

Autosport

INSERT: EUROPEAN
PREVIEW SUPPLEMENT

A Haymarket publication

26th April 1979 35



Datsun's Safari Victory

Spanish GP prospects □ Vauxhall's Circuit of Ireland □ Fiat X1/9 test

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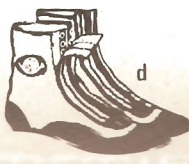
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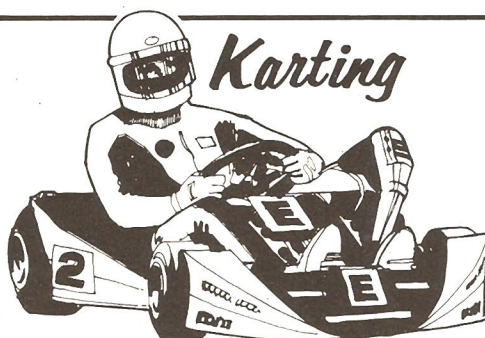
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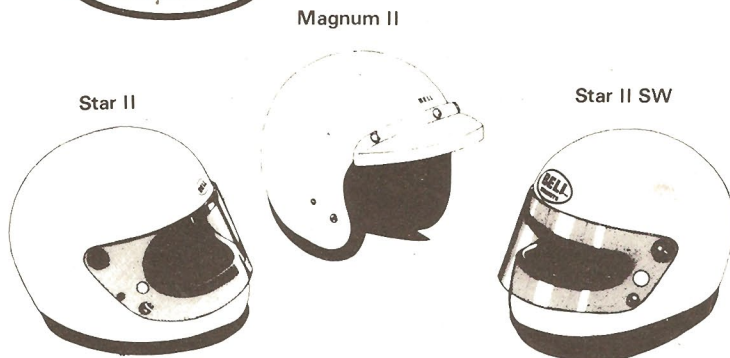


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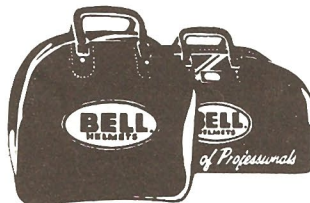
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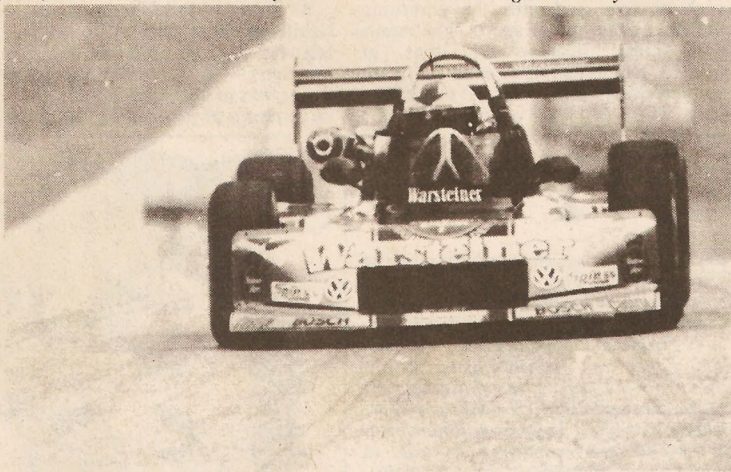
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Helmut Henzler's VW/Audi powered March setting the pole position time for the European Formula 3 Championship race at the Osterreichring (report: page 6). The first Euro/Vandervell confrontation will be at Donington on May 20 . . .



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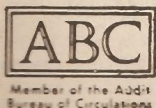
Publishing Director: Simon Taylor. Publisher: Eric Verdon-Roe.

Published every Thursday by: Haymarket Publishing Ltd, 76 Dean Street, London W1A 1BU (telephone: 01-439 4242). Editorial: Regent House, 54-62 Regent Street, London W1A 2YJ (telephone: 01-734 7605). Advertising: 76 Dean Street, London W1A 1BU (telephone: 01-439 6016). Telex: 23918 Haymarket LDN. Circulation, subscription and back numbers: Craven House, 34 Foubert's Place, London W1. US Mailing Agent: Expeditors of the Printed Word Ltd, 527 Madison Avenue, Suite 1217, New York NY 10022.

Annual subscriptions: Home: £25.00. Overseas, surface mail: £25.00. Air mail, Europe: £36.00. USA East Coast, Airspeed: \$64.00. Canada, South America and Mexico, Airspeed: \$74.00. Airmail, USA and Canada: \$92.00. Australia: £52.00. Other airmail rates on application. Second class. Postage paid at New York, NY. USPS No. 454 230.

Printed in England by: Harlow Web Offset Ltd., Horsecroft Road, Pinnacles, Harlow, Essex. Colour sections printed by: B. R. Hubbard Ltd, Callywhite Lane, Dronfield, Sheffield. Registered at the PO as a newspaper. Photosetting by Quikset, 184-186 Old Street, London EC1.

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FISA's latest move

A quick glance at *Pit & Paddock* will tell you that politics are it this week. In America, the struggle between USAC and CART grows ever more bitter. Here in Europe, Jean-Marie Balestre has been flexing some newly-acquired muscles, and there is a feeling within the FISA that the power is back where it belongs — with motor racing's governing body. In time, that feeling may prove to have been illusory, but certainly the FISA President now speaks with considerably more confidence and authority than before.

The new FISA decisions could have far-reaching effects. The Formula 1 Commission should enable all parties to discuss the problems in a far better environment. The new commissions for sponsors and Grand Prix organisers could both widen the FISA's power base. Balestre has recently had meetings with representatives of both, and the impression currently given is that they feel that the FOCA's power has gone far enough. Another point worth mentioning is that the organisers' commission will give those involved the chance to compare prices . . .

We welcome the FISA moves because we firmly believe that the power within motor racing should ultimately lie with its governing body. But we have no need of a USAC/CART punch-up in Europe. The CART teams broke away because they were disillusioned with the inefficiency and dogma of USAC. If the FISA is to govern, it must not fall into that trap again. Power politics can only degenerate Formula 1 as they are currently ruining Championship racing in the USA.

A boost for Formula 3

Recent developments on the Formula 3 scene are doing much to enhance the standing of this category, for the number of major motor manufacturers whose engines are being used by top teams has increased dramatically.

In Britain, where the Vandervell-sponsored series carries as much prestige as the official FIA European championship, Novamotor prepared Toyota units still power series leaders Chico Serra and Andrea de Cesaris, but the Japanese engines no longer reign supreme. BL Cars continue to develop the Swindon-prepared four-valve Triumph Dolomite Sprint engine, which is now fully competitive. In addition, trials are still being carried out at Titan with the General Motors Chevrolet Vega motor, which will shortly provide yet more variety.

It is in the European series, however, that the new interest of the big manufacturers has been shown, and Toyota have had a lean time in the opening three rounds. Renault-Gordini have now produced a very competitive F3 engine from the 20TS unit which won one race last year, and Alain Prost, with two 1979 race victories already, currently has maximum points for the French firm. Novamotor have developed the Alfa Romeo Alfetta 2000 GTV unit for F3, with remarkably successful results: Piercarlo Ghinzani (who is ineligible for Euro points) has scored the remaining FIA victory, and also leads the Italian national series with this engine. From Germany comes the also new VW/Audi F3 power unit from the Spiess tuning company, with which Helmut Henzler has been very competitive indeed in the early races of the season.

As far as chassis are concerned, there seems to be a trend towards March Engineering's latest design, but this will produce renewed development at Chevron and Ralt, while Lola are showing close interest in the formula once again, and Argo obviously have a good new car.

Formula 3 is now offering greater variety and interest than ever before. The rest of the season promises close competition between the established British F3 chassis manufacturers, with the addition of the very quick French Martini, and no fewer than five major motor manufacturers are involved competitively, four of them on a works or quasi-works basis.

cover picture

Datsun works driver Shekhar Mehta won his second Safari Raliy when he took his 160J to a dramatic victory over Hannu Mikkola's Mercedes on the recent World Championship classic. Report: page 10. Photo: Colin Taylor Productions.

next week

Will Ferrari beat Ligier, Lotus and Brabham again? Read our full report of the Spanish Grand Prix — one of the classics of the Formula 2 season, at the Nürburgring — The European championship saloon car race at Brands Hatch — Interview: Safari winner Shekhar Mehta — Silverstone 6 Hours prospects — The Castrol-Autosport championship Granite City Rally*

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

Balestre meets British press in London

Jean-Marie Balestre, the FISA's controversial President, was in London last week for a series of meetings, and on Thursday night he took the opportunity of meeting the English press to tell them of his plans for the future of motor racing.

It was a rather different Balestre from the one we have seen in the past, the table-thumping, red-faced anti-FOCA extremist of CSI (now FISA) meetings in Monza and Paris. Last week, he was much more circumspect and, apparently, confident. For the first time, he gave the impression that he was speaking from a position of strength. The bluster of old, it seemed, had given way to self-confidence.

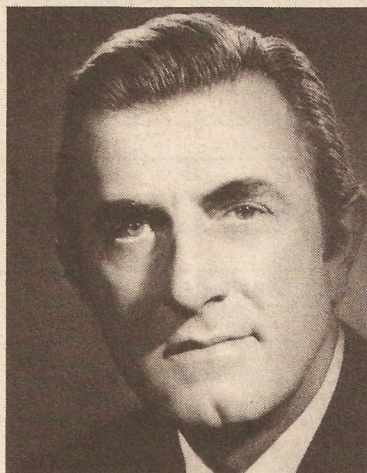
A few weeks ago, of course, it seemed inevitable that the FOCA and the FISA were on a collision course, from which neither could realistically retract. A FOCA spokesman told us that matters had reached a point where further communication with Balestre was pointless. Duplication of the USAC-CART split in America seemed close at hand.

But it never came. Both the FISA and the FOCA have had little to say on the matter since then, for reasons which are still uncertain — or, at least, unconfirmed. It now appears that considerable pressure may have been exerted on both parties to 'get their act together'. From both Leo Mehl and Jackie Stewart, we know that the chairman of Goodyear has been more than a little upset recently by the internal political turmoil of Formula

1. Even couched in comfortable business language, the message has been clear: if such unseemly and destructive battling between the two parties is not swiftly resolved, then Goodyear's Formula 1 activities could come to a swift halt. It is not necessary to explain the implications of such a decision.

Nor, it seems, are Goodyear alone in this. Balestre said that he had recently had meetings with a number of sponsors (two, although not actually named, were very obviously Elf and Marlboro). "I asked them a simple question," said Balestre. "Do you want motor racing to be a sport or a circus? Immediately, both of them said, 'A sport, of course'." Sponsors — major sponsors — were becoming scarce. In recent years, we had lost John Player, First National City and so on. If Formula 1 degenerated into even more of 'a circus', said Balestre, other sponsors would follow them out. The question of establishing a sponsors' organisation had recently been raised.

Recently, he said, he had also had informal talks with certain Grand Prix organisers, who had asked the FISA to set up a Formula 1 Organisers' Commission. This had been mooted in the past, but had never progressed beyond the talking stage. In 1976, a price scale was proposed to the FOCA, covering the years, 1977, 1978 and 1979, and this, according to Balestre, was accepted by the FOCA. But recently the Argentine Grand Prix organisers had protested to the FISA: this year, they paid \$900,000



Balestre — more confident.

for their race, plus TV rights, plus hire cars for 'Formula 1 people'. This figure was 27% up on last year. Practically every Grand Prix, he continued, had a different deal with the FOCA.

'Plus TV rights' . . . It should be obvious that television will play a huge part in the continued success — and viability — of Grand Prix racing. Balestre said that TV deals are currently handled by Bernie Ecclestone on behalf of the FOCA, and little, on a national scale, could be done about that. Internationally, however, it was a different matter. Eurovision had recently sought an undertaking from the FISA — an agreement or guarantee for the future, such as they had with the governing bodies of other major sports, like tennis and skiing. Balestre said that, at present, he felt unable to enter into such an agreement on behalf of the FISA: only when he was confident of the

governing body's future authority and power would he be in a position to 'guarantee the World Championship'.

This, of course, prompted a question from the floor. Was Balestre using TV against the FOCA? The FISA president carefully considered his reply: "In the past the FOCA has been interested in money and the sport, but now it seeks power. That is something new. In any conflict, I believe the best form of defence is attack. We shall use our weapons if we have to, but the door is still open, and will remain so. We will never close our door to negotiations with the FOCA."

Balestre said that he was trying to set up a Formula 1 Executive Commission, to decide all World Championship problems. There would be three FISA people on the commission, but four-fifths of it would comprise FOCA-nominated people. There would be a meeting of the Formula 1 Working Group shortly, which he hoped the FOCA attend. At present, there were so many serious problems in Formula 1 that no time must be lost on procedure. If FOCA were not represented, then decisions concerning future F1 rules — to keep down speeds and costs — would be taken in their absence.

