in this ex-Alan Rollinson Lola T60, seen here at Mallory Park.





Thompson had a good year in 1970 with this 1.8 Chevron B17C, winning the BOC Libre championship.

Prix at Silverstone, in which Steve took part, that changed his mind and he gave up karts for cars, influenced no doubt by his friend Chris Lambert who was about to do the same and move into Formula 3.

"Alan Rollinson at this time was just teaming up with Frank Lythgoe to run two of the old 1000cc Formula 2 cars for himself and Adam Wylie. Well Adam had already got a Lotus 22/31. It was an immaculate car, a really beautiful looking thing and with Adam's F2 deal, it was up for sale and because of Alan Rollinson's connections, it meant I could get it a little cheaper."

However while Steve and his family went over to Spain as the guests of Montesa for their efforts at winning the championship in 1964 and were rewarded with a joint British Montesa concession alongside John Brise, Wylie was killed while racing in Ireland. With his old car sitting in the family garage, it was a tactful move on behalf of Steve not to push his entry into motor racing at that stage.

It wasn't until the following year, "when I was seventeen and a half" that Steve had his first motor race down at Castle Combe. Steve remembers how much help and advice he received from Harry Stiller, later to become British F3 champion, on that day where he thinks he finished about 4th. "I did a few more races with this car in F3 trim but it was the start of the Brabham era where the first ten cars home were Brabhams. It was sold and we replaced it with a Lola T60 which Alan had been racing for Frank Lythgoe occasionally and I think Mike Beckwith drove it at Monaco. Anyway, we got it on a good deal", recalls Steve. "We fitted the Cosworth MAE engine and I did several more F3 races in 1966, picking up a 2nd here and a 3rd there but it still wasn't on a par with the Brabhams. So we fitted a Ford twin-cam engine which I'd bought from Robs Lamplough and that was the *Formule Libre* car that I ran in '67, '68 and '69. It was probably the most successful car I've every had and it cost little, if nothing, to run. Even on second hand tyres it used to blow off a lot of good cars."

That car was successful for Steve and he won the Bob Gerard *Libre* championship, admittedly based at Mallory Park, in '68 and '69 having been runner-up to Davey Powell's F2 FVA-engined Merlyn in 1967. It was through these successes that Steve became tagged as a Mallory master.

At the end of that final year, the twin-cam was finding life a little strenuous against the more potent F2 cars that were contesting British club races and so the venerable Lola was offered up for sale "but we couldn't sell it. The car eventually went to Chris Featherstone for *monoposto* racing so you see how old it was!"

However with his Lola out of the way, Steve was left without an immediate ride and it was at the beginning of 1970 that Brineton Engineering in Walsall came upon the scene. They'd ordered a brand new F2 spec Chevron B17C although powered by an 1800cc Ford FVC engine which was scheduled to be driven by John Burton. However the latter lost interest and Thompson was approached, although £3,000 was still required to finish off buying the car. "So I knocked on a few doors of local business friends and came up with the money which meant that we could do the British Oxygen *Libre* Championship." The car was delivered late but Steve was still able to take yet another *libre* title by winning "something like 14 out of 15 rounds" and was only beaten once by David Prophet's F5000 McLaren at Silverstone. It left Brineton Engineering quite happy, happy enough to support Steve the following year where he made the plunge into the cut-and-thrust world of Formula 3. The category had just incurred a new change of rules, allowing 1600cc engines, and after his relatively trouble-free experiences of *libre* racing, the expected competition from within F3 must have taken him back to his hey-day of karting. It started off quite well and by his fourth race, held at the prestigious Monaco venue, he finished fourth.

The car was late in arriving for Mo Nunn of Ensign didn't really want to build replicas of his F3 that was already becoming the formula's early pacesetter. However Nunn had financial support from Bernard Lewis who was Alan Rollinson's father-in-law and Steve was a cousin and so on.

"Anyway, we fitted the Ensign with a demon mill from Holbay and away we went. We spent some time trying to get it right and I must have been in favour with Holbay because when it came back from a rebuild. I got pole at Zandvoort and led for three laps before it blew a piston out. Holbay then took it back for a rebuild before giving it back to me for Monaco where I finished 2nd in the heat and 4th in the final to Dave Walker's Lotus.

"After the race, we drove overnight up to Montlhery, where I won the Paris Grand Prix and then the engine went back for another rebuild. I did another race at Mallory before going on down to Ricard where the engine wouldn't pull itself out of bed. I suddenly realised then what Formula 3 was all about and if you're "king of the kiddies" this week you've got the mill. If you haven't, then forget it. It's just a waste of time."

Following his Paris GP win however, he split with Brineton Engineering and was faced with the prospect of having to sell the car to pay them off. However, through a motoring journalist friend he was able to obtain commercial support from Contac 400, a cold cure. It was enough to help him see out the year "and although I thought it (£3,500), was a fortune at the time, I was skint by the end of the season." An untimely accident cost him valuable finance and he wasn't able to obtain the latest gimmickry that F3 required and so everything went downhill from then. "I got so depressed that I was prepared to jack it all in because I just wasn't prepared to spend my own money on motor racing. All the fun had gone out of it, certainly with the hassles and politics of Formula 3. So I put the lot up for sale and with the equity I received, I bought a flat. The old man wasn't very happy at this because he thought I should have carried on but here I was, 24 years old, and all I had in the world was a race car, a transit camper and trailer and I knew at the end of another year the lot would be worthless."

So once again a new year dawned without any positive direction, certainly in racing, for Steve Thompson. At this stage, his racing cousin suggested he contact Alan Brodie who had bought Rollinson's F5000 Surtees TS8 from Alan McKechnie so that the former saloon car driver could dabble at racing. Put it this way, after Alan's first taste of F5000, Steve found himself driving the car the following week at Snetterton "where I finished a bloody awful third in a bloody awful race. The cars were half a mile apart at the end but certainly after F3, all that power was tremendous. I never thought at that stage, that I'd ever be able to use it all."

Meanwhile an opportunity had arisen whereby Steve was asked whether he'd drive a Dastle F3 for a certain Lord Alexander Hesketh at Monaco because the organisers refused to accept their entry for Babbles Horsley. Steve accepted and qualified the car for the final. "It wasn't a bad car and it was very nicely built. After the race, Bubbles implied that they'd be going into racing a little more seriously than they had done and would I be interested in driving for them. I looked at it from the point that I'd already done F3 and I now had a Formula 5000 drive and I didn't want the F3 engine hassles again so I said 'no.' Then James was sacked from March . . ."

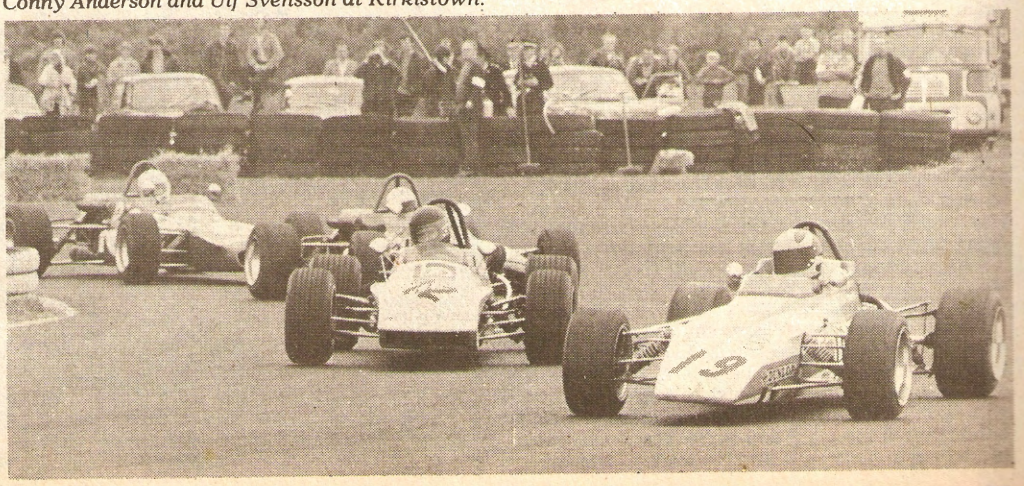
Steve's continued association with the Alan Brodie F5000 team rested on sponsorship and after searching around, he came up with Servis, the washing machine company. "It wasn't a lot that first year but it enabled us to do it half right. Anyway their first meeting with us was at a televised Mallory Park F5000 race when it poured down with rain and I blew everybody off. Mind you, it was local circuit knowledge plus the fact that I've never been afraid of the wet. I've found that a lot of guys pysche themselves out because of it. Of course, Servis were very chuffed and so we started talking about the following year and also the Tasman series as they're very big down in Australia."

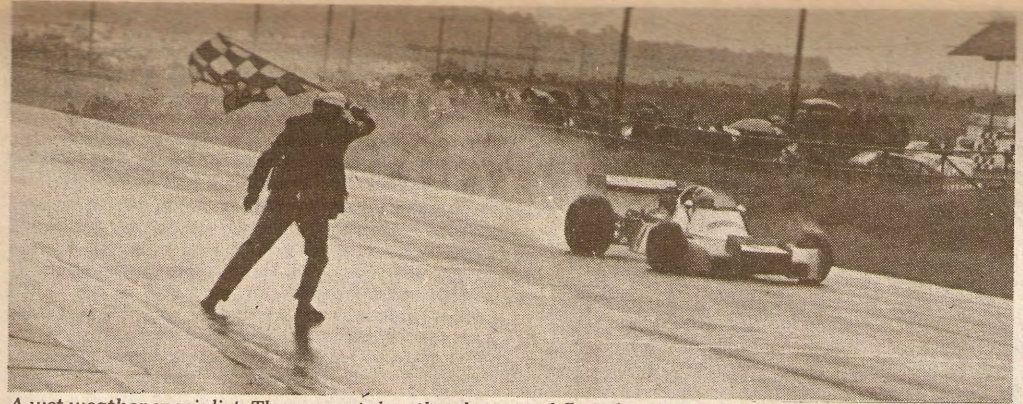
An agreement was reached whereby Brodie would finance the New Zealand part of the Tasman and Servis would act as their hosts in Australia. It was also agreed that the Surtees would not be competitive down-under so the team made enquiries about purchasing Brian Redman's prototype Chevron B24. Well, they weren't quite quick enough but after Keith Holland had a one-off race in it at Brands, it became Steve's mount for the Tasman and the car was shipped out to New Zealand. For Steve Thompson, this was the start of a new era in his already topsy-turvy career.