Quieter and more calm than usual he may have been, but on the question of the future relationship between the FISA and the FOCA, Balestre was uncompromising. There would be no solution to the problem, he said, until "The FOCA, like the rest of the motor racing world, accepts the rules of the sporting authority. Nothing else".

As Balestre himself pointed out, it was significant that the entire press conference was devoted to Formula 1 problems — as if no other form of motor racing was of any consequence. All told, he came out of the evening rather well.

New FISA Commissions for F1

On Monday, the FISA Secretariat issued a statement detailing the discussions and decisions of the FISA Executive Committee Meeting in London last Friday, the day after the meeting with the English press. It reads as follows:

1. The FISA Formula 1 Group is transformed into a Formula 1 Commission, a permanent commission created according to the undertakings made at the Grand Prix of Brazil. This commission, which will meet whenever necessary, will have increased powers and will be composed as follows: Three FISA representatives (the President of the FISA plus the Presidents of the Technical and Circuits Commissions), three constructors' representatives (the President of the FOCA plus the current World Champion constructor plus one representative of the other constructors), two sponsors' representatives, two representatives of the organisers and circuit promoters, two drivers' representatives,

and two tyre manufacturer representatives. It will be chaired until further notice by the President of the former F1 Group.

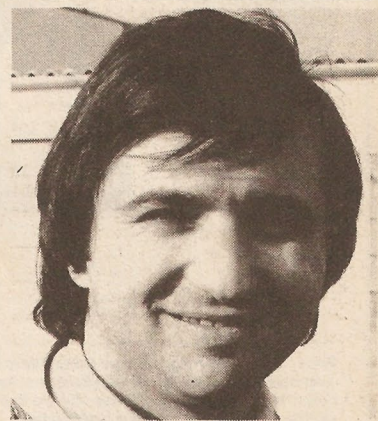
2. There is to be an International Commission for Sponsors. This new commission is composed of representatives of the main international firms having an important recognised activity in the events of the FIA World Championship. The number of the members of this commission is unlimited. The President is elected from a candidatures' proposal presented by members of the commission.

3. There is to be a Commission of Grand Prix Organisers. This commission is composed of the representatives of National Sporting Authorities and organisers and promoters of World Championship Grands Prix for Formula 1 drivers. The number of its members is not limited. Its aim is to ensure the defence of sporting interest of each country, and to establish

the best organisation conditions of the Grand Prix. The President of the commission is elected by the Executive Committee after a call for candidatures.

4. Formula 1 Technical Regulations. The Executive Committee gave its approval to the principles of the new F1 technical regulations concerning weight, wheels and tyres, bodywork dimensions, skirts and safety measures. In order to adopt these regulations point by point, the Executive Committee gave the Technical Commission a mandate to meet the F1 constructors and all other interested parties as soon as possible to confront their points of view and complete the technical information. The final decision will be taken by the Executive Committee in June.

The communique then went on to confirm the points raised at last Thursday's FISA meeting with constructors, engine builders and so on from Formula 2 (see separate story).



Another bad break for Bruno.

Alfa delay

Bad news for Bruno Giacomelli. We hear that the Alfa Romeo Formula 1 car, originally scheduled to make its race debut at Zolder on May 12, is some way from its first appearance. Unspecified "engine and chassis problems" mean that we shall probably not see the car before Monza in September. Which is where we came in: that's what they said last year . . .

Skirts banned in F2 from 1980

During his trip to London last week, Jean-Marie Balestre spent a day with 'all interested parties' in Formula 2, including constructors, engine builders, sponsors and so on. A variety of current problems were discussed, including the vexed one of skirts. It was agreed that skirts should remain in F2 (and F3) this season, after which they would be banned.

The Formula 2 regulations are due to be reviewed for 1982, and the FISA proposed that engines should in future be restricted to four cylinders, this being a measure to keep costs under control — much on the mind of the FISA at present. It is also proposed that the F2

calendar should be much stricter in the future, to discourage the practice of applying for dates and then cancelling later. Two-heat events are to disappear, replaced by a single event, and it is proposed that practice and qualifying be cut from two days to one.

We have mentioned this last point to several Formula 1 constructors, all of whom say that a similar measure in Grand Prix racing would have their support.

The news that skirts are to be banned in F2 and F3 (at least) with effect from the end of this season will be well received by many circuit owners. The track manager at Brands Hatch, Alan

Wilson, was most concerned after the recent Marlboro Daily Mail Race of Champions meeting when, on inspecting the track, he found long strips of damaged surface, especially at the bottom of Paddock Hill Bend and by the start line. Different cars use varying types of skirt system but most of them have some sort of rubbing-strip along the bottom edge, be it brass, aluminium, nylon or brush. These hard strips are literally tearing into the track surface, especially when the car is forced onto the bump stops on an undulating circuit. The rubbing-strips wear themselves down on the track and form a slippery, glazed layer on the tarmac.

Kennedy fast

In preparation for the Thruxton round of the Aurora series on May 28, series leader David Kennedy took his Formula 1 Theodore Wolf to the circuit last week and lapped in 1m 8.4s. This is well inside Geoff Lees's Aurora record of 1:10.4, which he set up last year in the March 781S, and better than the official circuit record set up during the recent F2 race by Mark Surer at 1:9.11.



Foyt — angry.



Richard King — adamant.

USAC-CART battle grows

The Indianapolis-CART-USAC 'situation' is growing decidedly ugly. At the Brickyard, the now divorced parties of USAC and CART are — or were — due to be reconciled for the duration of the month of May. In the Indianapolis 500, the two organisations confront each other on the track for the only time this year. The events of last week suggest that championship racing in the States is beginning to pull itself apart. In the end, both sides may lose out.

On Thursday, April 12, the day before Indianapolis entries closed, Jim Melvin of CART hand-delivered the CART entry forms to Joe Cloutier, the man who has run the Indianapolis Motor Speedway since the death of Tony Hulman. These entries represented a total of 44 cars (including spares and so on) for 25 drivers, and they were accepted.

It will be remembered that the CART entrants were unhappy at the prospect of running their cars to current USAC regulations — with only 50 inches of boost — at Indianapolis. In the past few weeks, there have been many meetings between representatives of CART, USAC and Indianapolis to discuss the boost problem. Earlier, CART President 'Pat' Patrick had described the Indy boost regs as "the result of unlawful, arbitrary and malicious motivation from USAC".

After the CART entries had been put in, there were lots of unconfirmed rumours that the Indianapolis Motor Speedway or USAC might reject some of them. They had eight days to do so, but Roger Penske said that recent meetings with USAC's Richard King had been reasonably amicable, and he anticipated no problems.

Last Friday, Richard King sent telegrams to Tyler Alexander (Team McLaren with Johnny Rutherford), Bob Fletcher (Cobre Tire Team with Steve Krisiloff), Dan Gurney (Eagle with Mike Mosley), Jim Hall (Chaparral Racing with Al Unser), Roger Penske (Penske Racing with Bobby Unser and Rick Mears) and Pat Patrick (Patrick Racing Team, run by George Bignotti, with Gordon Johncock and Wally Dallenbach). The telegrams ran thus:

Your entry in the 63rd Annual 500 Mile International Sweepstakes at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, scheduled for May 27, 1979, is refused by the United States Auto Club, the organising committee, because you are not in good standing with USAC.

This ruling is made in accordance with the International Sporting Code 1979, which gives you the right to refer any contention or question to the ASN holder of the sporting power: the Automobile Competition Committee for the United States, FIA Inc (ACCUS).

Your entry remittance is being returned.

The telegrams were signed 'United States Auto Club Inc (Richard King)'.

Significantly, all those who received the telegrams are members of the CART

board. Jerry O'Connell, who owns the Sugariprune McLaren M24 driven by Tom Sneva, was the only member of the board not to have his entry refused. At the Atlanta CART meeting last weekend (see *Racecard*), the cynics were saying this was a legal ploy, covering USAC against a possible charge of total discrimination against the CART board...

As you might expect, at Atlanta, the race was an incidental part of the weekend, which was largely given over to meetings and discussions concerning CART's next move in the chess game. On Friday, Patrick issued a statement:

CART is disappointed at USAC's latest action. We feel this rejects the efforts of these six teams through many years of helping to build motor racing into what it is today. It shows complete disregard for the fans who have purchased tickets, for the sponsors who have helped to make the Indianapolis 500 the great sporting spectacle it is. USAC appears to be using the Indy 500 as a pawn in its efforts to destroy CART as a viable racing organisation. We will not let this happen. They have attempted to eliminate six of the top racing teams in the world. What do they mean by 'not in good standing'? We are not even USAC members. We have submitted a total of 44 entries for Indianapolis, and that's the race we plan to run. They accepted our entries originally and we are dedicated to make every effort to run there.

The following day, after a succession of meetings with other members of CART and John Frasco, the organisation's attorney, Patrick sent a telegram to Cloutier at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, on behalf of CART:

On April 12, 1979, the official entry blanks of Championship Auto Racing Teams Inc (CART) affiliated teams were delivered to your office. Yesterday, six CART members received telegrams from Richard King of the United States Auto Club, stating that their 1979 Indianapolis 500 entries had been refused because they are not in good standing with USAC.

First, we must know whether USAC is acting on behalf of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway with regard to the above referenced entries for the 500 Mile International Sweepstakes.

If USAC is not acting on your behalf with regard to these entries, we must assume until notified otherwise that the entry blanks as submitted are still pending with the Speedway since it is our understanding that the right to refuse any entries is reserved to the Speedway.

If USAC is speaking on your behalf with regard to these entries, we must request immediate clarification of the grounds of rejection for the entries. Since some 25 CART entries have apparently been accepted and a select few refused, none of which are USAC members, we must immediately know the basis of this distinction. Failing a satisfactory response to these inquiries, we

will be compelled to resort to our available remedies. We expect a response no later than Monday, April 23, at 5pm.

This was signed by Patrick as President of CART.

The basis of the CART objection seems to us, 3000 miles away, to be sound. On what grounds do USAC have the right to refuse entries for an FIA-recognised event, where their cars are merely part of the entry? And what do the sanctimonious words 'not in good standing' mean? Is Dick King suggesting that any kind of disagreement with USAC is a cardinal sin. The phrasing of his telegram is high-handed.

Unquestionably, there has been a hardening of attitudes all round, and there looks like being an abundance of bad blood in Gasoline Alley this May. And we hope it is confined to there, the garage area or paddock. In the *Atlanta Constitution* last Wednesday, A.J. Foyt, USAC's only high-scoring card, was quoted as saying, "I'll put any CART guy into the wall". Apparently an indignant Foyt contacted the newspaper about this, saying they had misquoted him. His actual words, he said, were 'I'll put any CART guy who blocks me into the wall'...

Al Unser — a CART driver — had this to say in reply: "I left that kind of racing 15 years ago when I was running super modifieds. I can't understand why Foyt would say those things and why he aimed what he said at us drivers. I used to have more respect for him than he could ever know, but how can I now? He's just gone way over centre and it's too bad. It's a sad thing to see."

The rejected CART people are trying all they know to have the decision reversed so they can run. Whatever happens, though, this year's Indianapolis 500 looks like being the most bitter motor race in many years. Already people are talking of the possibilities of fist-fights in Gasoline Alley. Let us hope similar activities do not extend to the track. Grudges should not be settled at 210mph. And nobody needs a repetition from all over the world.

The prospects are sobering. Differences must be settled before May 27...

Thackwell's new March

Young Australian Mike Thackwell's works-run March 793 has featured well up on the grids at Vandervell British F3 championship events so far this year but the results, to date, have been disappointing.

The factory are currently building up a brand new narrow-monocque chassis for the Australian so that the side-pods can be used to greater effect. This is a new venture, halfway between the current 793 and the 'pod car' that has been tested recently by Chico Serra and it is hoped that the new car will be ready for the next championship race at Brands Hatch on May 7, whereupon Mike's 793 will be for sale.

At the same time, we hear that Mike is looking for a sponsor for this, his learning year in F3 prior to a full attack on the championship in 1980.

Luigi Chev for Brno

One name missing from the recently published Le Mans entry list was that of Carlo Facetti who, with Martino Finotto, was to have entered his Ferrari 308GTB turbo for the Sarthe classic. However, the team is currently concentrating on the European Touring Car Championship, and Le Mans clashes with the Group 2 round at Brno. By then, the two Italians are hoping to have their Luigi-run Camaro, which should be a good car at the Czechoslovakian road circuit. Plans for the Ferrari, then, are limited, but it is still hoped to run the car for the first time at Silverstone on May 6.

Works 936 for Silverstone

We are fortunate in this country that Porsche frequently use the Silverstone Group 5/6 race as a warm-up for their Le Mans onslaught. Last year, the factory 935 'streamliner' Group 5 made its only pre-Le Mans appearance at Silverstone.

At the end of the year, of course, Porsche announced their decision to withdraw from works participation. With Renault already gone, prospects for a top-level Le Mans 24 Hours looked bleak. Recently, however, Porsche changed their minds about Le Mans, announcing that two 936 Group 6 cars would be run, with backing from Essex Petroleum.

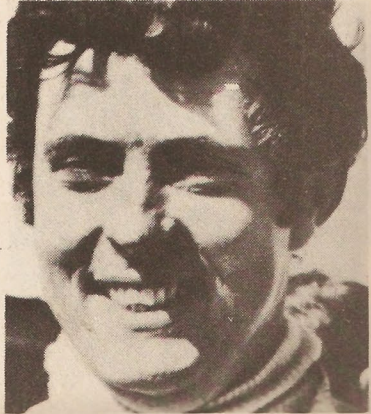
Mass — one-off drive.



It is excellent news that one of the cars will compete in the Rivet Supply World Championship of Makes 6 Hours, on May 6. The car will be driven by Jochen Mass — who will not drive at Le Mans, of course — and Brian Redman, who is due to share a car with Peter Gregg at the Sarthe. Jacky Ickx will be busy over the Silverstone weekend at Atlanta, driving in the first Can Am race of the season. It will be the 936's first appearance in Britain, and the car will run in full Le Mans trim, complete with long-tail bodywork.

Should be quite a sight — and we're delighted to see Brian back in a car worthy of his ability.

Redman — happy return.



Niki and Nelson on the pace at Brands

The Parmalat Brabham team took in a day's testing at Brands Hatch last week and showed just how much progress they have made with their V12 Alfa Romeo-engined BT48.

Niki Lauda covered nearly 90 laps last Thursday morning and tried out several subtle changes to the skirts and sidepods as well as some different Goodyear tyres. The Austrian posted a best time of just 39.7s, which is far and away the fastest ever time around the 'Indy' circuit. In comparison Dany Ongais's record in the Interscope Parnelli at the USAC meeting last October was 41.60, although Al Unser managed a lap a second better in practice. Also last year, Lauda took the 'fan-car' BT46B around in just over the 40s mark, so Thursday's time marked a significant improvement.

Niki had to fly back to Austria in the afternoon, so his team-mate Nelson Piquet was installed and he covered a

similar distance in the car. With hardly any wing at all, the Brazilian relying totally on the downforce created by the car itself, Nelson's best time was a shattering 39.4!

Piquet was covering only around six or seven laps at a time and trying out some small changes in the car, each of which had a surprisingly large effect upon the handling. The BT48 now has some 'breathing' holes cut neatly in the sliding side skirts and, simply by blocking some of these holes, the pressure created underneath the car can be controlled and the balance of the car altered.

So what does Piquet think of his chances this weekend at Jarama? "I know the circuit well. I won there in the Formula 3 (Ralt in 1977). And the car is much, much better now." And are there any team orders? "No, no. They say to me when I start, 'if you go quicker than Niki then no problem . . .'"

Rosberg at the 'Ring

With Derek Daly otherwise occupied at the Spanish Grand Prix, his place in the ICI March-BMW Formula 2 team will once again be taken over by Keijo Rosberg, when the European F2 circus moves to the daunting Nürburgring this weekend.

A known Ringmeister, Rosberg could very easily make it two wins in two races, although there are fears that the new March 'wing cars' could be rather fragile around the 14.2-mile Eifel track.

Therefore the Toleman Group equipe will have to start as favourites, as Brian Henton will have his last year's March 782 on hand (in place of the Ralt) to partner Thruxton winner Rad Dougall.

Making his European F2 debut will be the talented Frenchman, Patrick Gaillard. The Parisian, who won a European F3 qualifier at the 'Ring last year, will be driving a works-tended Chevron-Hart B48.

A March for Acheson

It is beginning to look as though Formula 3 racing, certainly in this country, could become 'Formula March' before very long. While March Engineering are about to produce their 100th 1979-series car in the next week or so, both Chevron and Ralt are suffering from various internal problems. The former have a car which is difficult to make competitive, while the latter have lapsed far behind in the construction of their latest design, and are not in a position to offer prospective customers delivery until the middle of the season.

It comes as no surprise to hear that Kenneth Acheson, last year's premier Grovewood Award winner, is to replace his ex-Derek Warwick Ralt RT1 with a brand new March 793 'pod car'. Acheson will be seen in his new car at the next Vandervell round, which is at Brands Hatch on May 7.

Although Kenneth expressed himself *Jordan — a March.*



happy with his year-old car, feeling that he and his team still have a lot to learn about Formula 3, his Ready Mixed Concrete sponsors felt that he should have his new chassis as soon as possible. Ron Tauranae felt that he could not produce a new car worthy of his name in the very near future. Acheson's team had no alternative but to switch to March.

March Engineering's Robin Herd is delighted that he has finally captured the young Ulsterman, believing him to be the most gifted of the young up-and-coming talents.

Another Irish Formula 3 driver who has decided to switch his allegiance to a rival make of chassis is Dubliner Eddie Jordan. Like Acheson, Jordan is also buying a brand new March 793 to replace his Chevron B47 which, so far this year, has proved more than a handful to drive.

Jordan and his sponsors Marlboro felt that despite being part of the Derek McMahon Racing works Chevron team, they could not persevere with the Bolton design any longer. All this switching to March by the British Vandervell runners seems to have had an effect on the continent as well, for both the Roger Heavens Racing and KWS Autotechnik teams, who currently run Ralt and Chevron chassis respectively, are toying with the idea of ordering versions of the Bicester 793.

As for the remaining Chevron front runners in this country (Bernard Devaney, Stefan Johansson and Michael Roe), their attention has been focused on what results Chevron Cars have achieved in testing with their F2 driver Bobby Rahal last week.



Richard Jenvey's Esprit made a short but impressive debut at Dijon.

Esprit's WCM debut

For some years, Ford and BMW competitions managers Mike Kranefuss and Jochen Neerpasch have suggested that the mid-engined Lotus Esprit would be a very good car for Group 5. At Dijon last weekend, the first G5 version of the car appeared.

Although parts have been bought cheaply from Lotus, the actual building of the machine has been done by one man: Richard Jenvey. Jenvey is a former British modified sports car champion, having driven MG Midgets and Lotus Elan. A couple of years ago he drove the Vogue sports car in the European 2-litre class. However, 18 months ago he thought of preparing a G5 Esprit, and slowly he has built it up, having a full-time job at the same time. The car has been built with the financial support of his family company, Polarroof.

Although the original chassis has been retained, a monocoque unit has been built around it, designed by Jenvey. He also designed the front suspension, while the rear end of the car is from the Vogue. The engine has been built by

Vegantune, although Jenvey is now building two engines himself. The current engine gives about 260bhp, and drives through a Hewland FG400 gearbox. The car is down to the G5 weight limit.

Jenvey's plans are to race the car at the World Championship of Makes races at Silverstone and the Nürburgring, and then to do a number of German Group 5 rounds. The car was well received by German championship contenders at Dijon, who look forward to the possibility of the endless stream of Ford and BMWs being joined by a different car.

While building more engines (and another car is also under construction), Jenvey has plans to build up the cars for sale in order to finance his racing. Another interesting aspect of the project is that KKK are working on a 1.4-litre turbo version of the engine.

Incidentally, there will be another Esprit at Silverstone for the Rivet Supply 6 Hours race, driven by Ian Marshall/Syd Fox, although this car is less modified.

Martini for Aurora?

Elf Martini team manager Hugues de Chaunac was showing a lot of interest in the Aurora series when we spoke to him at Zolder last weekend. The man who has masterminded much of the success of Elf, Renault and Martini in recent years told us that the team still has its MK23 Formula 1 car sitting under dust covers back at the Magny-Cours base and that,

although they have sold off their four Cosworth DFV engines, participating in the Aurora series might be of interest to them.

There are some Aurora races which do not clash with Alain Prost's European F3 commitments, including Nogaro on July 8. . .

Rothmans pull out

Rothmans of Pall Mall (Australia) Ltd have announced that they will no longer sponsor the annual February down-under series for Formula 5000 and Formula 1 cars.

While the announcement came as a shock to the Confederation of Australian Motor Sport, the move was not entirely unexpected and came after a period of rumours that the company would shift into another motor sport area.

The Rothmans series was the successor to the Tasman championship which for a long period was run as an eight-race series in New Zealand and Australia. When New Zealand decided to follow the Formula Pacific route, the series was broken into two separate four-race series, the New Zealand events being sponsored by Peter Stuyvesant. However, Peter Stuyvesant pulled out last year, giving the first indication that the sister company might do the same in Australia.

With prize money this year of more

than \$120,000, the Rothmans series drew the best fields and saw the best racing for several years, with the additional interest of being open for the first time to F1 cars (although eventually only two took part, under the Theodore Racing banner).

CAMS have affirmed that they want the series to continue, and will be seeking an alternative sponsor; at the same time, suggestions are being made to take the opportunity to change the format, possibly combining the series with the Australian drivers' championship, and possibly holding the series at a different time of the year. November-December has been suggested as a period when the likelihood of attracting overseas drivers is better, although the increasing cost of luring F1 teams and drivers is prohibitive.

Meanwhile, Rothmans will continue their involvement in motor sport, with a saloon car series at the Oran Park and with speedway and drag racing.

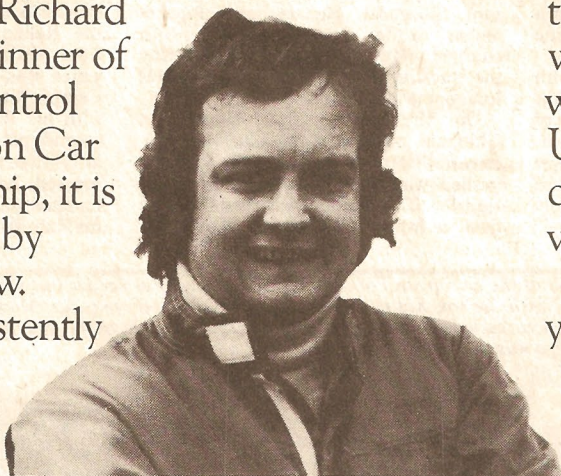
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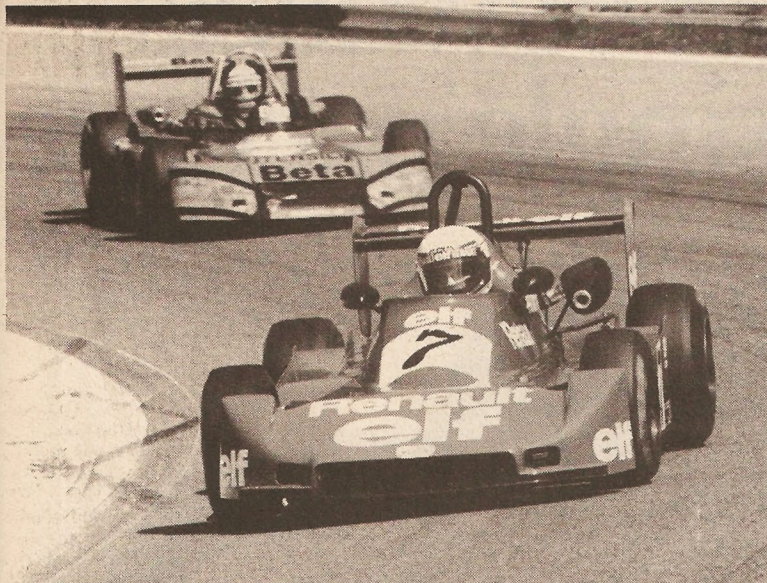
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Alain Prost's winning Martini-Renault leads from the Alfa Romeo-engined March of Piercarlo Ghinzani.

Renault from Alfa in Austrian Euro F3

Alain Prost (Martini-Renault MK27) scored a superb win at the Osterreicherung on Easter Sunday, when he took the all-important second heat and wiped out a one second deficit on Piercarlo Ghinzani. Ghinzani, who brilliantly held off the challenge from Prost and Helmut Henzler, just won the first heat with his March but was slowed by a tyre problem in the second. Henzler retired his impressive March-Audi with a puncture and so handed third place overall to Michael Bleekemolen, who was lucky to finish heat 2 as his battery was dragging on the ground and he lost all his electrics on the last lap, slumping to seventh.

Slim Borgudd finished fourth on aggregate ahead of Michele Alboreto and Michael Korten. 1977 European Champion Ghinzani is ineligible for points this year under the FIA ruling so the final point went to Oscar Pedersoli.

All the leading teams and drivers made the long trek to Zeltweg for the second round of the European Formula 3 Championship. The atrocious winter has meant no testing at all for many car/driver combinations, so many teams took the opportunity of a week's free testing in perfect conditions prior to the race.

Excitement spread rapidly through the paddock at the end of the first official practice session when it became known that three drivers shared the best time of 1m 54.4s: Ghinzani (March-Alfa Romeo), Prost (Martini-Renault) and Henzler (March-Audi/VW). It looked as though the end is nigh for the ubiquitous Toyota engine!