It was an epic journey just to get put there, but that's been recorded within these pages before. To briefly recap, because of bad weather conditions and missed connections, it took Steve and Alan six days to fly there and they weren't in the best of health by the time the first practice session was due to start, literally a matter of hours away!

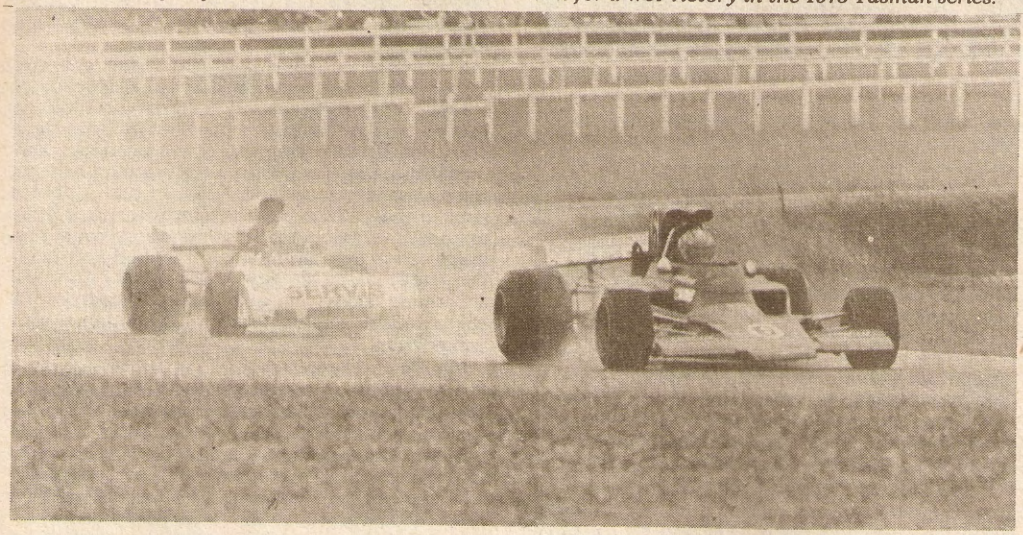
"I went out in the car and it honestly felt as if my head was full of cotton wool. All the landing and taking off in getting down there, besides nearly blowing my mind, had turned a real

Thompson was immediately a front runner in the F3 Contac 400 Ensign in 1971. Here he leads James Hunt, Conny Anderson and Ulf Svensson at Kirkistown.





A wet weather specialist, Thompson takes the chequered flag above at Snetterton's "farce" last year, and below, comes up to pass Frank Matich at Warwick Farm for a wet victory in the 1973 Tasman series.



heady cold into a dose of flu." Anyway, by ambling around and benefiting from other people's misfortune, Steve came home 3rd. The next race saw him lying 4th before the radiator fell off but by now, Thompson had recovered from his early ills.

"I then went on down to Christchurch and by now, I was feeling much better and really fit. It was the first time I'd gone motor racing without working in the week. Christchurch I really liked. It was a fast, flat-out airfield circuit with wide corners. I had a really good race there, pushing Frank Matich until he spun and I finished a bloody good third not far behind Warwick Brown and Max Stewart." You could tell from the tone in his heavily accented Midlands voice that this was a race he really enjoyed but the next, at Invercargill, was too with his wet weather expertise, although Steve readily admits the reasons quite why he and his car were so superior that day. "It was down to a set of old wet weather Firestones which Keith Holland had used in the semi-dry conditions at the last Brands meeting and had half cooked. They were the only wets we had and they'd been shoved on the car while it was in transit." He ran rings round the opposition, pulling out something like 40s in 10 laps. It looked as if he'd win at a canter but then water got into the electrical coil and he slowed to a stop. He lost many laps fixing it before restarting, unlapping himself no less than three times, to eventually finish 6th behind the race winner, a certain Alan Rollinson!

The deserved win which didn't materialise in New Zealand came in Australia though and once again it as the weather which helped Steve greatly. Having blown an engine at Surfer's Paradise, their only spare was rebuilt by Aussie engine ace Peter Molloy and fitted for Warwick Farm. Recalls Steve: "Now all the way through the Tasman, the Aussies kept saying that although Frank Matich had been blown off, I'd just have to wait until he got me to Warwick Farm, where he'd blow me into the dust. It got me so mad, I said to my mechanic John Fisher (later of Hesketh) that even if I finished last but one, I didn't care as long as Matich was behind me."

Suffice it is to say that it rained the whole meeting and the Servis Chevron, fitted with its "demon" Firestones, got the pole and led the race from flag to flag. "I was very chuffed and Servis were over the moon, especially as Sydney was their biggest market and the race was fully televised that evening." The series finished for Thompson with a 5th and a 3rd in the remaining races, although had the team had better resources, the results might have been good enough to win him the actual Tasman Cup. But it was not so.

"When I returned to Europe, having been away from work for something like ten weeks, and working in the week was my usual handicap, I felt really fit and entered the Rothman's European F5000 championship with, what I thought, was a really good chance." However, Steve reckons that by remaining faithful to Firestone, Goodyear's early season advantage in tyres put them at a disadvantage "although looking back on it, I think a lot of the trouble was me anyway. Believe it, or believe it not, even at that stage in 1973 I was working in the family business and this was a problem. I'd find that I was arriving at races not having even thought about driving a racing car beforehand and I literally couldn't get my mind conditioned over the weekend to do the job correctly. I mean, here I was racing against guys who did bugger all during the week except go testing. It was the highest level of racing I'd done at the time and I really started to suffer. I felt that I was completely useless getting myself into the right frame of mind for driving quickly. I wasn't driving or even working right so I decided it had to be one or the other. As neither looked like providing a satisfactory answer, it remained as before."

An attempt by Firestone to overcome the tyre disadvantage resulted in a test session at Silverstone. "We were trying some funny fronts and I came into Woodcote doing about 160 mph when the front tyre just lost its air and the car went straight into the barrier. All I can say is thank goodness I was in a Chevron because it was a helluva whop and I knew it was going to hurt there and then." He was knocked unconscious for several minutes but had survived with just severe bruising. "That was the beginning of the end if you like."

A new chassis was produced but because of business commitments and poor facilities, there wasn't time for them to sort it out properly. At that time, a whole crop of F5000 races came up and although Steve had an outside chance of taking the series by winning the last race, he ended up 4th overall.

Yet again Thompson found himself without direction over the winter for Servis, despite an option for 1974, pulled out because of the economic climate. The team tried to see what they could achieve during those early season races with the Chevron, but it was to no avail and "it was me who finally said I'd sooner not drive what was once a competitive car down the field and make all of us look idiots, so I jacked it in."

For almost the entire season, Steve spent time on the family business before accepting an offer from Ian Ward to try out the troublesome and unwanted F5000 Trojan T102. He "won" at a farcical Snetterton race but eventually was placed 8th after a recount but, as Steve put it, "it was a pig of a car and nobody of any repute had ever sorted the thing out" and the deal eventually fell apart due to internal wranglings.

With absolutely nothing on the horizon as far as racing was concerned, Steve decided to think of earning a regular income and following a shuffle around within the family business he set up a import and export truck components business (Importex) with partner Barry Kirby and it has proved very successful in its first year. "It's a challenge, setting up on your own and verv satisfying."

It looked as if Steve Thompson had quietly faded completely from the tracks until Martin Hone, patron of the Opposite Lock Club in Birmingham, asked Steve whether he'd drive the ex-Vandervell Ford Mexico in the *Penthouse* series this year. Up until then, Steve had resigned himself into retirement "although I'd decided that motor racing had retired from me rather than the other way round." Driving a saloon for the first time would at least allow him to keep racing for fun as well as look after the business. Wether he did it for fun or not, Steve Thompson took to the new world of saloon cars like a duck to water and he became virtually unbeatable in the series, ending up the most successful driver the series has ever known. Commenting on his past season, Steve reckons he's had one of the best racing seasons ever, "certainly from the fun point of view."

Whether we'll ever see Steve Thompson drive a competitive single-seater again remains to be seen. Undoubtedly, so many think, he deserves another chance, although whether he really wants to accept such a commitment is doubtful. However, Steve Thompson hasn't retired yet, although "I think the business has a much better future than motor racing has for me."

Thompson's championship winning Opposite Lock Club Escort sandwiched between David Da Costa's similar model Gordon Bruce's Sport.



"Our Man in the West" — a behind-the-Curtain saga of RAC Rally retirement, for this year anyway . . . by Richard Hudson-Evanski

I was just another TV personality until I discovered Polski Fiat

The pale-faced Polish columns busily bustled about their daily tasks, like so many well behaved and curiously silent worker ants. The tangible fruits of their considerable labours, a totally rebuilt Warsaw, their capital proudly re-hewn out of the efficient rubble of Nazi nastiness, is very much back in business — and, judging by the range of non-essential consumer "goodies" that are now framed by the still basically austere shop-windows, Poland is no longer the Eastern Bloc's poorest relation.

Hardly likely to go unnoticed, even by the sleepiest watcher lurking behind his Pravda, was an even paler faced crocodile of western pressmen. Armed with their inevitable — and predominantly Japanese! — cameras, and suffering from the usual surfeit of bottled national hospitality, the *Gentlemen of the Press* were doing Warsaw.

Having groaned at the awfulness of the preserved ghetto cells, winced at the SS's torture chamber and genuinely marvelled at the faithful reconstruction of the Opera House, still with shell particles embedded in its pillars, the man in the leather coat and the Polish peasant's cap declared — "And next you will enjoy seeing die achievements sporting of our heroes."

The next stop on our cultural frogmarch was a kind of "Department of Somewhere" lobby, its walls lined with celebratory showcases crammed with gleaming pots. "Now you can see ow successful vee Poles ave been in der wide vorld of die sport," proudly purred our talking guide book.

There were cups for epic pedalling, trophies for historic dribbles, medals for Speedway bravery — and, by way of gladdening the western heart of any rallyman, given pride of place were many a worthy relic from Polish rally raids from as far afield as Greece and Portugal, to the outback trails of the North American Press-on-Regardless.