More was to come! In the second session, Henzler's VW Motorsport/Spiess Tuning car shot round and pulled 1:52.96 out of the blue to put pole position out of reach. It was an amazing performance, for this was only the second outing for the engine.

Prost, running his Martini with bolt-on side wings, reeled off a string of fast times to join the gold March on the front row with 1:53.13. Ghinzani found himself knocked off the front row as he could only manage to improve to 1:53.16 with the Novamotor-tuned Alfa.

Fastest Toyota-powered car was the Roger Heavens Racing/F&S Properties Ralt RT1 of Bleekemolen: "It's like a Rolls-Royce compared to my Chevron last year." Bleek's car also ran with sidepods, designed by the Heavens team, and they obviously worked well. "It is much more stable in the corners with

mate Thierry Boutsen, whose car boasted a similar set-up.

Personable Swede Slim Borgudd qualified his standard Ralt on row 3 alongside Arie Luyendijk's Racing Team Holland Argo JM3, which had been comfortably quicker than anyone else in testing but slipped a little against the official watches. Still, it was a good effort, and made it four different makes of car and engine in the top six.

Seventh time went to Pedersoli who slipstreamed round with Mauro Baldi, but unwittingly towed Henzler round on the last lap of practice to give the German pole position. Next to the Italian on row 4 was Richard Dallest in his works Martini-Toyota MK27, sponsored by Super Bear Studios. The Frenchman had tyre problems in the first session and even switched to a set of G50s before solving the blistering tyre syndrome.

Mike Korten headed the fifth row with his Klaus Zimmerman March 793, the German having to make do with his morning time as a disturbing handling imbalance set in during the afternoon when he changed tyres. Korten had the young, up-and-coming Italian Albereto alongside in his Euro-racing March 78/93 despite losing time with an engine breakage.

Another Italian Henry Uncini, with his Marlboro Ralt, sat on the sixth row alongside the similarly sponsored car of Roger Heavens's other driver, Boutsen. The 22-year-old Belgian suffered low fuel pressure throughout the second session although this was eventually traced to a leaking fuel line.

One had to look as far down the grid as row ten before finding the fastest Englishman, Alan Smith and his HWS-Chevron B47. By the time Alan had the car sorted out, the front roll-bar stabilising link had snapped and made the handling even more unpredictable. The two other KWS cars of Franz Konrad and Karl Schuchnig were similarly troubled.

HEAT 1

Henzler and the March-VW sat proudly on pole position but he was caught napping when the lights blinked to green. As the cars sped uphill it was Prost and Borgudd fighting out the lead although the Frenchman then cut across the Swede forcing him into the pit lane. As the cars squeezed through the chicane then it was Prost leading Ghinzani with Bleekemolen, Henzler and Borgudd right behind, although Ghinzani pulled out of the slipstream as they powered out onto the straight and took the lead. At the tail of the field, Thierry Boutsen pulled into the pits to retire at the end of the first lap after his engine blew all the water out.

As the race progressed, Ghinzani and Prost pulled further away, leaving most of the field duelling for third place. Borgudd, Bleekemolen and Henzler took turns in leading the dice, while Luyendijk, Alberetto, Pedersoli, Dallest and Korten sat and waited. This battle broke up on the fifth lap when Pedersoli's foot slipped off the throttle and poor Dallest powered straight into the back of the Italian's Ralt. Pedersoli spun and Dallest was forced to retire with a holed radiator and smashed nose section.

Henzler then managed to break free from Bleekemolen's Ralt and tore off after the leading duo. It took the German just a lap to make up the 1.5secs deficit but the 12 laps ran out too quickly for him and he had to settle for third place and a new lap record.

Bleekemolen finished a distant fourth, after an indifferent start, to head home Borgudd, Alboreto and Swiss Bruno Eichmann (March 783). Pedersoli recovered to finish ninth with Fredy Schnarwiler (March 793) completing the top ten.

Luyendijk suffered massive understeer in all the fast right-hand corners, but managed to hold down sixth place, until a contretemps with Alboreto saw him off the track, and then a problem with a front tyre forced him into the pits.

HEAT 2

Prost made another fabulous start to lead away the second heat from Ghinzani, Borgudd, Henzler and Bleekemolen while further back Smith charged across the chicane showering the track in dust and stones as well as forcing most of the tail-enders off-line.

On the second lap, Prost and Ghinzani negotiated the dust successfully but Borgudd half-spun his Ralt and bashed wheels with the close-following Henzler. This incident knocked the valve from a front wheel of the March-VW

and Henzler retired to the pit with his tyre in tatters. That left Prost with a gradually increasing lead over Ghinzani, with Bleekemolen edging up on the Italian.

This was the pattern of the race, until lap 5 when Ghinzani, suffering from an all-too-common problem of bad tyres, was relegated to third by a troubled Bleekemolen. The F&S car had its battery support break and the battery was rubbing on the track under braking. Unfortunately for the Dutchman the electrics cut out several times on the last lap and he dropped to a distant seventh place, although still claimed third in the aggregate result.

So third place on aggregate fell to Alboreto, ahead of Borgudd, Korten and Pedersoli.

Luyendijk made another demon start with the Argo but then tried to overtake Baldi on the outside like at the Texaco Curves. Baldi nudged into the Argo and sent them both spinning, the Italian coming off worst as Dallest ploughed straight into the AutoSonik Ralt and forced both cars out of the race. Luyendijk continued to finish a disappointed ninth just ahead of Boutsen who had a new engine for the second heat.

TIM TYLER

Prize of Knittelfield
European Formula 3 Championship, round 2
April 15, Osterreicherung, Austria
2 x 12-lap heats

- 1, Alain Prost (Martini-Renault/Dudot MK27), 45m 39.7s 187.404kmh;
 - 2, Piercarlo Ghinzani (March-Alfa Romeo/Novamotor 793), 45m 46.6s;
 - 3, Michael Bleekemolen (Ralt-Toyota/Nova RT1), 46m 04.3s;
 - 4, Slim Borgudd (Ralt-Toyota/Nova RT1), 46m 09.6s;
 - 5, Michele Alboreto (March-Toyota/Nova 78/93), 46m 09.9s;
 - 6, Michael Korten (March-Toyota/Nova 793), 46m 10.6s;
 - 7, Oscar Pedersoli (March-Toyota/Nova 78/93), 46m 17.7s; 8, Bruno Eichmann (March 783); 9, Fredy Schnarwiler (March 793); 10, Walter Lechner (Ralt RT1), etc.
- Fastest lap: Helmut Henzler (March-VW/Spiess 793), 1m 52.3s 190.499kmp (record).

Ghinzani at Misano

The week before Zolder, on April 8, Piercarlo Ghinzani once again showed his talent by scoring his second win of the season in the Beta Tools-backed March-Alfa Romeo 793. A clear winner in both his heat and the final at Misano, Piercarlo thereby took over the lead of the Italian Formula 3 Championship from Guido Pardini's Emiliani-Wolf, which was delayed by a spin. Roberto Campominosi made it an Alfa one-two with his Ralt, and thereby moves into second place in the series with 13pts after three rounds although he was hard-pressed by young Carlo Rossi, who finished on exactly the same time with his Ralt-Toyota RT1.

Alain Prost continued his domination of the European Formula 3 Championship at Zolder last weekend by leading the final in his Martini-Renault from start to finish: he now has maximum points from the three races. Michele Alboreto, whose fight with Arie Luyendijk's Argo-Toyota (pictured below) in the first heat was the highlight of the day, finished second in the final, ahead of Hans Burger's Ralt. The Argo was the fastest qualifier. Report next week.



Martinsville to Petty

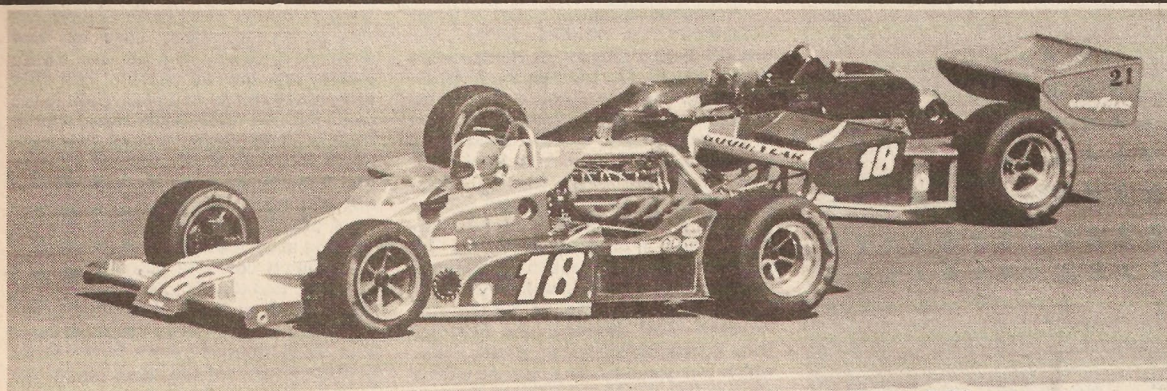
Darrell Waltrip summed up the feelings of the NASCAR boys at Martinsville, Virginia, last weekend: "Petty is the man to beat here. He's physically stronger than for a long time, and he's certainly ready mentally. The whole Petty team has made big strides since last year — it's stronger than it has been for three or four years".

Waltrip was right. Although he managed to qualify his Gatorade Chevrolet Monte Carlo on the pole, King Richard's similar STP car was second, followed by Bobby Allison's Bud Moore Ford Thunderbird, and then more Monte Carlos, driven by Buddy Baker (Spectra), Cale Yarborough (Budweiser) and Lennie Pond (Burger King). Neil Bonnett made his debut for the Wood brothers in the Purolator Mercury recently vacated by David Pearson. He qualified ninth.

The race developed quickly into a three-way battle between Petty, Waltrip and Baker, but Waltrip's brakes began to fade after he had run in front for the first 49 laps. As well as that, he and Baker contrived to run into each other soon after half-distance, although neither car was badly damaged, and both continued.

At the finish, Petty was a pretty comfortable winner, five seconds ahead of Baker, with Waltrip third, a lap back. Behind these three were Bobby Allison, Joe Millikan, Harry Gant, James Hylton, Dale Earnhardt, Terry Labonte, J C McDuffie and Yarborough, the last eight all in Monte Carlos. For Cale, it was a miserable day. He was eight laps behind at the end, apparently simply off the pace. Significant retirements included Donnie Allison, who blew up, and Benny Parsons, whose gearbox broke.

This Virginia 500 was Petty's 15th win at Martinsville, his favourite among the short tracks. If Waltrip's forecast is correct, the King might be heading for another big season. The win takes his points total to 1299, making him fourth behind Waltrip (1487), Bobby Allison (1401) and Yarborough (1312). Behind Petty are Parsons (1244), Millikan (1242), Donnie Allison (1224), Earnhardt (1216) and D K Ulrich (1131).



Atlanta sensation Lee Kunzman takes his Parnelli VPJ6C around the outside of Tom Frantz's Wildcat-DGS.

JR's Atlanta double

In between all the discussions about the Indy controversy (see *Pit and Paddock*), the CART brigade also managed to put on a race or two in Atlanta last weekend. The racing itself was excellent, but the CART hierarchy can have taken little cheer from the size of the crowd. USAC crowds this season have been similarly small. Bluntly, there seem not to be enough fans to sustain both. CART has virtually every driver of significance apart from the biggest crowd-puller of the lot, A J Foyt.

Perhaps there was another reason for the disappointing turnout at the Gould Twin Dixie last weekend. Atlanta, Georgia, apart from being the home of the US Masters, is also smack dab in the middle of NASCAR country.

Two 125-mile races were scheduled for Sunday, and from the start it was clear that Johnny Rutherford and the works Budweiser McLaren M24B were the combination to beat. The Texan had recently been Goodyear testing at Atlanta, and quickly made his mark in qualifying, taking the pole at 201.693mph — a remarkable pace for a 1½-mile track, albeit a steeply-banked one. JR was followed by Gordon Johncock (Patrick Penske PC6), Mike Mosley (works Eagle), Danny Ongais (with National Panasonic backing for his Interscope Parnelli VPJ6B), Tom Sneva (Sugariprune McLaren M24), Wally Dallenbach (Patrick Wildcat), Al Unser (Jim Hall Lola), Bobby Unser (works Penske PC7), Lee Kunzman (Parnelli VPJ6C) and Spike Gehlhausen (Tibon Eagle-Offenhauser). The first nine were using Cosworth DFX engines.

At the start of the first race, Rutherford moved into an expected lead, but Johncock and Mosley went with him, followed by Ongais and B Unser. After eight laps — or three and a half minutes of racing! — Gordie passed the works McLaren and began to pull away. After 15 laps, he was four seconds clear. In the meantime, Ongais had closed up on Mosley and Rutherford, and the three began a pitched battle for second spot, but JR soon exerted his authority, moved clear and began to close on Johncock.