'These are our main sports in Poland," old leather coat proudly burbled. "Die cycling, football, speedway — and, of course, the rally. You vill enjoy our films." And so it was that the intrepid but fading press corps were filed in and sat down in front of a cinema screen at the Polski-Fiat factory "to enjoy" viewing the four-wheeled Polish products in action.

After seeing Polskis nimbly threading down the latticework hairpins above Monte, holding their breath for long enough to slip through the TAP's dusty woodland tracts, and wallowing successfully into, in and occasionally out of East African bog holes, the inevitable tinted-specs-wearing spokesman proclaimed — "You see vee ave made rally in world's most arduous motoring events — Acropolis, TAP, Monte Carlo and Safari . . ."

"Vot about — sorry, what about the RAC Rally of Great Britain?" I queried in as challenging a way as I could muster after such a frenzied piece of celluloid brain-washing.

Pause of incomprehensible consultation, exchange of gesticulation various and evil smelling Polish fags. "Dis RAC. Is't difficult?"

"No problem," quoth I daringly, hoping that they wouldn't rumble my seven non-finishes. . . . "Why don't you come to find out?"

Two night clubs and a nightmare of telex messages later, they did, taking their place for the first time among 15 other "official" manufacturers' forays, accepting what East will now agree with West has clearly become the world's most prestigious sporting car challenge.

"You know RAC?" My confident nod clinched my being press-ganged into the "Number one Co-pilot's seat." "You vill enjoy it!" Polish Wodka is a powerful persuader, particularly the most dangerous variety of all (be warned) where the grass, so beloved of the Polish bison, can be found thriving within the bottle!"

Apart from the ever-eager David Palmer, the Polski PRO for the importers in Britain, the same firm, incidentally, who bring in the Mazda presence, losing yet more hair over exactly how many comrades would be landing, and my having to purchase all the maps for a brace of rally Polskis and a quartet of service bargskis — I was left to chew my capitalist toe-nails in unnerving solitude. Would they ever arrive? Even a comforting and confirming telephone call (yes, I fortunately had a free evening!) from Comrade Martin Holmes on his return from the Warsaw Rally, saying that they would definitely be coming, did little to ease my tow-nail consumption.

Anyway, the door bell rang and in out of the cold marched the vanguard of the Polish task-force. Suddenly my tiny Chiswick flat was like a Polish working men's club, an occasion my long-suffering and non-smoking cat will always want to forget.

The two rally cars, Polski-Fiat 125 P's both, prepared to 1600 cc "Acropolis"-specification, which meant 160 bhp Abarth Twin Cams under their near cast-iron bonnets, five-speed boxes and limited slip differentials, had already continued A1-wards to Yorkski. But even so, our road, even within Stratos earshot of the Chequered Flag, is very much a backwater in motoring terms. It seems the kerbs were full of amazingly laden Fiat 125P Estates, a pack of much-travelled "mother-ships" if ever I saw any. Their roof racks were piled high with the three different tyre possibilities — Michelin XAS for the tarmac stages, Michelin M and S as used by the team on the Safari for the loose, and the very comforting Finnish 'Hakkas' if it turned nasty, picked up while in the Marlboro Country of the Arctic circle.

Very much "mothering" the service crews was the fast-smoking Krystyna Gott MA, a formidable blonde lady, straight out of Fleming, officially "Co-operation (you would have very little choice . . .) and Publicity Manager" for "Polmo FSO," Polski-Fiat's AVO-like operation. They call it "The Research and Development Centre of Passenger Cars — Racing Cars Division"! While keeping an eye on things were "Bill and Ben" or Jozef Krawcxynski and Stawomir Kozminski, the men "from the management" I was told. Anyway, on the rally they were always around with "Sweeties" and cups of coffee, maybe every team should have a "Bill and Ben" . . .

About the best English — or rather "the only" English was the task of Jacek Olesinski, an



Our man Hudson-Evanski in jocular pose.

Engineering type who seemed to alternate between further studying, and working for Polski. His sparse knowledge of English was at least some consolation for my not having mastered more than the very basic "yes," "no," "left," "right," "petrol," "water" and "stop" in Polish!

Then there were regular Polski Team rallyists, Maciej Stawowiak, 12th overall on this year's Monte, and Ryssard Lyszkowski, their chief co-driver. When they're not rallying or travelling to and from rallies (the team had driven the over 2,000 miles to the RAC . . .), Maciej works as a driver at the works, Ryssard in the Competition Department on the mechanical side.

A trio of ace Pole-wrenches completed "the workers" in the Team, Piotr Walesak, Audrig Marciniak and Pawet Filipowicz, they said little, preferring to work, again an asset to any team, I would have thought!

They were mightily overawed by the comprehensive nature of "Jim Porter's Bible" — "Even the Service Cars can make rally." Indeed, throughout the rally, the Roadbook was a source of constant reading matter — and will, even now, be under the microscope back home in Poland. Our Ordnance Survey maps, too, impressed — and after having coped with trans-Siberian treks from rice-paper maps, one can understand why. We even mark War Department establishments. . . .

After the first meeting in London, I became very quickly aware that the language problem would be far from easy. Even all put together, their English was hardly going to be able to order a three course meal in York — let alone cope with the split-second complexities of taking part and taming the challenge of the RAC, not forgetting the organisers. It was obviously going to be pretty tiring. The hotel in York didn't help. Nothing wrong with it — except it happened to be a "Temperance House" . . . However, there was in fact only room for the Poles, who really needed to be all together, so unlike my term in the Skoda camp, I was able to escape occasionally, to bathe my over-taxed brain in some Licensed Premises elsewhere. Not for me, this year, the ever-watchful pair of eyes in the hotel lobby — "So, you are not sleeping. Should you go out?"

However, because the Polski boys and girls probably rally on more internationals in a year than any other rally team in Europe right now, this year, when (and if!) they get back from the Russian Winter Rally, they will have clocked up over 20 events, they very quickly grasped "our system." I marked up their maps with the start and finish of every stage, optimistically as it turned out. They had the service points, allowed by the organisers and expected by the rally cars, parked on the maps too — and scribed into the roadbook in the right places. And while it lasted they were everywhere they should have been.

I was partnered with Polski's "Number One" driver, one Andrzej Jaroszewicz, a bearded 29-year-old who, apart from being the Director in charge of their competition operation, happens also to be the Prime Minister's son. But I was very quickly aware as we slithered without drama over the varied droppings that covered the drives of Bramham, by the time we came through that he was very definitely Poland's number one driver — on ability. And besides being fully capable of giving some of the RAC Rally Championship top

10 runners a good chase (with more brake horsepower, of course), he was obviously every bit as much an administrator as his Dad — controlling the strategy behind an 80-strong competition labour force and a 30-strong vehicle fleet.

Although a newcomer to rallying on this side of the Channel, Andrzej has been a frequent invader on western events, winning his class on the '74 Acropolis. While at home he is top-dog, having won the Warsaw Rally, and no mean tyro on the track too, being the current 1300 cc Saloon Car Racing Champion of Poland. His lovely wife, Irena, who visited York too, is also a keen rally competitor and looks forward to having a go in the Ladies' category on an RAC sometime. After this year' abysmal showing by our birds, I told her she had plenty of scope. . . . Besides she looked a darned sight prettier.

The second car, sensibly "more used," I thought, had been entrusted to that most photographed of all current Flying Finns, Jussi Kynsilehto, who apart from attempting jumping records in Escorts is a bit of a hero first-class with the Poles, like Saaristo is to Skoda, Polski's very own tame Finn. Jussi, like so many Finn rallyists, "sort of imports and exports — this and that," spent most of his non-rally time on the phone to remote parts, applying stickers to his Polski, grinning at hotel receptionists and trying to persuade me (after we had all retired, of course) to literally pour down vast helpings of "Wodka widout orange vater." Jussi hopes to be doing much spectacular motoring for Polski in '76. His co-driver on the RAC, Henk Van Tunen, filled the empty co-driver's seat at the 11th hour, obviously an excessively brave Dutchman, prepared to sit where quite a few seasoned "names" were not.

For our car, the first day's loop presented no problems — apart from the very real fear of killing a few spectators. Once or twice, our original Fiat 125 discs became very hot, such as at Olivers Mount, and started to misbehave themselves, locking up on one side or the other, causing us to veer this way or that under braking. Why it is that perfectly sane and sensible enthusiasts, by far and away the majority in any spectator situation, continue to stand just where a car could go off if its brakes locked up one one side or a wheel came adrift, entirely baffles me. But there, more than ever this year, were the crowds packed several deep on the apex of corners, just where a car could cut across if its tyres bit — and as for straight-on at hairpins. . .

Two things are for sure. The so-called "blanket cover" taken out by the organisers to protect competitors who may be unfortunate enough to involve members of the public in an accident on a stage, where liability appears to be limited nowadays to a mere £50,000 any one accident, is plainly inadequate. Although I cannot imagine an insurance man in his right senses taking any kind of odds on such a racing "cert." Secondly the day that the law of the land will demand that rally organisers take "adequate precautions" to safeguard spectators from injury may be all too close. Maybe we can all think ourselves lucky that the Minister Gilbert only concerned himself with the political publicity benefits of flagging away a car or two, and a leisurely first day drive, rather than actually seeing in intense detail for himself how "dangerously" popular our sport has become.

The "Jussi Polski" very nearly notched up a spectator or 20, I gather, at Oliver's Mount. He lost his brakes and had to handbrake-spin his car off a gate. And he swears it must have been a spectator's body which came through his rear window!

After the re-start on the Sunday morning, everything seemed to be in apple-pie order for both cars, handily placed for a waiting game in the early 60s. However, having survived the excitement of poor Vatanen's "almightly," coming over the fateful Clipstone jump not many minutes afterwards, our own excitement occurred in Blidworth Wood, when we suddenly veered sharp right halfway through a left-hander. To start with I thought Andrzej had misunderstood my "Left" for a "Right," it nearly happened in Yorkshire when I called "Hairpin Right" and he thought I had said "OP-EN Right." But no, the top and bottom ball joints had pulled out of their seats, the suspension pulling back and the car digging well and truly in on that corner.

Even by dint of some swift manhandling into a lay-by and a lift to collect our service crew from a helpful marshal, the suspensin was pole-axed and, even with new bits fitted, it came adrift all over again.

Meanwhile Jussi had been visiting the scenery on Clipstone — and even after some mighty servicing at the end of the stage, with a halfshaft change, he had to call it a day at Trowell Services with damage (when leaving the road!) to the oil filler's casting, grit getting in and oil pouring out. The team was out. It was back to York early, where we were surprised to meet up with so many other unfortunate crews who were having the good sense to console themselves with what was left of their petrol money.

However, after a coffee table examination of the offending ball-joints had revealed that they were Fiat 131 and supposed to be better than the 125 parts, hitherto fitted to their rally cars, the engineer responsible no doubt enjoying a long Siberian sabbatical, the welcome newcomers vowed to be back. And they will be too, you see. Although they are going to have to go some to better Chris Sclater's Toyota times — in a 1600 cc, lest we forget.

True, their 125 P, even in works form, might have been all rather like going rallying in *ye olde* Lotus Cortina Twin Cam of a few years back — indeed, even the limited-slip differential clonked away in the same disconcerting, just-about-to-give-up-the-ghost manner. But, for the moment, this is the only car that Fiat allow them to export into a market like our own. Back home, they are already in the midst of a switch to making the 131 P as well — and this will be their mainstay on the rally front in '76, in Eastern European events certainly, just as Jaroszewicz's Fiat Abarth 124 Spyder has been this season. While it's just possible that "Luca The Godfather" could well release his first Lancia Stratos into the Eastern Bloc for Polski to campaign.

Like Skoda, who are no longer some jokey sewing machine manufacturer, especially after their domination of the 1300cc class and a 15th overall, Polski are not to be underestimated. They have the good fortune to have their Government openly behind them — and rightly so. In Poland, at least, rallying goes hand in hand with developing and selling cars. Besides, the powers that be acknowledge that rallying is a major sport, every bit as capable of securing them national prestige around the world as football.

Anyway, I do hope they ask me again. I had a lovely time even if I couldn't down their wodka in one. And I'd hate to waste those seven words of Polish. There is also the small matter of that chap opposite my place, lurking professionally. He surely can't just be reading the paper . . . my goodness, it's this week's AUTOSPORT!

"I was very quickly aware as we slithered without drama . . . Andrzej Jaroszewicz was very definitely Poland's number one driver."



LOMBARD RAC RALLY results

1975 Lombard RAC Rally of Great Britain
Overall Results

1. T. Makinen/H. Liddon (Escort RS1800) 360m 44s.
2. R. Clark/T. Mason (Escort RS1800) 361.57.
3. T. Fowkes/B. Harris (Escort RS1600) 366.11.
4. T. Pond/D. Richards (Opel Kadett) 372.26.
5. E. Aaby/P. O. Nyborg (Escort RS1600) 374.14.
6. B. Coleman/D. O'Sullivan (Escort RS1800) 376.38.
7. B. Nilsson/L. E. Carlstrom (Opel Ascona) 377.53; 8. M. Verini/N. Russo (Fiat Abarth 124) 377.59; 9. W. Sparrow/R. Crellin (Vauxhall Magnum) 378.04; 10. S. Lampinen/P. Sodano (Lancia Beta Coupe) 378.59; 11. H. Kallstrom/M. Stedt (Datsun Violet) 380.11; 12. A. Dawson/K. Gormley (Datsun Violet) 382.02; 13. R. McCartney/T. McMahon (Porsche Carrera) 382.11; 14. P. Thompson/M. Greasley (Porsche Carrera) 387.43; 15. J. Haugland/F. Gallacher (Skoda S110) 388.07.

Ladies Award: T. Jensen/M. Brathen (Escort 1600 Sport) 458.03.

Group One: 1, Brian Culcheth/Johnstone Syer (Triumph Dolomite Sprint); 2, Robin Eyre-Maunsell/Neil Wilson (Chrysler Avenger); 3, Paul Faulkner/Monty Peters (Vauxhall Magnum).

Manufacturers Team Prize: 1, Dealer Team Vauxhall; 2, Dealer Team Skoda.

Class Awards

Class 1: A. Garvik/G. Sveinsvoll (Honda Civic 1200) 431.33; **Class 2:** G. Waugh/P. Handy (Chrysler Avenger) 403.02; **Class 3:** B. Culcheth/J. Syer (Triumph Dolomite Sprint) 390.41; **Class 4:** J. Haugland/F. Gallacher (Skoda S110) 388.07; **Class 5:** C. Sclater/M. Holmes (Toyota Corolla) 400.55; **Class 6:** T. Makinen/H. Liddon (Escort RS1800) 360.44; **Class 7:** W. Sparrow/R. Crellin (Vauxhall Magnum) 378.04; **Class 8:** No finishers; **Class 9:** T. Pond/D. Richards (Opel Kadett) 372.26.



Another second place on the RAC for Roger Clark who suffered and overcame many problems to finish 1m 13s behind team-mate Makinen.

Special Stage times

SS1 Bramham
1, Blomqvist 2.37; 2, Makinen 2.39; 3, Vatanen 2.40; 4=Waldegaard, Taylor 2.41.

SS2 Harewood
1, Blomqvist 2.34; 2=Waldegaard, Clark 2.35; 3, Eklund 2.37; 4, Makinen 2.38; 5, Vatanen 2.39.

SS3 Croft
1, Clark 1.38; 2=Rohrl, Mikkola, 1.39; 3=Makinen, Brookes, Pond 1.40; 4=McCartney, Taylor 1.41.

SS4 Ingleby
1, Clark 3.35; 2, Waldegaard 3.39; 3, Makinen 3.40; 4, Taylor 3.42; 5, Rohrl 3.42

SS5 Forgar
1, Waldegaard 3.53; 2, Clark 3.57; 3=Blomqvist, Rohrl 4.00; 6. Eklund 4.01.

SS6 Olivers Mount
1, Waldegaard, 3.50; 2, Mikkola 3.58; 3, Mikkola 3.59; 4=Makinen, Pond 4.03.

SS8 Broxa
1=Waldegaard, Munari 3.02; 2, Makinen 3.03; 3, Brookes 3.04; 4, Clark 3.06; 5=Blomqvist, Rohrl, Aaby, Fowkes 3.07.

SS9 Langdale
1, Waldegaard 5.44; 2, Munari 5.48; 3, Blomqvist 5.50; 4=Makinen, Rohrl, Brookes 5.51.

SS10 Staindale
1, Blomqvist 6.37; 2, Waldegaard 6.40; 3=Alen, Brookes 6.44; 5, Makinen 6.46.

SS11 Dalby North
1, Waldegaard 3.37; 2, Munari 3.40; 3, Brookes 3.41; 4, Rohrl 3.44; 5, Fowkes 3.45.

SS12 Dalby South
1, Waldegaard 7.35; 2, Munari 7.41; 3, Makinen 7.43; 4, Fowkes 7.50; 5=Clark, Vatanen 7.55.

SS13 Pickering
1, Vatanen 4.03; 2=Makinen, Waldegaard 4.04; 3=Alen, Munari, Rockey 4.07; 5=Rohrl, Brookes 4.08.

SS14 Cropton
1, Vatanen 7.34; 2, Makinen 7.35; 3, Waldegaard 7.41; 4=Blomqvist, Alen, Munari 7.44.

SS15 Clipstone 1
1=Blomqvist, Waldegaard 2.09; 3=Brookes, Pond 2.11; 5=Makinen, Munari 2.12.

SS16 Clipstone 2
1, Brookes 5.20; 2, Makinen 5.22; 3, Clark 5.23; 4, Rohrl 5.24; 5=Sparrow, McCartney, Kuun 5.27.

SS17 Blidworth
1, Waldegaard 2.25; 2, Brookes 2.26; 3=Blomqvist, Clark 2.27; 5 Rohrl 2.28.

SS18 Sutton Park
1, Fowkes 5.37; 2, Makinen 5.43; 3, Rohrl 5.44; 4=Munari, Verini 5.45; 6, Rockey 5.47.

SS19 Cirencester
1=Waldegaard, Blomqvist 8.16; 3, Makinen 8.25; 4=Sclater, Brookes 8.28.

SS20 Longleat
1, Verini 4.49; 2, Rohrl 4.53; 3, Makinen 4.54; 4, Pond 4.55; 5=Waldegaard, Sparrow 4.58.

SS21 Torr
1, Blomqvist 4.51; 2, Waldegaard 4.52; 3, Makinen 4.56; 4, Clark 2.57; 5 Munari 3.58.

SS22 Kingswood Warren
1=Waldegaard, Blomqvist 2.47; 3, Makinen 4.50; 4=Brookes, Rockey 2.53.

SS23 Grovely
1, Blomqvist 6.16; 2, Waldegaard 6.18; 3=Makinen, Clark 6.23; 5, Brookes 6.34.

SS24 Cricket St. Thomas
1, Waldegaard 2.37; 2=Blomqvist, Lampinen 2.42; 4, Makinen 2.44; 5=Coleman, Pond 2.45.

SS26 Slowley
1, Waldegaard 4.27; 2, Munari 4.28; 3, Makinen 4.30; 4, Aaby 4.32; 5, Blomqvist 4.33.

SS27 Withycombe
1, Waldegaard 2.12; 2, Makinen 2.14; 3, Munari 2.15; 4, Aaby 2.17; 5, Fowkes 2.19.

SS28 Speech House
1, Waldegaard 7.41; 2, Munari 7.44; 3, Makinen 7.54; 4, Blomqvist 7.56; 5, Fowkes 7.59.

SS29 Russells
1, Rockey 3.30; 2, Waldegaard 3.31; 3, Makinen 3.36; 4=Blomqvist, Munari 3.39.

SS30 Serridge
1, Waldegaard 5.54; 2, Munari 6.02; 3, Makinen 6.08; 4=Brookes, Aaby 6.11.

SS31 Sallowvallets
1, Waldegaard 3.49; 2, Makinen 3.57; 3=Blomqvist, Brookes, Aaby 4.01; 6, Munari 4.02.

SS32 Radnor
1, Fowkes 6.14; 2=Sclater, Blomqvist 6.28; 4, Waldegaard 6.29; 5, Lampinen 6.32.