On lap 34, there was a 'yellow situation' following some lurid moments when a scrapping bunch of Ongais, Sneva, Dallenbach, Rick Mears (Sneke PC7) and Bobby U set about lapping Vern Schuppan's troubled Wildcat. In the course of it, Mears had a huge moment, and Dallenbach spun. Immediately everyone came in for tyres and fuel.

On the green, Johncock and Rutherford pulled clear of the rest. During his stop, JR had asked for a front wing change, and it was a good move. After passing Gordy for the lead, he pulled out a second and looked comfortable. On lap 59 (with 23 to go), however, there was another yellow, this time as the result of a pit fire involving Joe Saldana's venerable Eagle. Once more, most of the leaders, including Rutherford and John-

It was a short yellow, lasting only a couple of minutes, and one man who kept going throughout it was Lee Kunzman in Larry Ham's Parnelli. Kunzman's career had been a chequered one. In the sixties, he made a considerable name for himself in the sprints, but was horrifically burned in an accident 10 years ago, which put him out of racing for a long time. A further shunt in a championship car at Ontario set him back yet further, but now he has a truly competitive drive for the first time, and on Sunday he showed himself worthy of it, leading confidently from Mears, Sneva, Rutherford and Johncock.

With seven laps left, Rutherford passed Sneva and Mears, beginning to close in on Kunzman. By now the Parnelli man, having not come in for tyres during the final yellow, was beginning to understeer quite severely. For as long as possible, he hung on, but JR passed him on the outside of turn one on the 81st lap, and it was all over. At the flag, Kunzman was a second in arrears, followed by Sneva, Johncock, Mears, Al Unser (having the usual handling troubles with his Lola T500) and brother Bobby. It was evident that the works Penskes — the first ground effect cars in championship racing — were having a hard time on this very quick track, raising once more the question of the suitability of the concept for oval racing.

Not around at the end of the first race were Ongais (broken fuel pump drive on lap 56) and Mosley (whose Eagle went out with a broken clutch ring after 20 laps. Both cars were on the grid for the second race, Ongais's after an engine change.

Kunzman's glory day came to a swift conclusion in the second 125-miler, the Parnelli coasting to a stop on the backstretch with a broken gearbox. Also soon out was Mosley with a blown engine. Under the resulting yellow, Ongais pitted for a wing change.

On lap seven, it was green for go once more, and this time Bobby Unser snatched the lead, pressed hard by Rutherford and Johncock. Soon the Budweiser McLaren was back in front and building a lead, until the 25th lap when there was another yellow. In they all came — except for the legendary Salt Walther!

Salt, who employs a PR man (who, by necessity, has to work very hard for his money), stayed out there, so that when the green returned, on lap 30, he headed the field. And not only that. Perhaps carried away with the elation of the moment, he got the jump on them all on the restart. For five laps, the blue McLaren M24 was in the lead. People rubbed their eyes. Salt would never stop talking about this . . .

But five laps of this was enough for the pack. On lap 35, Walther was first. On lap 36, he was eighth. Rutherford once more went to the front, trailed by Sneva, Al Unser (who had made big changes to his Lola during the interval) and Ongais

famous charges, getting by Al U and Tom S for second place, and closing on JR for the lead.

He never got there. On lap 46, the black Parnelli came in with a shredded tyre. The cudgels were now taken up by Unser, who began to move in on Rutherford. The luckless Johncock was now out of contention. The G-forces on the Atlanta banks are such (about 3G, apparently!) that Gordie's helmet slid down over his eyes. That he was able to rectify, but unfortunately the balaclava came down too, and Johncock was unable to move it back to its original position. Hence, for the last 35 laps, he was driving semi-blind . . .

The last pit stops were made under the green, and neither of the leading two took on new tyres. With two laps to go, Al was just half a second behind Rutherford, but halfway round the 81st lap, the Lola came down off the pace. A turbo hose had burst, and Unser was suddenly very short of power. Just before the line, Mears passed him for second. JR, of course, had already gone through.

Bobby Unser took fourth, followed by Ongais, Tom Bagley (Kent Oil Penske PC6), Sneva (who had falling fuel pressure towards the end), Dallenbach, the unlucky Johncock and Walther. Pancho Carter's Lightning-Offenhauser ran well in the second race, but dropped back to 11th with electrical problems.

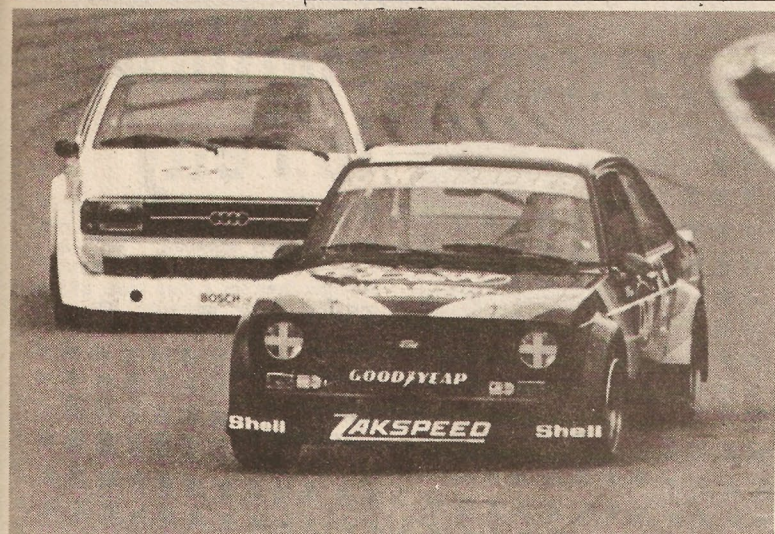
After three rounds of the CART Championship, Rutherford leads with 710 points, followed by Mears (565), Johncock (500), Al Unser (455), Bobby Unser (375), Kunzman (265), Sneva (256), Bagley (238), Dallenbach (178) and Ongais (138). The next round is at Trenton on June 10. Indianapolis does not count for CART points.

All-Porsche Riverside

Last weekend's six-hour IMSA race at Riverside was won by the Whittington brothers with their Porsche 935, from the similar cars of John Paul/Al Holbert and George Follmer/Brett Lunger/Derek Bell.

Peter Gregg took the pole as usual, but finally finished fifth, co-driving with Klaus Ludwig, after a troubled race. Sixth, after problems, were Dick Barbour/Rolf Stommelen/Brian Redman in a further 935.

EUROPEAN FORMULA 3 CHAMPIONSHIP		Mar 18 Vallelunga	Apr 15 Osterreichring	Apr 22 Zolder	May 01 Magny-Cours	May 20 Donington Park	Jun 04 Zandvoort	Jun 17 Enna	Jun 24 Monza	Aug 05 Ring Knutstrop
1. Alain Prost	F	9	9	9						27
2. Michele Alboreto	I	—	3	6						9
3. Mauro Baldi	I	6	—	—						6
5. Slim Borgudd	S	—	4	1						5
Michael Bleekemolen	NL	—	6	1						6
Michael Kortzen	D	—	2	3						5
7. Carlo Rossi	I	4	—	—						4
Hans Buerger	F	—	4	—						4
9. Richard Dallest	D	3	—	—						3
10. Roberto Campominosi	I	2	—	—						2
Thierry Boutsen	B	—	—	2						2
12. Guido Pardini	I	1	—	—						1



The Heyer/Nussbaumer Zakspeed Escort leads the Trint/Rostberg Audi.

Another for Grano

Despite an overheating engine for the last 20 laps, Umberto Grano brought home BMW Italia's 3.2 BMW 3.0 CSL to narrowly win the third round of the European Touring Car championship at Mugello last Saturday. Behind Grano, Bruno Giacomelli and Eddy Joosen, the drivers of the winning car in the 500 kilometre race, the order changed frequently, there was never any real threat to their lead, until close to the end. Grano had to slow so much that he finished only 2.6s ahead of Martino Finotto/Carlo Facetti to score the team's second win in the three rounds of the championship held so far, and it puts them in the lead of the European Touring Car championship ahead of Zakspeed Escort driver Walter Nussbaumer.

The entry was pretty much the same as at Monza: Heyer was back in the Escort he would share with Nussbaumer, and Luigi reappearing with a 3.2 BMW 3.0 CSL for Rajmond van Hove. Jean Xhenceval and Pierre Dieudonné. A newcomer among the BMWs in the over 3000cc class was former Alfa Romeo driver Vittorio Ciardi with Alessandro Francastoro in their ex-Luigi/Finotto/Facetti CSL.

It was Bruno Giacomelli though, who,

for the third time this year, was fastest in practice, with a time of 2m 06.66s, over four seconds faster than the best his co-drivers Umberto Grano and Eddy Joosen could manage in the ex-Luigi BMW Italia car. "It shows what a Grand Prix driver can do on a driver's circuit" said Pierre Dieudonné, co-driver of the second quickest car. "There's never been such a gap between the regulars and a Formula One driver before." Dieudonné's partner Jean Xhenceval was second quickest with a time of 2m 09.21s in Luigi's CSL; the third driver was again Rajmond van Hove. Third quickest on 2m 10.65s, was Ciardi while Francastoro was just over 1.5s slower. Fourth quickest was the CSL of Carlo Facetti with Martino Finotto, suffering dire handling problems with their ex-Alpina car, on 2m 11.31s. Hans Heyer was the fastest of the two litre cars in the Zakspeed Escort RS1800 he shares with Walter Nussbaumer, although the pre-race championship leader was just under four seconds slower than Heyer's best of 2m 13.03s. Helmut Kelleners came next on 2m 13.63s in Eggenberger's Jagermeister sponsored BMW 320i, although co-driver Herbert Müller complained that the car was a little unstable through the bends at Mugello.

The second Zakspeed Escort of Klaus Niedzwiedz/Sigi Muller Junior was seventh fastest thanks to Niedzwiedz's time of 2m 15.30s, for then the differential seized and they didn't go out in the second session. Eighth fastest, and first in the 1600cc class, was the Oscar Berg-engineered Killian Tuning Audi 80 of Manfred Trint and Fred Rosterg, Trint setting 2m 15.79s. They were just in front of the semi-works Audi of Hans Nowak and Willi Bergmeister on 2m 16.45s, delayed by a broken clutch in the morning, and a broken brake pipe in the afternoon. Completing the top ten were Amerigo "Joe" Bigliuzzi and Spartaco Dini in the former's 2.0 Alfetta GTV, which was powered by a new Autodelta engine. Jorg Siegrist and Drago Reguart were on 2m 17.69s in the VW Scirocco, followed by the Austrians Harald Neger/Heribert Werginz/Roman Loibnegger in the first of the 3000cc cars, their Racing Corporation Vienna BMW 530i, on 2m 18.26s. Ludwig Linder/Dieter Kindmann were next in their BMW 320i on 2m 18.34s.

In pleasantly warm weather, Giacomelli pulled straight into the lead of the 100 lap, 500 kilometre race. At first Xhenceval tried to challenge him, but that challenge swiftly faded as Xhenceval's tyres wouldn't give him the adhesion needed. First of all he dropped back to be overtaken by Facetti, but after six laps, the green BMW of the Italians came into the pits with the left wheel seeming to give trouble. So Giacomelli led from Xhenceval, some way behind, then Ciardi leading Heyer, for the second Zakspeed Escort already had trouble with a puncture later to be even further slowed with clutch trouble. Then came Kelleners.

Once Facetti was back in the race, he was charging up through the field, and at 15 laps, he narrowly led Xhenceval and Ciardi. It wasn't to last long though, for he dropped back again with another stop to check the wheel.

The order varied considerably with usually Xhenceval in second place, but he handed over the position to Facetti briefly at 20 laps with a handling worry, before re-inheriting it. Ciardi was in second place at 35 laps when the others had pitted for the routine stops. His car was misfiring, but he kept going only for a wheel to fall off at 40 laps.

Thereafter, Xhenceval or Dieudonné held second place behind the flying BMW Italia car, but when Van Hove took over, he wasn't fast enough, and at

around 70 laps, the Finotto/Facetti car was in second place. They too had another problem, for the car wasn't picking up out of corners, but they maintained this second place right to the end. But the lead BMW was also in trouble, with Grano waving his arms about in the cockpit, trying to indicate that something was wrong, although no one was really sure what. But he lost more time to Facetti and in the end, his winning margin was only 2.6s. "I judged it absolutely correctly, just like the last race," he said smugly after the event, but one wonders what would have happened had there been another couple of laps. Van Hove brought Luigi's BMW home in third place, on the same lap as the leaders. Heyer and Nussbaumer were in fourth place, their only real trouble being tyres and the car's balance.

Fifth were Kelleners and Müller, a good effort this, particularly that of the latter, who made up nearly a lap on the two 1600cc Audis that eventually followed him home. First of the Audis was that of Willi Bergmeister and Hans Nowak in a class-winning sixth place. Nowak had allowed the other Audi 80 of Manfred Trint and Fred Rosterg to lead in the early laps as his tyres were overheating, but when Bergmeister and Rosterg respectively took over the driving, they swapped positions. Eighth was the class winning three-litre BMW 530i of Heribert Werginz/Harald Neger/Roman Loibnegger, which had risen as high as fifth, but dropped back to narrowly beat Pugliese/Biggi for the class honours. Dini and Bigliuzzi completed the top ten.