SS33 Red Lion Hill
1=Blomqvist, Lampinen 3.32; 3, Waldegaard 3.34; 4=Coleman, Airikkala 3.35.

SS34 Cwmcynydd
1, Waldegaard 4.55; 2, Blomqvist 4.58; 3, Makinen 5.04; 4, Coleman 5.05; 5=Lampinen, Brookes, Aaby 5.06.

SS35 Cwm-Ys-Gawen
1, Fowkes 4.39; 2, Waldegaard 4.42; 3, Blomqvist 4.46; 4, Makinen 4.50; 5=Clark, Coleman, Airikkala 4.51.

SS36 Pantperthog
1, Waldegaard 7.11; 2, Fowkes 7.22; 3, Clark 7.23; 4, Blomqvist 7.27; 5, Makinen 7.30.

SS37 Dyfi 1
1, Waldegaard 13.45; 2, Fowkes 14.06; 3, Makinen 14.16; 4, Brookes 14.20; 5, Clark 14.24.

SS38 Dyfi 2
1, Waldegaard, 10.35; 2, Fowkes 11.09; 3, Clark 11.11; 4, Brookes 11.30; 5, Coleman 11.32.

SS39 Coed-y-Brenin 1
1, Brookes 3.15; 2, Waldegaard 3.16; 3, Makinen 3.18; 4=Clark, Sclater, Fowkes 3.19

SS40 Coed-y-Brenin 2
1, Waldegaard 7.16; 2, Clark 7.20; 3, Brookes 7.27; 4, Fowkes 7.37; 5, Coleman 7.42.

SS41 Penmachno 1
1, Waldegaard 6.44; 2, Clark 6.54; 3, Makinen 7.03; 4, Fowkes 7.04; 5, Coleman 7.06.

SS42 Penmachno 2
1, Waldegaard 3.21; 2, Brookes 3.24; 3, Clark 3.28; 4, Coleman 3.29; 5=Makinen, Blomqvist 3.31.

SS43 Clocaenog 1
1, Clark 4.46; 2, Waldegaard 4.48; 3=Makinen, Blomqvist 4.57; 5, Fowkes 5.03.

SS44 Clocaenog 2
1, Waldegaard 3.12; 2=Makinen, Brookes 3.18; 4, Coleman 3.19; 5, Blomqvist 3.20.

SS45 Clocaenog 3
1, Waldegaard 4.04; 2, Makinen 4.14; 3, Coleman 4.17; 4, Blomqvist 4.18; 5=Sclater, Fowkes 4.19.

SS46 Clocaenog 4
1, Waldegaard 4.59; 2, Makinen 5.15; 3=Blomqvist, Coleman 5.17; 5, Sclater 5.19.

SS47 Clocaenog 5
1, Waldegaard 4.39; 2, Brookes 4.44; 3, Fowkes 4.55; 4=Coleman, Sclater, Pond 4.57.

SS48 Heaton Park
1=Brookes, Pond 2.16; 3, Clark 2.17; 4, Makinen 4.18; 5, Verini 2.19.

SS49 Greystoke
1, Waldegaard 4.03; 2, Brookes 4.10; 3, Blomqvist 4.14; 4, McCartney 4.18; 5=Coleman, Sclater, Pond, Aaby 4.20.

SS50 Setnurthy
1, Waldegaard 2.34; 2, Makinen 2.39; 3, Clark 2.41; 4, Brookes 2.42; 5, Sclater 2.45.

SS51 Braithwaite
1, Waldegaard 5.06; 2, Brookes 5.14; 3, Clark 5.12; 4, Makinen 5.20; 5, McCartney 5.22.

SS52 Whinlatter
1, Waldegaard 7.06; 2, Clark 7.14; 3, Makinen 7.15; 4, Brookes 7.23; 5, Fowkes 7.38.

SS53 Whythop
1, Clark 3.26; 2, Brookes 3.21; 3, Waldegaard 3.32; 4, Makinen 3.33; 5=Kallstrom, Fowkes 3.41.

SS54 Glengap
1, Brookes 7.51; 2, Waldegaard 7.55; 3, Clark 8.06; 4, Makinen 8.07; 5, Rockey 8.09.

SS55 Laurieston
1=Waldegaard, Brookes 2.34; 3, Clark 2.37; 4, Rockey 2.39; 5, Makinen 2.40.

SS56
1, Clark 6.20; 2, Waldegaard 6.22; 3, Lampinen 6.27; 4=Kallstrom, Rockey, Fowkes 6.36.

SS57
1, Waldegaard 4.31; 2, Clark 4.34; 3, Makinen 4.42; 4, Lampinen 4:47; 5, Fowkes 4.49.

SS58
1, Waldegaard 4.03; 2, Clark 4.22; 3=Lampinen, Brookes, Aaby, McCartney 4.24; 5, Makinen 4.26.

SS59 Twiglees
1, Waldegaard 6.35; 2, Makinen 6.46; 3, McCartney 6.50; 4, Brookes 6.51; 5, Clark 6.58.

SS60 Castle O'Er
1, Waldegaard 4.40; 2, Brookes 4.48; 3, Makinen 4.52; 4, McCartney 4.54; 5 Clark 4.55.

SS61 Craik
1, Waldegaard 7.16; 2, Makinen 7.25; 3, Brookes 7.32; 4, McCartney 7.34; 5, Sclater 7.36.

SS62 Redesdale 1
1, Makinen 4.39; 2, Waldegaard 4.40; 3, Clark 4.45; 4, Fowkes 4.48; 5, Airikkala 4.54.

SS63 Redesdale 2
1, Waldegaard 4.33; 2, Makinen 4.37; 3, Clark 4.39; 4, Fowkes 4.40; 5, Brookes 4.47.

SS64 Redesdale 3
1, Fowkes 4.24; 2, Waldegaard 4.26; 3, Clark 4.32; 4, Makinen 4.35; 5, Brookes 4.36.

SS65 Kielder 1
1, Waldegaard 8.28; 2, Clark 8.38; 3, Fowkes 8.54; 4, Makinen 9.02; 5=Coleman, Aaby 9.15.

SS66 Kielder 2
1, Waldegaard 7.02; 2, Clark 7.14; 3, Makinen 7.18; 4, Fowkes 7.26; 5=Lampinen, Kallstrom 7.42.

SS67 Kielder 3
1, Waldegaard 7.05; 2, Clark 7.10; 3, Makinen 7.27; 4, Fowkes 7.30; 5, Nilsson 7.39.

SS68 Kielder 4
1, Waldegaard 7.12; 2, Clark 7.15; 3, Fowkes 7.23; 4, Makinen 7.25; 5, Coleman 7.36.

SS69 Hamsterly
1, Waldegaard 6.10; 2, Makinen 6.17; 3, Clark 6.24; 4, Ariikkala 6.29; 5, Pond 6.35.

SS70 Boltby
1, Verini 3.11; 2, Sparrow 3.12; 3, Clark 3.13; 4=Makinen Lampinen, Fowkes 3.14.

SS71 Flass
1, Makinen 2.33; 2, Lampinen 2.35; 3, Sparrow 2.38; 4, Kallstrom 2.40; 5, Pond 2.41.

SS72 Kilburn
1=Clark, Fowkes, Sparrow 3.00; 3=Coleman, Sclater 3.02; 5 Verini 3.04.

Terry Kaby and Bob Freeborough were nostalgically cheered through the stages in Freeborough's venerable Mini-Cooper 'S'.



No panic at Combe

An effort to put Castle Combe on a better financial standing, has come up against the local planning authorities. AFN, who lease the circuit, are once again applying for planning permission for use of the circuit for five days racing per year, but have also recently applied for permission to use the circuit for approved leisure activities and for fully silenced road cars. The latter two licences have not been granted due, it was stated, to objections from local residents, a point blown up by the local authority, who went so far as to issue their own press release to local papers without informing AFN.

John Aldington, a director of AFN, has since issued a press statement, also to the local papers in which he calls the maximum number of proven objectors, 20 (and there could have been fewer), "a bit feeble." All the leisure activities which AFN had planned had been discussed with local council, and Mr Aldington noted that in their statement, the local council had only mentioned those which *could* be called noisy, and had also omitted any mention of the fact that the cars used would be silenced. There was one day last February when some 861 Ford dealers tried 25 of the new Ford Escorts at the circuit, and one objection was lodged in August, after information about the test day was made available in May. "This Ford day was the maximum use of the circuit by road cars ever envisaged . . . the local inhabitants did not know it had happened," said Aldington.

When we spoke to Aldington on Monday, he said that Castle Combe was in no more danger from lack of racing then it had been since 1948 when the circuit was first used. Every three years it is in danger by merely having to have the planning permission renewed. Even despite this frequency, news is not expected from the planning authorities for at least three or four months.

Meanwhile, Aldington said "we don't want to see motor racing stopped; we certainly can't afford to lose any more circuits in Britain. It's just normal planners' gobbledy gook. We see Castle Combe as a clubby circuit and we don't want it to be any more. We want to put it to some other commercial use, to make the whole thing viable."

FE and O&C make up

It seems that Forward Enterprises and Oldham and Crowther have reached a compromise over their differences regarding panels for the Thoroughbred Sports car series in 1976. The two parties had announced their split in the championship following disagreement regarding internal panels, a rule change which was felt by O and C to be unfair to competitors under a previous agreement.

The relevant part of a statement from O and C is: "The rules regarding internal panels will now read as follows: All cars must be fitted with sills and front and rear bulkheads of original materials and shape.

All other internal panels must be of original shape but can be made from lighter material such as aluminium (NOT fibreglass).

In order to prevent any future disagreement there will be a meeting between John Harper (of Forward Enterprises) and Oldham and Crowther to agree which panels constitute a part of the bulkhead."

Thus it seems that all is well again on the Thoroughbred Sports car scene, one which should be known for its relaxation and gentlemanly conduct.

BRTDA vary autocross

Several new names appear on the list of organising clubs in the 1976 BT & RDA Autocross Championship which is confirmed as being of 24 rounds. With best six scores to count new secretary Martin Barnard says, "Nobody will have to travel more than 90 miles to do his six qualifiers. The series is not regionalised but it will take place, in the main, in three areas, the South West, the London area and the Midlands."