BOB CONSTANDUROS

Trofeo Banca Toscana

European Touring Car championship, round 3
Mugello, April 14, 500 kilometres, 100 laps

1. Bruno Giacomelli/Eddy Joosen/Umberto Grano (3.2 BMW 3.0 CSL), 3 hrs 43m 57.8s, 140.514 kph, 87.311 mph;
 2. Carlo Facetti/Martino Finotto (3.2 BMW 3.0 CSL), 3 hrs 44m 00.4s;
 3. Jean Xhenceval/Pierre Dieudonné/Rajmond van Hove (3.2 BMW 3.0 CSL), 3 hrs 45m 05.8s;
 4. Hans Heyer/Walter Nussbaumer (1.8 Ford Escort RS1800), 99 laps;
 5. Helmut Kelleners/Herbert Muller (2.0 BMW 320i), 97 laps;
 6. Willi Bergmeister/Hans Nowak (1.6 Audi 80), 97 laps;
 7. Manfred Trint/Fred Rosterg (1.6 Audi 80), 97 laps;
 8. Heribert Werginz/Harald Neger/Roman Loibnegger (3.0 BMW 530i), 95 laps;
 9. Vittorio Pugliese/Rubens Biggi/Antonio Vallebuona (3.0 BMW CSL), 95 laps;
 10. Spartaco Dini/Amerigo Bigliuzzi (2.0 Alfetta GTV), 95 laps.
- Fastest lap: Giacomelli, 2m 08.0s, 147.515 kph, 91.661 mph.

preview

BRANDS HATCH G2

And another?

The 1978 European Touring Car Champion, Umberto Grano, is among the entries for the *gsi* Group 2 race at Brands Hatch next Sunday, in which spectators will gain a rare chance to see these spectacular 140mph saloon cars on the full Grand Prix circuit over 120 laps.

Grano will drive his familiar BMW Italia-entered 3.2-litre BMW CSL, and the leather goods merchant from Verona will be looking for his third successive win of the 1979 season to consolidate his lead in the championship. The car will be co-driven by Antwerp jeweller Eddy Joosen, who has also partnered Grano in his two wins so far this season at Vallelunga and Mugello.

Their main opposition will come from the similar Luigi-entered BMW CSL for Pierre Dieudonné/Jean Xhenceval/Rajmond van Hove, and the Jolly Club's BMW CSL wealthy Italian Martino Finotto and his very experienced co-driver Carlo Facetti, who will be looking to avenge their narrow defeat by Grano in

BMW's have won each of the three rounds held so far this season but the *gsi* race should see a new challenger to the European domination in the form of a British-driven G2 Chevrolet Camaro. Gerry Marshall and Tony Lanfranchi will drive the Colvend Racing entry with Scotsmen Jim Patrick and Eric Paterston.

The 2000cc class includes a trio of Ford Escorts, two of them coming from the German Zakspeed concern, for Sigi Müller/Klaus Niedzwiedz and Walter Nussbaumer, partnered by twice former European Touring Car Champion Dieter Quester. Another Escort will be driven by the British team of David MacPherson/David da Costa/Pete King, while further opposition will come from a Swiss BMW 320i for Marco Vanoli/Paul Geisser and Michele Lauria's Alfetta GTV.

Tony Dron and Richard Lloyd will share the latter's Volkswagen Golf GTI in the 1600cc class and their nippy little

the larger-engined entries. A pair of works-entered Skodas in the 1300cc class will add further spice to the cosmopolitan entry.

Qualifying for the *gsi* sponsored race, to be held in association with the *Daily Mail* will take place on Saturday, as will the second round of the Dunlop Star of Tomorrow Formula Ford 1600 series, which has attracted an incredible entry of nearly 90 young hopefuls. The 500kms main race on Sunday will be

supported by rounds of the Hitachi British Formula Atlantic Championship and the successful new BMW County Championship (see *Weekend Sport*).

The meeting, organised by the BRSCC, commences with qualifying at 10.15am on Saturday (adults £1, children 50p, paddock £1 extra, stands free), racing commencing at noon on Sunday April 29 (adults £3, children £1, paddock £1.50 extra, stands £2 and £1 extra).

The Luigi BMW will be at Brands, driven by the usual trio.



Ferraris strong

During testing at Jarama last week, Jody Scheckter's Ferrari 312T4 set a new unofficial lap record at 1m 14.85s, five-hundredths of a second quicker than the time set by Jacques Laffite's Ligier JS11 during the Goodyear tests a few weeks ago. At that time, the French cars were considerably quicker than any of their rivals, so a Ferrari-Ligier battle could well be on the cards for Sunday.

Completely new for Spain are the Williams FW07 cars for Alan Jones and Clay Regazzoni, one of which was taken to the States recently for testing at Ontario. Frank Williams tells us that the tests — both there and on the short Brands circuit — were very encouraging. "We've burned our boats," he said on Monday. "All the old cars have gone now, so we'll have no spares, either in Spain or Belgium. The third chassis will be ready for Monaco." We hear that Alan Jones set a sub-41s lap at Brands, which, if true, is very quick indeed for a new car.

Almost certainly running the older Copersucar F5A, the Fittipaldi team will nonetheless take their latest F6 to Spain. "At present, the car is very definitely an oversteerer, but it seems good on quick corners," Peter Macintosh told us. "Slow ones are its big problem, which means that it will not get on with Jarama. I think we'll go with the older car."

Facing the same problem is Derek Daly, whose future with the Ensign team is said to be in doubt. However, an Ensign spokesman told us that Derek had visited the factory last week, and the question had never been raised. In Spain, Daly will race the old, non-ground-effects, Ensign. The charter plane bringing the newer car back from Long Beach was severely delayed in Kansas, and by the time the N179 was back in Walsall, it was too late to begin the mods necessary before the car can race again.

At the time of going to press, it was believed that Martini Racing Team Lotus would almost certainly field a pair of last year's 79s for Mario Andretti and Carlos Reutemann, with a spare 80 along for testing. Brabham — who looked very strong in the Race of Champions — will have Niki Lauda and the ultra-promising Nelson Piquet in a pair of BT48s.

The rest of the mix is as usual, although Jean-Pierre Jabouille should have the new RS10 ground-effect Renault for qualifying.

SPANISH GRAND PRIX

Jarama, Madrid
2.116 miles, 3.404kms.
Lap record: Mario Andretti (F1 JPS 79),
1m 20.06s, 95.104mph.
Organisers: Real Automovil Club de España

TIMETABLE

Practice
Friday 10.00-11.00 (untimed)
12.30-14.00
Saturday 10.00-11.00 (untimed)
12.30-14.00

Race (75 laps, 158.65 miles)
Sunday 15.30

All these are local times, and one hour ahead of British Summer Time. This means that the Grand Prix is due to start at 14.30 BST.

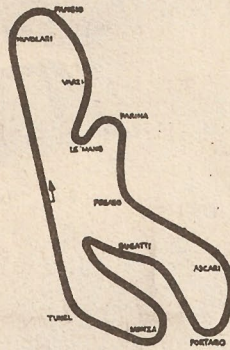
BROADCASTING

Saturday 17.30 Radio 2 (Practice)
Sunday 16.02 Radio 2 (Progress Report)
17.30 Radio 2 (Finish)
19.00 Radio 2 (Sunday Sport Full Report)
23.40 BBC2 TV (approx)

PREVIOUS RESULTS

1968	Graham Hill	GB	Lotus-Ford 49	84.41mph
1969	Jackie Stewart	GB	Matra-Ford MS80	92.91mph*
1970	Jackie Stewart	GB	March-Ford 701	87.22mph
1971	Jackie Stewart	GB	Tyrrell-Ford 003	97.19mph*
1972	Emerson Fittipaldi	BR	JPS Lotus-Ford 72	92.35mph
1973	Emerson Fittipaldi	BR	JPS Lotus-Ford 72	97.86mph*
1974	Niki Lauda	A	Ferrari 312B3	88.48mph
1975	Jochen Mass	D	McLaren-Ford M23	95.54mph*
1976	James Hunt	GB	McLaren-Ford M23	93.01mph
1977	Mario Andretti	USA	JPS Lotus-Ford 78	91.79mph
1978	Mario Andretti	USA	JPS Lotus-Ford 79	93.53mph

*Races run at Barcelona



Bookies favour Villeneuve

Quite rightly, following his performance of late, Ladbrokes have Gilles Villeneuve as favourite to win in Spain this weekend. On Monday they quoted the following odds for the race:

Villeneuve	4:1
Scheckter	9:2
Andretti	6:1
Laffite	6:1
Depailler	7:1
Reutemann	8:1
Lauda	12:1
Jarier	20:1
Hunt	25:1
Jones	25:1
Piquet	25:1
Jabouille	33:1
Pironi	33:1
Watson	33:1
Fittipaldi	50:1
Bar these 15	100:1

At the same time, William Hill were offering:

Villeneuve	3:1
Scheckter	7:2
Andretti	7:1
Laffite	7:1
Reutemann	7:1
Depailler	8:1
Lauda	8:1
Jarier	16:1
Bar these 8	20:1

William Hill and Ladbrokes also quoted their revised odds for the World Championship, Villeneuve turning up favourite in both cases. Ladbrokes odds:

Villeneuve	7:2
Scheckter	9:2
Laffite	11:2
Reutemann	6:1
Andretti	7:1
Depailler	7:1
Lauda	12:1
Jarier	20:1
Watson	20:1
Hunt	25:1
Jones	33:1
Pironi	33:1
Fittipaldi	50:1
Jabouille	66:1
Bar these 14	100:1

William Hill:

Villeneuve	4:1
Laffite	5:1
Reutemann	6:1
Scheckter	6:1
Andretti	7:1
Depailler	7:1
Lauda	10:1
Watson	12:1
Jarier	14:1
Bar these 9	25:1

FORM GUIDE AND ENTRY LIST

1978	1979	Driver	Nat	Car
R 10	5 R 4 4	Mario Andretti	USA	Lotus-Ford 80
1 3	2 3 5 R	Carlos Reutemann	RA	Lotus-Ford 79
10 7	R 4* R 10	Didier Pironi	F	Tyrrell-Ford 009
—	R NS 3 6	Jean-Pierre Jarier	F	Tyrrell-Ford 009
R R	R R 6 R	Niki Lauda	A	Brabham-Alfa BT48
—	R R 7 8	Nelson Piquet	BR	Brabham-Alfa BT48
R R	3 8 R R	John Watson	GB	McLaren-Ford M28
6 8	R R 10 R	Patrick Tambay	F	McLaren-Ford M28
R R	NQ R R R	Hans Stuck	D	ATS-Ford D1
3 2	R 6 2 2	Jody Scheckter	ZA	Ferrari 312 T4
R 1	R 5 1 1	Gilles Villeneuve	CDN	Ferrari 312 T4
5 R	6 11 13 R	Emerson Fittipaldi	BR	Fittipaldi-Ford F5A
4 12	R 10 R NS	Jean-Pierre Jabouille	F	Renault RS10 turbo
9 R	R R R NS	René Arnoux	F	Renault RS01 turbo
—	R 14 R R	Jan Lammers	NL	Shadow-Ford DN9B
—	7 12 R 7	Elio de Angelis	I	Shadow-Ford DN9B
7 R	R R 8 R	James Hunt	GB	Wolf-Ford WR8
8 6	11 13 NQ R	Derek Daly	IRL	Ensign-Ford N177
R NQ	R NQ NQ R	Arturo Merzario	I	Merzario-Ford A2
R 5	4 2 R 5	Patrick Depailler	I	Ligier-Ford JS11
11 R	1 1 R R	Jacques Laffite	F	Ligier-Ford JS11
2 9	9 R R 3	Alan Jones	AUS	Williams-Ford FW07
14 NQ	10 15 9 R	Clay Regazzoni	I	Williams-Ford FW07
— 4	NS 9 11 R	Riccardo Patrese	I	Arrows-Ford A1B
—	8 7 12 9	Jochen Mass	D	Arrows-Ford A1B
R NQ	R NQ R R	Hector Rebaque	MEX	Lotus-Ford 79

catchpole

by Barry Foley





Shekhar Mehta displayed all his mastery of Safari tactics to win for the second time with Datsun.

Mehta masters Mercedes

Stout Datsun of Shekhar Mehta surprisingly vanquishes major works efforts from Mercedes, Peugeot and Fiat — Mikkola's automatic Mercedes second — Alen third on Safari debut — Report: MARTIN HOLMES — Photography: HUGH BISHOP.

The eventual winner of the 27th Safari Rally was Shekhar Mehta with Mike Doughty co-driving a Datsun 160J, after two Mercedes 450SLCs and one Peugeot 540 Coupe V6 had previously led but had fallen back or retired. Mehta had led during the first of the three legs (etappes) but had been delayed through repairs to his suspension when he claimed that he had been pushed off the road by Timo Makinen. Makinen himself eventually retired with engine trouble of the sort which also eliminated two of the three other factory Peugeot entries and Bjord Waldegaard and Hannu Mikkola were both delayed through mechanical troubles after leading with their remarkable automatic transmission Mercedes. The Safari was the fourth event in the World Rally Championship, still led by Ford who did not compete, with 50 points against 41 for Fiat and 40 for Datsun. In the Drivers section Waldegaard and Mikkola are now equal, both with 51 points against 32 for Markku Alen who, on his first entry on this event, finished a competent third place.

Four motor manufacturers contested this rally seriously, which makes the Safari '79 a vintage event by any standards. It must surely be the most expensive rally in the World Championship series, and the main reason why more manufacturers do not enter is that they find that they could compete in two or three other world status rallies for the price of the Safari. On the other hand, the publicity to be gained through victory on this one rally is probably the greatest from any one motoring event in the world, with only the Monte Carlo Rally for comparison. It is a rally where the stakes are high. It is an event from which a manufacturer who seeks to sell his products in Africa cannot afford to stay away. The mighty for combatants were Datsun, three times previous winners, Peugeot six-times winners, Mercedes, thrice victors, and Fiat, who

For Datsun the philosophy was to rely on strength of the regular 160J, a large-scale production car fitted with an engine which is only mildly tuned by rally standards, but which should pull through to succeed when more sophisticated cars failed. By Safari Rally standards the cars were light, which would help when the going became very muddy and cars had to be man-handled. In performance terms the cars fell well back against their rivals.

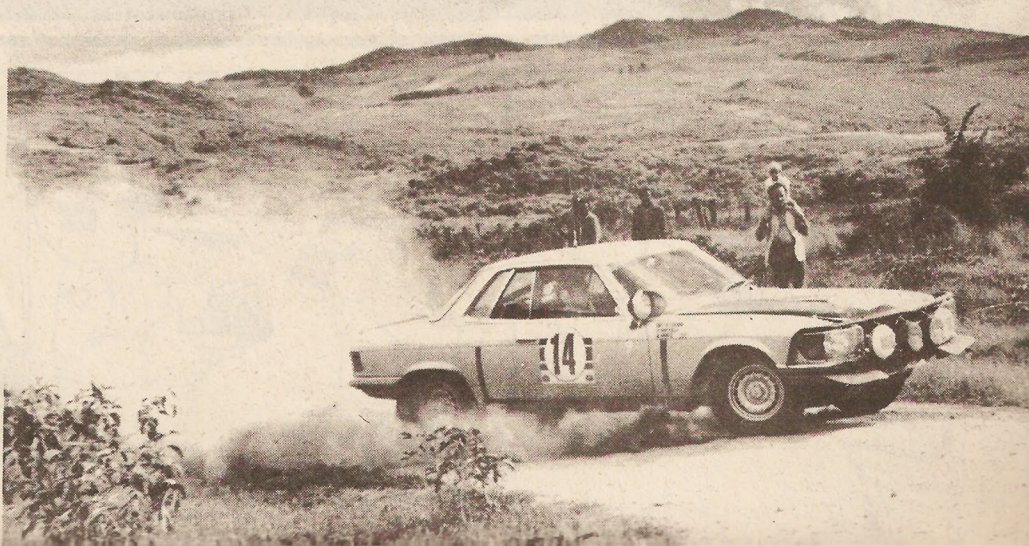
For Mercedes, the objective was to alter their image, from that of comfortable semi-luxury saloon to a car with strength and solid practicality. They chose

for this purpose two different types of car, the old trusty 280E model and a new car, never before rallied, the 450SLC 5-litre. This was the same basic model as that which won the South America Marathon but which was fitted with a more powerful engine and which was lighter. Mercedes mounted a huge exercise, with six competing cars (three of each type), dozens of support cars and a budget which must create something of a world record. Chief engineer Waxenberger, masterminding the operation, steadfastly sidestepped enquiries about money.

Peugeot still live on their image as the automotive lions of Africa, which was cemented for all time in 1975 when they won the Safari, Bandama and Morocco. Their cars are now competitive in terms of line performance (important on this event when fast main road sections are included) with proven reserves of strength

WCR	WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP	4
	SAFARI RALLY	

Both the automatic Mercedes led the Safari. Mikkola's example finishing second.



Notes on the cars

Peugeot

Winners last year, Peugeot entered four of their Group 4 Coupé 504 V6 models. These cars were all fitted with the five-speed gearbox, as Lampinen had used on the Bandama last year, and had the axle cooling system used there as well. A new exhaust manifold provided an increase in power up to around 240bhp, while the three new cars (Lampinen had 5012RN25, Makinen 5011RN25 and Nicolas, 5013RN25) had many lightweight features, the result of which was that the starting weight was down to 1300kg.

Lefebvre, the winner last year as co-driver for Nicholas, was competing as a driver and had an older, heavier body (4536QX25) which weighed an extra 60kg, but in reality was stronger. All the lightweight cars had engine troubles stemming from inadequate protection though Nicholas' car actually had some extra strengthening in the form of an aluminium plate over the front panel, designed to protect the radiator in the event of a head-on collision.

Only one type of front tyre (Michelin RC12 with two longitudinal slots for easier steering) and one type of rear tyre (RC1 with extra blocks cut out) were used for the event.

Datsun

In accordance with their current policy, the Datsuns for this event were prepared in Japan and run from there. Heavyweight preparation was in evidence, with all the many strengthening pieces being fitted. As with Peugeot, the tyre choices were limited to aid servicing.

The suspension was a little softer than usual, the engine gave more torque and rear disc brakes were tried, but otherwise the drivers reported there was little change in the specification since the PA10 cars first appeared on this event a year ago.

New engines were used, but the bodys shells were old. Aaltoen used KNY58 TE1233, Kallstrom KNY58TE1232, Mehta KNY58TE1234 while two Violets were driven by local drivers John Hellier TKS56H06793 and Mike Kirkland, TKS56N18640. All cars were right hand drive, as the first left hand drive (PLA10) models will appear at the Acropolis.

Mercedes

The third manufacturer to compete this year was Mercedes, being little less reticent about their official involvement than last year. They introduced a complete new model for this event, the 450S C 5-litre, the same shape as won the South American marathon rally when fitted with a 4.5-litre engine.

The new engine was reported to have better torque and was built in alloy as against the old cast-iron. Power was up from 225bhp to 300bhp and the V8 engine was coupled to an automatic three-speed gearbox which gave speeds of 95, 160 and 220kph in gears. The production run has not been completely finished and so the car is homologated only in Group 4. Cars driven were: Vic Preston S-DP1908, Waldegaard S-DP1910 and Mikkola S-DP1909.

As a back-up to these cars three of the more orthodox 280E models were entered, in Group 2. These cars were very heavy (in ready-to-run form they weighed in at 1750kg against 1410kg for the 450SLC) but were fitted with 4-speed manual gearboxes. The engines gave 210bhp from their 2.8 litre engines. The suspensions were improved and the cars set higher than when they appeared in South America.

Fiat

The last big manufacturer to enter was Fiat-Alitalia, with three Abarth 131s for Alen (TOR92559), Munari (TOR92452) and Rohrl (TOR92448). Under an agreement with the importers Robin Ulyate had been rallying a similar car locally (KVE131) in preparation for this event. Another Abarth 131 was driven by one of the leading African drivers, George Githu.

There were problems in testing when the shock absorbers were found to be bending, then siezing and in turn breaking their mounting points. A supply of new units was delayed when the cargo department at Frankfurt was bombed but ultimately the trouble was alleviated before the event. The three Italian cars were new but Ulyate's had been rebuilt by Italian personnel in Kenya after contesting four local events.

Pirelli tyres using narrow widths and Scandinavian-type blocks were used, and again only this one type was chosen. This was only the first time in Kenya with Abarth 131s and only the second entry for Fiats, although Lancia had often competed.

and immense organisational experience.

Fiat, however, find the Safari as much a challenge as anything else. The Italian company uses its competition activities to push forward its export sales, and although Lancia have often competed in Africa, the Fiat group have never won the event. It is like a terrible spectre for them: they can win rallies all over the world, but never here. On paper the cars had the vital ingredients: strength (all five Fiats which started reached the finish) and performance — for long stretches, between delays, Sandro Munari was putting up competitive times. Even the back-up organisation seemed to be adequate but success once more eluded the Italians.

The Safari Rally attracted no fewer than thirteen A-seeded drivers, of whom only three were from Kenya (Singh, Mehta and Preston). Mikkola and Waldegaard secured releases from Ford to drive on this occasion for Mercedes, Waldegaard working once again with Vic Preston with whom he had been connected the year before when they drove Porsches. Preston, the son of the 1955 Safari Rally winner, has still not won himself but each year he immerses himself in the business of setting up the organisation required for running whichever team he is concerned with.

Waldegaard started the rally ahead of Mikkola in the Drivers' series, following his three second places so far this year. A long delay, coupled with the cancellation of a section which would have given him advantage, pushed him down to sixth place at the finish. The only other driver able to challenge these two in the series was Markku Alen following his third at Monte Carlo and fourth in Sweden. His team-mate Walter Rohrl, still had not scored at all this year and the other Fiat driver, Sandro Munari, had intimated that this would probably be his one and only event this year, maybe even the final rally in his career.

The Safari Rally is based at Nairobi, which lies some 500kms inland from the coastal town of Mombasa. One of the hidden problems with this rally is the remarkable range of altitudes to be experienced. Nairobi itself lies 1660 metres above sea level (as high as the Turini Pass on the Monte Carlo), and the rally goes higher still, with the highest points being above 3000 metres. This places an advantage on the more powerful cars.

Then the next special challenge is the way in which the weather can change so quickly. This year it was extraordinary. The rain storms seemed to follow the rally route: the leading cars had an event that was predominately dry but the tail-enders continually suffered from heavy storms.

national speed limits for cars competing on the Safari) must cater for dry conditions but wide tolerances are offered in maximum overall lateness times. This year this system gave rise to a great number of finishers, particularly among the leading crews, and each year encourages service systems designed to repair cars which break down whatever the delay. The organisers reserve the right to extend these lateness allowances even beyond the original times and advise competitors never to retire until they are told by officials that they are out of time. It is incredible to see cars arriving many hours late, yet still qualifying, and this wide time allowance also increases the hazards of the rally.

Like the Bandama, the Safari has no special stages: no closed roads at all. Although local people are advised to stay away from rally roads during the event, it is very common to see cars, minibuses (always

It was the first visit to Kenya for the Fiat Abarth 131 and third-placed Markku Alen.



absolutely full of local inhabitants) and especially lorries driving down the rally routes. This year no accidents were reported, but near misses are commonplace and an ignorance of when rally cars are actually expected to arrive can do nothing to reduce the hazard. For all these problems, Kenya is a beautiful place to be and the rally will always be popular.

At 2 pm on Thursday before Easter the rally got under way. The starting order was drawn, with makes being equally spaced to make servicing easier. Rauno Aaltoen gained the coveted number-one starting number, the advantage being principally the absence of dust when conditions are dry. In fact the fight for the chance to open the rally route can often be vicious, as Mehta and Preston later reported. The opening leg went north up to the Lake Victoria region, not so far from Uganda which once used to welcome the Safari Rally and where the eventually rally winner, Shekhar Mehta, once lived.

After the first group of controls where Munari, Makinen, Mehta and Waldegaard alone were without penalties (timing is always to the minute, rather than to the second), Waldegaard started to pull ahead. The Mercedes was something new in concept since this car not only had a V8 engine but also automatic transmission. Nobody could recall when an automatic car had ever succeeded in rallies before. Drivers were not sure how good the system was, but they admitted that it did not seem to be any worse than a manual gearbox.