New Clubs running rounds include Haldon and South Hams whose events at Easter kick off the season, Cosmopolitan from the Portsmouth area, Stort Valley, EMI in the London area who may well run a Saturday date to link with Chess Valley the following day, Longton and District, who will run at the Charnock Richard complex, Owen Motoring Club and Brent Vale.

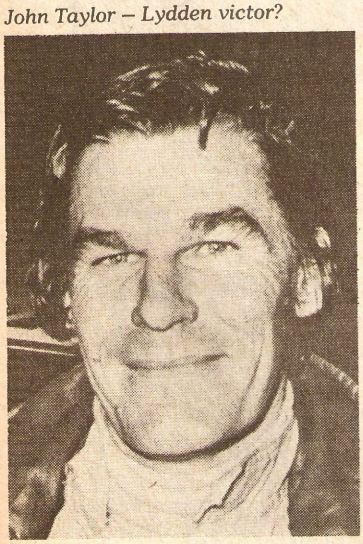
There's no news of a sponsor for the series but plans are afoot for awards at every round instead of cash. The registration fee is fixed at £3.

Lydden variety

Christmas shopping and racing don't mix, so one might say, but there's a chance to see if it does work this Sunday at Lydden where, in addition to a fine entry of rallycross and autocross cars, TEAC have arrange for Platt's Markets to sell their wares; a fine selection of a bumper number of Christmas bargains. If you think it sounds suspiciously like an unfortunate double booking of the same venue, it isn't for Platts are involved in the prizes too, putting up three silver trophies for the first three places.

But back to the rallycross. Among the entries are Hugh Wheldon (VW),

John Taylor – Lydden victor?



John Taylor, John Smith, George Warren (Escorts), and Mick Bird, Trevor Reeves, Peter Vaughan (Minis), A considerable number of autocrossers have also entered and may well pose a threat. The action on the track does not start until after shopping (12.30 pm), and the admission fee is only 50p.

Marshals' training day

Once again the British Motor Racing Marshals Club is organising a national training day early in the New Year at Silverstone. All motor sport officlals are invited to attend this comprehensive training day, which will comprise lectures on the following: course marshalling, flag marshalling, fire marshalling, observing, medical and race organisation. Talks on race telephones and paddock marshalling will also be given for those interested. There will also be practical circuit training with all marshals under instruction for the duty allocated.

Drivers are also invited to attend the day and take in lectures and circuit work, as the BMRMC feel that it would be mutually advantageous for all competitors to have a better understanding of marshalling. The events are due to take place on Saturday, February 21 and for further information, those interested are asked to contact Dave Scott, BMRMC National Training Officer, at 34 Canford Drive, Addlestone, Weybridge, Surrey KT15 2HL. Drivers should mark their letters "competitor."

Palliser show variation on FF2000

Palliser have sold both their 1975 works FF2000 cars to drivers hoping to contest APG's series next year. The two buyers are Kees van der Grint, a Dutchman who had one race in the car towards the end of this year, and Martin Berrow-Johnson. The company report good interest in the Formula for next year, and are currently negotiating with more drivers for further sales. They're hoping to run a two car team next year as this, although it would only be with the help of a sponsor.

They're running an updated Palliser, converted to Atlantic trim at minimum cost, this Sunday at Brands Hatch for Damien Magee. The car is to be powered by a twin cam engine, with which it has run a 45.8s, and Les Oakley at Palliser suggested that this would be a cheap way to go Indylantic with the same car as used in FF2000.

Brands rescheduled

The Rochester Motor Club had assembled a fully representative entry for their varied eight-race programme at Brands Hatch last Sunday, but the weather then turned against them and the thick fog refused to clear, so that by lunchtime the officials had no option but to formally abandon the meeting.

It was a most unfortunate situation for less than five miles away towards London, on slightly lower ground, the area was quite clear. Unfortunate, not only for all the regular club drivers, but also for the few spectators who braved the cold conditions and who would have witnessed the sight of Gerry Marshall in the Classic Saloon Ford Zephyr of Bruce Stapleton.

On a brighter note though, it was announced that an arrangement had been made with John Webb to re-run the meeting on Sunday, December 14, in conjunction with an MRS race day.

● The final practice of the year at Mallory Park is December 6. Early sessions next year are January 24 and February 21, but a full list of dates can be obtained by writing to the circuit and enclosing a stamped-/addressed envelope.

● Because of a mis-booking by the hotel, there's a clash again in January between the Tour of Dean and the annual BT & RDA luncheon at Solihull. Both events are going ahead and plans will be made for the rally awards to be presented on another occasion.

Lotus 7 in? — could be

Rumour hath it that the BARC's competition committee have approved the inclusion of the Lotus 7 in their modsports championship next year, despite the BRSCC having used an exclusion clause. However, the decision has to be ratified by the club's council, and this doesn't take place until Tuesday evening and the outcome is highly unpredictable.

Even the BARC are unsure of their position regarding existing interested competitors, because some of the prime movers to the banning of the car apparently give the club one side of the story, but when they speak to Graham Nearn, the director of the cars at Caterham Cars who build the Lotus, they apparently give a different view.

1976 BBC Radio One

A sixty per cent increase in prize money, a new scoring system, and 21 rounds in England and Scotland: these are the features of the 1976 BBC Radio One production saloon car championship announced last Monday.

The prize fund per class at each round of the 1976 championship has been increased to £50, with £25 going to the winner, and £15 and £10 going to the next two placed respectively.

Drivers placed second and third in each class will also receive year-end prize money.

The classes will be as announced last week: Luxury (over £2,401); sporting (£2,000 to £2,400); family (£1,601 to £2,000) and economy (up to £1,600). Apart from the usual venues used this year, the series travels north of the border to Ingliston for one round in July.

Once again there will be two days

The 1975 BBC Radio One awards were presented in London on Monday evening. Below left, overall champion, Jock Robertson looks happy with his spoils. Below right, Under-21 award winner Marc Smith receives his cheque from Douglas Muggeridge of the BBC. A revised Under-21 system is expected to be announced at a later date.





For overall championship honours, each class will score points on the 9-6-4-3-2-1 basis to allow more drivers the chance of scoring and reduce the chances of one or two drivers running away with the class spoils.

For overall honours, a driver's best 15 scores from the 21 rounds will count towards his end of season results which will be rewarded by £100 to the overall winner and £50 to the winner of each other class.

specialising in Radio One type fun, at Mallory Park on May 2, a BBC Radio One motor race and fun day, and at Brands Hatch on September 12 which is a BBC Radio DJ day.

The full list of dates is: March 7, Brands Hatch; March 14, Silverstone; March 21, Mallory Park; April 4, Thruxton; April 16, Oulton Park; April 18, Snetterton; April 19, Brands Hatch; May 2, Mallory Park; May 15, Oulton Park; May 30, Brands Hatch; May 31, Snetterton; June 20, Silverstone; July 11, Mallory Park; July 25, Ingliston; August 1, Snetterton; August 29, Mallory Park; August 30, Snetterton; September 12, Brands Hatch; September 18, Oulton Park; October 3, Snetterton; October 24, Brands Hatch.

Haydays in the ice

With fog for most of the night and sheet ice in places life was not easy for the 55 crews who contested last Saturday night's A la Carte Rally run by Croydon and District MC in Surrey and Kent. Winners, by three minutes, were Ken and Hazel Hayday from the Bexley club who gained their second rally success within a fortnight and who were also highly placed the weekend before in their class. On the 176 mile route which contained 43 time controls and 22 passage controls, they missed one passage control and dropped 54m in the process in their RS 2000.

Second place, on a night in which seven crews went off on one particular bend, were Rod Johnstone and Alan Clark in their Mexico with 1F 57m and third were Alan Mepham and Mike Town, also in a Mexico, who were four minutes down on the runners-up.

Fourth, and best Croydon entry, were Bryan Nash/Dave Johnson in their venerable Mk 1 Cortina which was on its last outing before being replaced by an Escort. Their fourth place on 2F 59m clinched the drivers and navigators award for them in the club championship.

Completing the leaderboard were Louise Porter and Sam Samson in their Cooper with 4F 63m and Mick Crockett and Dick Steptoe (Dolomite), on 5F 66m.

Top novices were Ron Bignell and Tony Watson in a Triumph 2500 who dropped 13F 61m and the first three novice crews all finished higher than the leading semi-experts Malcolm Smith and Phil Cook in another Mk 1 Cortina who had 15F 54m.

Brands results

Due to a substandard results service at the Romford Enthusiasts Car Club meeting at Brands Hatch on November 23, we failed to print the correct results of the 850 class of event one. These have been supplied by Robert Hazell, who agreed with our reporter's comment concerning the service. The results were 1, Gerry Glass; 2, Eddy Arscott; 3, Allan Adkin and 4, Neil Whitford; all in Minis.

Mudge returns

Canadian Chris Mudge is returning to Canada at Christmas after a season and a half's FF racing to pursue a possible SuperVee drive in the States. Chris and his wife have spent most of this year looking for F3 sponsorship, and thus he only did a couple of races with the Palliser FF2000 works team. He would like to thank his friends for their help, and should they be in Canada he will be available at c/o 47 Chaplin Crescent, Toronto 7, Ontario, Canada.

Vixen foxes

Graham L. Capel has recently unearthed a Vixen GT from a chicken shed at Wimborne and would like to know something more about the car. Its chassis number is VIX 1 and was probably built around 1963/5, reminiscent to the Ferrari Dino of some 5/6 years later. It was formerly owned by an American who used it on the road and bought it in the Basingstoke area around 1969. Capel may be contacted at Chorlwood House Estate, PO Box 7, Horley, Surrey.

● Wally Hall, who designed, built and raced the 1.0 MG Gnat so successfully a few years ago, would very much like to contact the present owner. Wally has masses of information on the car and would like to help him out with it. He may be contacted at 15 Battersea High St, London SW11.

● Young Jonathan Palmer, whose been campaigning a Sprite this year, is moving to Formula Ford next year, and is said to be "a driver to watch."

Briefly . . .

● Not a happy November for the Warne family, members of the Southampton MC. The weekend before last Andy rolled the RS 2000 on a rally and last weekend Dot broke the sad news that she had rolled the Mexico on a selective on the club's Solent City Rally. Fortunately neither car is too badly damaged, the major dents being to the family budget.

● HF Sprint Team from Birmingham will be running their two Mini-Fords in substantially the same trim as this year in the 1976 BT & RDA Autocross Championship. Frank Morris will drive the 1 litre car with Terry Smith in charge of the 1450 version. "We looked at the possibility of rallycross to a greater extent but time and the cost were against us," said Smith.

● Apart from being a tremendous success in the North East, *The Journal* /ANECCC autocross series has also raised money for charity. Following the round on September 14, £100 was raised for the North East Dyslexia Association.

● Although not all the venues are announced at least three of next year's LCAMC Sprint Championship rounds will be held at Bassingbourn and Duxford. There are 20 rounds to count, starting on February 8 with the Harrow club's event at Brands Hatch and going through to November 20. Series secretary is H. Wood, 35 Deer Park, Harlow, Essex.

● The LCAMC Autocross Championship list of dates has been finalised so far as is possible for next year and 14 and possibly 15 rounds will be run.

It all gets under way on May 2 at the Stort Valley round and Mike Anderson at 'Pit Stop', 80 St Edmunds Drive, Stanmore, Middlesex, will look after the secretarial side of the activities.

● Eighteen road and five stage events are included in the LCAMC Rally Championship next year. The road event series starts with the West Essex Cloverleaf on January 10/11 and the stage series a month later — on February 8 — with the same club organising. The West Essex people are going to have a busy season with no less than four events.

Waldon in Wales

After various problems with the bogies at the final championship round at Silverstone on October 25, the results of the Welsh Speed championship, sponsored by Esso Uniflo, have now been published. Winner was Peter Waldon in a Sprite with 52.08 after leading the series throughout. Brian Wilson was second in a Mallock, after non-starting two more events than Waldon on 48.41, and third was Stuart Watts (Elan) on 44.03. The awards will be presented at the Welsh Association annual dinner and dance at the Abernant Lake Hotel, Llandrtyd Wells in February.

With his very comprehensive season run down, Alun Morgan, who's resigning as secretary to the championship, included the 1976 dates, which are as follows:

March 20, Llandow; April 18, Talbenny; May 23, no venue announced; June 13, Longridge; June 20, Curborough; June 27, Talbenny; July 10, Valence; August 1, Llandow; August 8, no venue; August 29, Talbenny; September 12, no venue; September 19, Pontypool; September 26, Wroughton; October 30, Silverstone.

● The RAC's training trust should be getting under way early in the New Year with a number of seminars arranged for their own stewards.

Directory for Classic builders

A phenomenal aid to any classic or thoroughbred car builder or restorer is the *Thoroughbred and Classic Cars* Directory of Specialist Firms and Services. It contains over 6,000 entries, lists over 700 firms offering specialist parts and services for owners of cars built between 1920 and the 1960s who are experiencing difficulty obtaining spares. It was compiled with the assistance of the country's one-make car clubs — all the club's secretaries and their addresses are listed — and it will appeal to anyone who has such troubles as where to obtain a reed for your bulb horn, or where to obtain running board strip. The directory costs only 70p and is available from IPC Business Press (Sales and Distribution) Ltd, 40 Bowling Green Lane, London EC1 1DE.

● Regs are now out for the novices only Local Garages Rally which Kirkby Lonsdale MC are running on December 27. Start is The Service Station, Nether Kellet and the route will be only 54 miles. Entry costs £2 and only 35 crews will be allowed to start.

Awards open for all

The Shellsport Gold Star bonus scheme which was limited to saloon cars in 1975 — producing over 200 individual race wins including six major championships and eight class victories — has been completely revised for 1976.

Open to any driver using Shell fuel and oil, the Gold Star Awards now include single seaters, sports and GT cars, rallying and rallycross in addition to saloon cars, with a new scale of bonuses for each win: International events (£50); National events (£30); Restricted events (£15). These new bonuses will be awarded for each class or outright win gained between January 1 and November 30, 1976 and will be credited to each driver during the season for a single, total payment at the end of the year.

Each victory will also count towards the Shellsport Gold Star award — presented each year to the driver with the greatest number of wins. The leading six drivers will receive free supplies of oil for the following season. There will also be an official "Open Trade" licence available free of charge for drivers wishing to enter as an official Shellsport entry.

To be eligible for the Gold Star awards bonus scheme, drivers must register with Shellsport and in addition to wearing Shellsport badges on their overalls and helmets, they will be required to display a windscreen visor on all saloon/GT cars and a Shellsport decal on the nose or rear wing on all single-seater or sports cars. All cars must display a Shellsport Gold Star on either side for each race win during the year.

Drivers should register with Shellsport at Shellsport Gold Star Awards, MotorSport Division, Shell Marketing Ltd, Shell-Mex House, Strand, London WC2R ODX.



The Penthouse Mexico awards were presented in London last week. Above, Mike Freeman (right), who was second in the series, with Penthouse's Peter Goldsmith (left) and Peter Browning of the BRSCC. Below, chief Fender Bender David Da Costa admires his trophy while Penthouse champion Steve Thompson looks on.



Tippett retires

Following an accident in his Calor sponsored Gryphon at the beginning of November at Brands Hatch, Charles Tippett has said he's retiring from racing. Tippett suffered back injuries when he failed to negotiate Clearways and rammed the bank hard. His back, apparently, will take some months to mend, so, metaphorically speaking, he's hanging up his helmet.

Tippett who lives at Shabbington, near Aylesbury, has been a long time supporter of Clubmans, firstly with a 1.0 U2, and for the past two seasons, with a Gryphon sponsored by the Calor Group of companies, for whom he is an accountant.

FF versus Clubmans?

An interesting challenge is brewing in the breast of Clubmans Supersports Register secretary Peter Evans. With the knowledge that his B Class drivers are faster over most circuits than Formula Ford drivers, he's seeking to mix the two types of cars up together.

Both types of cars use the same engine, but while the Clubmans cars have to be front engined, the FFs are rear engined. But then the Supersports cars can use racing tyres, but at the same time are heavier and the front area is greater. Whatever happens, it might at least be interesting to see the various different driving styles.

Rallycross drivers meet

Rallycross drivers will be holding a second meeting this weekend to decide whether a British Rallycross Driver's Association should be formed or not. The meeting is scheduled for 5 pm and will be held at Barham Village Hall after the Lydden meeting this Sunday. Details can be gained from Nick Jesty, David Potter or Dick Griffiths, who will all be at Lydden on Sunday.



Mick Briant and Peter Bryant on the way to their Martin Group rally win.

Bolton challenges Briant

Mick Briant cruised home to yet another *MN* Championship win in North Wales last Saturday night. Partnered by Peter Bryant they won the Martin Group Rally (formerly the Cytax) run by High Moor CC. In their RS 2000 they dropped 46m to beat Jim Corner and Brian Gough (Mexico), by 18m. But it was not as easy as it looks on paper for Cyril Bolton and Nigel Raeburn were right with the champion until six controls from the end when a drive shaft gave way on the Cooper S.

Mike Wood, one of the organisers, reported sheet ice throughout the night and from an entry of 90 about 45 crews made it back to Llandudno whence the event started. Among the early retirements were Colin Mack and Dave Thomas who were sidelined when the throttle pedal disintegrated on their Avenger GT.

Corner and Gough finished two minutes ahead of Mike Pattison and Dave Taylor in their RS 1800 and Ian Harrison and Stephen Bye were fourth in their Escort on 73m. On 74m were Tony Jackson and Rod Carter in an Escort TC and sixth, on 75m, were the Cooper S crew of Chris Beddow and Steve Fellows.

An Imp in the hands of Bob Fisher and Kevin Jones took top honours in the semi-experts class finishing ninth on 83m while Gil Bennett and John Spiller were only two minutes behind them in tenth place in the Toyota Levin. Life was very tough for the novices and winners Peter Bennett and David Arstall dropped 7F 97m in their Mini to beat Steve Ogden and Mike Stubbs (Mexico) who were half an hour down.



Early leader Cyril Bolton.

Hawes' anti-climax

The first Classic Saloon Car championship ended on a damp and anti-climatic note last Sunday when the ninth and final round at Brands Hatch was fogged off.

A meeting was held of all the drivers present as soon as the decision was taken to postpone the race day where it was discussed as to whether or not the final round should be run on the new date.

Some strong words were to be heard when it was stated that even if there was to be a further race in two weeks' time, it would not count towards the championship and that the current positions would be regarded as final. Thus the fine Challenge Trophy, presented by Mr George Deffee, has been won by Mike Hawes, who has campaigned an MG Magnette, from Bob Meacham (Jaguar Mk 1), Andy McLennan (Austin 35), and Peter Jackson (Lancia Aurelia B20), the points situation remaining as printed in *Sports Extra* last week.

This has been a fine year for the classic saloon cars with a large variety of cars being turned out regularly, and at minimum cost, and they have provided some really close and exciting racing. Certainly the sight of Andy McLennan's little A35, chasing, and often beating, the much larger-capacity Jaguars, MGs, etc was well worth watching. Apparently the series is to be enlarged next year with 13 rounds being run at many different venues, the best eight scores to count towards the championship, starting at Silverstone on March 20.

● Annual presentation of awards, including those won on last weekend's A la Carte Rally, of Croydon & Dist MC, will be carried out at a buffet dance at the Old Whitgiftians Clubhouse, Farley Road, Croydon, on December 19.

● The Holland Cup is on again this weekend. After two years' absence from the calendar, the Boston and District Motor cycle and Light Car Club are holding their event this Saturday night starting from Holland Bros Ltd, Tawney St, Boston, to be run over 180 miles of public and private roads.

Consistent Jackson

Thanks to four consistent rounds on which he led or was second after each tour of eight sections, the Kent farmer Gordon Jackson duly collected the Johnson Cup at the Peterborough MC's sporting trial of the same name at Great Weldon, near Corby, last Sunday. A tie decider — furthest cleanest — gave John Benson second with Ivor Portlock third, both finishing six down on Jackson who dropped 34 marks.

A healthy entry of 37 turned up in misty, uncharitable weather for the trial which was using the site for the last time. Jackson, in his Ibex, took the lead on 16 marks in the first round with Lol Hurt (Ford Special) hard on his heels and Jack Pearce (Kincraft) tieing with Les Needham's Cannon. High hopes were held out for Norman Manser, the club's president, who was fifth in his Trisman.

Second time round Pearce nipped ahead of Jackson by a single mark while Ivor Portlock (Driad) burst on the scene by dropping only seven marks and took third. John Benson also made up for a poor first round to move into fourth with Jabs. Only seven marks separated the first six at this stage.

Running together Jackson and Pearce began to show their form on the third round and matched each other's moves and they moved clear of Benson and Portlock, who were having their own private duel for third.

On the last tour Pearce threw away his chances by clipping nine markers on two sections through which he blasted clear so he thought and Jackson, with the pressure removed, cruised home with only three more to add to his total.

1, G. Jackson (Ibex), 34 marks; 2, J. Benson (Jabs), 40 marks; 3, I. Portlock (Driad), 40 marks; 4, Julian Fack (Impunity), 46 marks; 5, J. Pearce (Kincraft), 48 marks; 6, L. Hurt (Ford Special), 54 marks.

A case of the weather

Plagued by bad weather throughout the night, the organisers of last Saturday's Northampton & District MC John Robinson Rally curtailed proceedings 10 controls from the end otherwise they would have ended up with everyone of the 40 crews out of time. Sheet ice and heavy mist in the first half of the 110 mile route proved bad enough but the fog that followed really slowed things down.

Despite the conditions the event proved a worthy one for winner John Case returning to rallying with an RS 2000 after a three year absence. With Bob Shutler he led Northants club to a first and second overall on 28m from John Hollowell and Nigel Evans in their Mexico on 34m. Third, only two minutes down, were the Vauxhall club members Geoffrey Biggs and Peter Pratt in a Firenza, and they, in turn, were a minute up on John Parsons and Barry Cooper in an Avenger GT.

Novice crews Eric Pyrah/Paul Davey (Maxi) and Rick Pearce/Pete Edwards (Mexico) took awards for fifth and sixth places on 40 and 44m respectively, Pearce having led the rally at the half-way stage with only 17m dropped.

Geoff Conway and Peter King were second at this point but broke a half shaft on their Mexico at around two thirds distance when possibly leading. Top novices were Dave Henshaw and Phil Brookes in a Datsun 180B on 60m.

Smith doubles with Sherwood

Winning navigator on the 1974 event Doug Smith partnered Dave Sherwood to success last Saturday night when they won the Southampton MC's Solent City Rally in the Normans of Slough Avenger. In an exciting finish in which the first three were separated by three minutes, Sherwood and Smith dropped 22m to beat Alan Hemmings and Dave Kirkham (RS 1600) on 23m with Mike Harrington and John Dixon third in their RS 2000, on 24m.

Suffering ice and fog, like the rest of central and southern England, the organisers laid on a 180 mile route in Hampshire and Wiltshire for 66 crews of whom 45 reported back.

Hemmings and Kirkham may have won the event but for time lost when they went off in the final third of the event while Harrington and Dixon paid dearly for a wrong slot.

A gap of three minutes separated fourth crew Ian Pettie/John Jones (Mexico), from the leaders and they were running with a very tight engine. Fifth were Derek Skinner and Peter Rushforth in their MGB on 30m while Tim Wyeth and Pete North were sixth in their RS 2000 on 36m.

Best of the clubmen, and twelfth overall, were Geoff Twigg and Mike Burrows in their Cooper S on 47m beating Eddie Gale and Richard Bosiacki (Cortina Mk 1) by eight minutes. In the novice class D. Speak and G. Wall brought their Cooper S into 18th spot on 63m to take the award from Mike Crane and John Jones (Escort) who were 19m down.

Peter Wallace and Malcolm Hudson (Mini), were rallying together for the last time as Wallace is selling the car and buying a house and they ended up best Southampton members. Mother and daughter Mrs J. Hart and Lori collected the ladies award in their Escort GT and the marque award went to D. Cawston and R. Millar in a Vitesse. The best all Hampshire crew were Mike Bugden and Chris White (Ascona).

● Miki Dee, who recently swopped his Merlyn for a 1974 Van Diemen, has been racing these last few weeks with the help of Hi-Watt Amplifiers. Hi-Watt manufacture heavy duty amps for many of the country's top pop groups.

Banning avenges in the ice

On a night when sheet ice caused many crews to go off the road, some not to return at least during the event, Bernard Banning and Rob Parrott ran out winners by more than five minutes in South Wales last Saturday night on the Red Dragon Rally, run by Port Talbot MC.

This was Banning's first success in a round of the *MN* Championship and he achieved it not in one of the all conquering Escorts, but in an Avenger GT which must be ironic. From an entry of 84 crews starting from Saundersfoot he and Parrott dropped 48m 53s to head off the pack of Escorts in four of the next five places.

Among the 45 crews who finished were a high percentage of novices and most of the local crews managed to stay in the event on which survival, rather than time, was of prime importance.

Danny Owen and Alan John (RS 2000) took second place on 54m 0s while the Mexico of Peter Reynolds and Lyn Jenkins placed third on 60m 06s. Fourth were Ted Cowell, running with Colin Francis for the first time. In their RS 2000 they dropped 68m 20s, exactly a minute less than Peter Gerbez and Dennis Osborne in their Clubman GT. Eric Davies and Mike Cowburn were sixth in their RS 1800 on 72m 05s.

In the semi-expert class, winners, from Pembrokeshire MC, were Jim Llewellyn and Gordon Evans in a Mexico from Les Crawford and Rod Hanson in their Escort TC with Monty Belton and Richard Phillips third in another Mexico.

The novice class went to John Taylor and Bob Rutherford from Tavern MC in a Cooper S with Chris Young/Chris Hoult (Escort) second and Wyndham Rees/Ian Delve third in an Escort.

Billy Gwynn and Terry Thorpe, who needed to do well to substantiate their claims to top places in the *MN* Championship were out very early with clutch trouble in their Escort and Mick Brown and Derek Tucker found V6 power in an Escort acutely embarrassing and dropped 76m.

Hawke develope FFs

Hawke are expecting to shortly be testing their all new Formula Ford, the DL15. They're currently wrestling with four different models of FF and FF2000, as they're also building Adrian Reynard's range of cars.

Hawke's own range includes an all new FF. It has new bodywork, a new chassis and rear suspension similar to the successful DL12 with inboard springs and dampers. Inquiries for the FF are going well, and the company expect to have Jim Walsh and Rick Morris driving their cars next year as this, and possibly Rod Bremner if he doesn't step up to F3. On the FF2000 front, Hawke don't expect to change their 1975 model following its recent successes in the hands of Tiff Needell, but trade has so far been slow although they expect inquiries to multiply after Christmas.

Jim Walsh – Hawke again?



On the Reynard side, once again they don't expect to have to do much to the FF2000, although they may give it a new nose. However, the FF will come in for more treatment with possibly new bodywork as well as other modifications.

Hawke as a whole are determined to make a go of 1976. "There'll definitely be a concerted effort next year. We intend to wrestle away a few championships," said a member of the staff.

Briefly

● Next Tuesday's BRSCC clubnight at the Oval, Kennington, has been cancelled out of respect for Graham Hill who was to have been the speaker.

● The new club secretary of the Nottingham Sports Car Centre is Alan S. Bragg of 1 Fisher Lane, Bingham, Nottingham; tel: Bingham 38664.

● In conjunction with the Mallory Park MC, the BRSCC are holding a driver's forum in the Mallory clubhouse on Saturday, December 6 at 8 pm. A bar extension has been arranged and hot meals will be available. Among the drivers who will be present are Gerry Marshall, Bernard Unett, Geoff Friswell, Geoff Lees, Stan Clark, John Bright and Jeff Ward.

● Following the overwhelming success of having a commentator who's super-informed on Clubmans matters commenting at their races, the Register have arranged for a separate B sports commentator for next year. No name has officially been announced.

● Competitors are reminded that it is not sufficient to have a helmet conforming to BS2495 this year. It must also have the fireproofing specification.

● Due to the Ministry of Defence twice withdrawing permission to use their land, the Crane Valley Motor Club have regretfully had to cancel their Duckham Challenge Trophy trial. The trial was a qualifying round of the BTRDA, ACSMC and RAC championships, but no alternative venue could be found in time. The club are ensuring that no similar problems will occur for the 1976 event.

2 GREAT GOODYEAR OFFERS

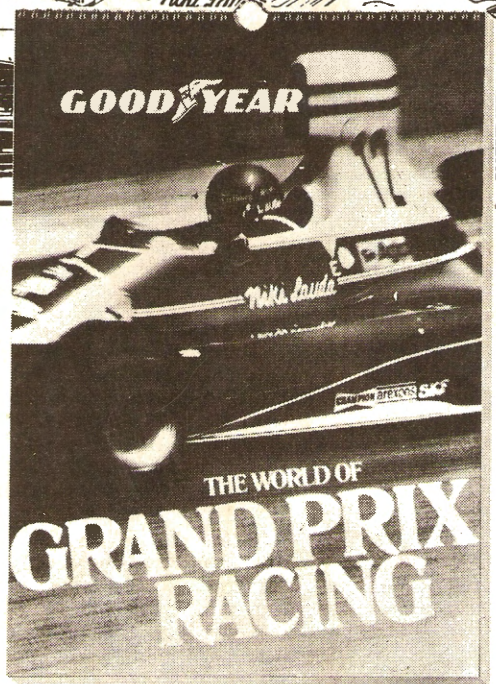


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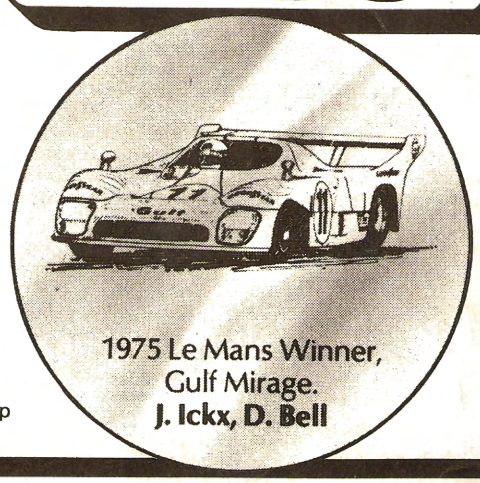
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