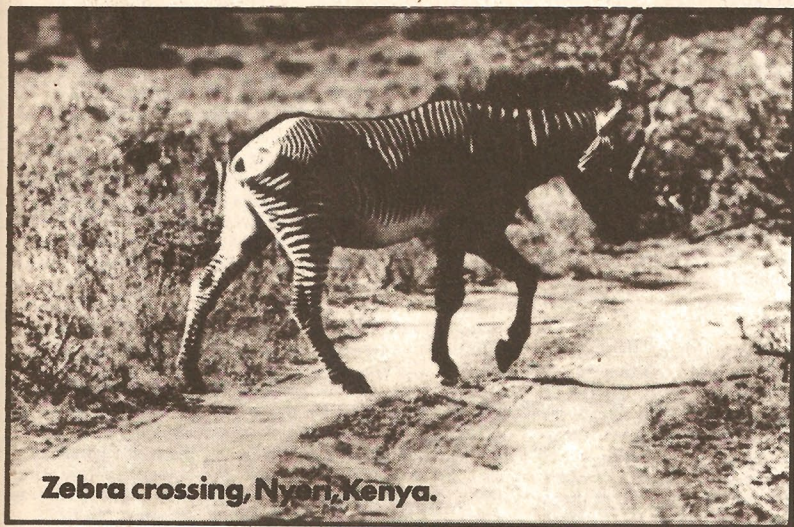
Other drivers were never far behind, and at the first regrouping point, during the night at Kisumu, the penalties were Waldegaard 41, Mikkola 42, Aaltoen 43, Mehta 44 and Makinen 45. Later that night, as the rally headed towards Kitale, the action began in earnest. Preston reported he was stopped with trouble at the rear of his car. The bolts locating the axle subframe had failed and he was stuck. It was night and rescue was not available. Mehta caught Makinen but, after a collision between the Datsun and the Peugeot, damaged his suspension. His lead was lost when it took twenty minutes of servicing at Eldoret before the damage was repaired. Mehta was furious and reported that the luckless Preston had experienced similar problems with the Peugeot driver. He also told the officials that they would have a full report of the incident later.

Munari was in trouble, slowed through the night by alternator trouble, punctures and shock absorber problems and Ulyate, the local Fiat driver, had alternator trouble as well as a broken throttle. Mikkola had suffered a broken screen.

From Eldoret to Nairobi it was daylight, and Makinen and Waldegaard shared the lead with a four minute advantage over Aaltoen. Then Aaltoen had trouble, the Datsun's axle twisting and becoming dislodged against the locating arm, due possibly to vibrations created by the new rear disc brakes. The driver and co-driver radioed for help, then dismantled the rear suspension ready for replacement when help arrived. Waldegaard struck the same problem that Preston had experienced during the night and was delayed for 2½ hours leaving the unpopular Makinen in an unchallenged lead, overall and on the road. But he was the remaining Peugeot in contention.

Nicolas had retired during the night with an engine failure, thought to have been caused by loss of oil but probably due to a broken oil pump pick-up pipe as a result of using too thin a sumpshield. Then Lampinen had gone out with another engine failure, after

Once again Dunlop win the East African Safari. Hooray for Dunlop. But what's in it for you?



Zebra crossing, Nyeri, Kenya.

Not a lot, you may think.

After all what has Shekhar Mehta, battling through the Kenyan bush at 95 m.p.h. got in common with the average British motorist driving down his High Street?

Surprisingly, quite a lot.

Because the knowledge and experience Dunlop gains through winning such gruelling competitions means better tyres for your car too.

It has meant the development of Dunlop Performance Tyres, for example. A range of extra wide, low profile radials that hold the road better, corner better and brake

better—however tough the driving conditions.

And every other Dunlop win will mean even more knowledge and experience.

Mind you, with seven out of the first ten cars in this year's Safari using Dunlop tyres, and an outright win for Dunlop twelve years out of the last sixteen, we've had quite a lot of experience already.



Zebra crossing, Orpington, Kent.

 **DUNLOP**

**Leading the field
to give you the best.**

continued

reporting he had suffered a heavy landing on his sump-guard, whilst Lefebvre had all manners of trouble, not the least being an accelerator cable breakage, which lost him over half an hour. The Lions of Africa were looking a little forlorn.

Makinen lost time on arrival at Nairobi changing his sump, but kept the lead overall. At Nairobi the positions were Makinen 118 minutes, Mikkola 121, Mehta 129, Munari 147, Cowan 157, Rohrl 162, Alen 168, Singh (delayed by engine mounting failure which could not be repaired) 185, Kallstrom 189 and Aaltonen 194.

The second leg began in a far less competitive manner, with several hours of driving before competitors started once again to lose points. The first testing sections were in the Taita Hills, en route for Mombasa, where Rohrl collided with a minibus. Then after another two kilometres, he hit a bird which smashed his screen. The lead changed hands when Makinen lost his fanbelt, a problem which cost a half-hour and which let Mikkola through, and then Kallstrom suffered an identical rear axle problem to that of Aaltonen. He was unable to prepare himself as Aaltonen had done and lost 2½ hours against the 1½ of his Finnish team-mate. At the same time Datsun took the opportunity of replacing the disc brake axles with those fitted with drum brakes as previously used. Mikkola had 144 penalties at Mombasa, against 157 for Mehta, 170 for Munari, 184 for Makinen, 190 for Rohrl and 201 for Cowan.

Then came the night and the rain. It was known that sudden floods could be expected, and one of the tightest sections (Wamunyu-Machakos) was passed, but trouble came before that, on the road leading to Kitui. The first six drivers passed as the drift filled with water, the last being Waldegaard, who reported that his car was so nearly swept downstream that it would be foolish for others to follow. A queue built up. Joginder Singh saw the lights in the distance and took an alternative route which avoided the river in its full width. Other cars heard through the Peugeot service radio network (a popular method of carrying messages on this event!) that they must wait until the flood subsided. They were not promised cancellation or penalties or even extension of overall lateness, just told to wait. For many hours, almost till the following morning, the cars stood there until it was safe to proceed. Eventually the penalties were scrubbed and the lateness extended, much to the relief of most teams, particularly Fiat. Munari had suffered a serious, rear suspension failure on this section and the flood effectively nullified what otherwise would have been a penalty of a couple of hours!

Zasada had crashed and retired, and Makinen completed the Peugeot misfortune when he had to retire with engine trouble. Only Lefebvre continued, but he was being plagued with troubles. With literally hours between the front runners and those delayed at the river the second leg finished. After the river section had been cancelled the penalties were now Mikkola Mehta 129, Munari 147, Cowan 157, Rohrl 162, Alen Cowan 270, Aaltonen and Alen 275, Mike Kirkland (Datsun Violet) 330, Waldegaard 353 and Ulyate 391.

The last leg was expected to be the toughest, even though, at 1373kms, it was also the shortest. The rains had been expected to create mudholes, and the supporting mud-rescue crews were sent out to keep the rally moving. Rain was falling as the cars headed away from Nairobi for the first few sections. Mikkola was holding his 9 minute lead and at Nyahururu (Thomson's Falls) he had increased this to eleven. Then came more troubles when his fan cowling penetrated his radiator. More than that his radio was not functioning, so he had to wait for Waldegaard to arrive before he could summon help.

Suddenly Mehta found himself in the lead again and a night of nervous anticipation began. On the following section he, with several other drivers, found an alternative route round a swollen river, with Alen being lucky enough to follow the lights of his rivals and thus save time. Then, as the rally headed for the infamous sections around the east of Mount Kenya, Mehta twice found himself stuck in mud. Both times he was lucky and soon got going again, but others were less lucky. Rohrl broke his steering, and Munari broke first his driveshaft, and then a rear wheel bearing. Alen alone was running strongly from the Italian team and was up to third place, only four minutes ahead of Andrew Cowan.

At breakfast at Nyeri, on the final morning, Alen was 31 minutes behind Mikkola, but he was anxious to keep his place ahead of Cowan and set off on the final sections with a vengeance. Mehta allowed Aaltonen, his team-mate, to catch and pass him, to ensure that he was not exposed to the dangers of running first on the road (Aaltonen was then lying fifth) but Alen caught and passed them both. So hard was he going that, by the finish he had increased his lead over Cowan to 16

minutes — and had unwittingly come within five minutes of second man Mikkola who was slowed by shock absorber trouble. Cowan was worn out through driving with defective power steering (this meant the steering had no self-centring effect) and was content to finish fourth once again.

Mehta had won his second Safari and helped Datsun into a challenging position in the World Championship.

World Rally Championship, round 4
27th Safari Rally
12-16th April, 1979

- 1, Shekhar Mehta/Mike Doughty (Datsun 160J), 387 min;
- 2, Hannu Mikkola/Arne Hertz (Mercedes 450SLC), 435 min;
- 3, Markku Alen/Iikka Kivimaki (Fiat Abarth 131), 440 min;
- 4, Andrew Cowan/Johnstone Syer (Mercedes 280E), 456 min;
- 5, Rauno Aaltonen/Lofty Drews (Datsun 160J), 486 min;
- 6, Bjorn Waldegaard/Hans Thorszelius (Mercedes 450SLC), 560 min;
- 7, Mike Kirkland/Dave Howarth (Datsun Violet), 574 min;
- 8, Walter Rohrl/Christian Geistdorfer (Fiat Abarth 131), 625 min;
- 9, Harry Kallstrom/Claes Billstam (Datsun 160J), 643 min;
- 10, Sandro Munari/Silvio Maiga (Fiat Abarth 131), 693.

66 starters: 21 finishers

Leading retirements

Simo Lampinen/Atso Aho (Peugeot 504 V6), engine; 29 controls Vic Preston Jnr/John Lyall (Mercedes 450SLC); rear axle location; 23 controls Timo Makinen/Jean Todt (Peugeot 504 V6) engine; controls Jean-Pierre Nicolas/Henry Liddon (Peugeot 504 V6), engine; 22 controls Sobieslaw Zasada/Biozej Krupa (Mercedes 280E), accident; 52 controls Jurgen Barth/Roland Kussmaul (Porsche 924 Turbo).



Above: Walter Rohrl's Fiat 131 limped home in eighth place, looking very battle-scarred. Below: Timo Makinen was forced to retire with engine trouble after leading for Peugeot. Bottom: Andrew Cowan finished a fine fourth in one of the conventional Mercedes 280 models.



Ten round World series

The 1980 World Rally Championship will consist of 10 events, six in Europe and four outside. This decision was taken by the Executive Committee of the FISA at a meeting in London on Friday.

This is good and bad news for some events currently in the championship, as the four events outside Europe will be in North America, South America, Africa and the Pacific Area. It could mean

that, with only one African round, Bانداما is likely to be dropped as it is most unlikely that the Safari would be the rally to go. Also it looks promising for the Brazilian rally, as this is the only one in South America that would be a likely candidate.

The Committee also decided that seven of the 10 events would count towards the championship.

Fuel help on 1000 Lakes

The regulations have now been published for the 1000 Lakes Rally, the one event that it is the aim of every Finnish driver to win. This year's route covers 1400 kilometres over the classic forestry tracks.

The start of the recce period is at 9am on Friday, August 10 and this runs right up to the start of the event from Laajavuori at 6.01pm on Friday, August 24. The finish is back in Laajavuori at about 9am on Sunday, August 26.

Included in the route will be 45 special

stages over 500 kilometres which, as in the past, some of the drivers will learn by heart and thus be able to cover during the event without the use of pace notes.

Foreign competitors are being helped with their finances by the organisers who will be giving each entrant 150 litres of fuel free before they start their recce.

Regulations for this seventh round of the World Rally Championship can be obtained from the Rally of the 1000 Lakes, P1 205, 40101 Jyvaskyla 10, Finland.

Fiat going to Brazil

With the major attack on the Safari now behind them, the Fiat factory team have an easier year ahead. The next rally on their calendar is the Brazil International where two 131s will be entered, one for Walter Rohrl and one for Markku Alen.

The rally is being sponsored by Olio Fiat and by Pirelli.

After Brazil, the team will be competing in Quebec and on the San Remo Rally. Drivers have not yet been decided upon for these events.

New Peugeot 104 in Acropolis entry list

The next round of the World Rally Championship is the Acropolis Rally which starts from just outside Athens on May 26. So far it seems that there will be at least four major manufacturer teams on the event with Peugeot debuting a new model and Ford mounting their strongest ever attack on the rally.

The Ford team will consist of three Escorts, all backed by Rothmans with nominated drivers Hannu Mikkola, Bjorn Waldegaard and Ari Vatanen. Peugeot will be showing their new Peugeot 104ZS II with two cars driven by Jean Claude Lefebvre and Timo Makinen. Jean Pierre Nicolas will be driving a Peugeot 504 for the team.

The new 104ZS II features a slightly

larger engine than the current 104ZS, the capacity now being 1361cc instead of 1124cc. In standard road going form the power is up from 66bhp to 83bhp and the car has been described by the French press as being 'better than the RS Alpine'.

Renault themselves will have two cars on the rally, one 5 Alpine for Jean Ragnotti and one for a local driver. Another team which will be fielding local drivers is Datsun which will have two locals in addition to cars for Timo Salonen and Harry Kallstrom.

Mercedes had considered competing on the event but are understood to have now shelved the plans.

Last year Harry Kallstrom finished fourth on the Acropolis. This year he will be back, again in a Datsun 160J.



Mercedes were well pleased with their Safari performance though upset that Mikkola didn't win.

Merc to do WCR rounds?

Despite the fact that their team didn't win the Safari Rally, Mercedes were apparently well pleased with the performance of their 450SLCs and it seems likely that we will be seeing the cars out later in the year on other World Rally Championship rounds. Events which are being mentioned include Acropolis, Quebec and New Zealand, although the Acropolis seems unlikely since both Hannu Mikkola and Bjorn Waldegaard, who drove for the team on the Safari, are already contracted to Ford for that event. There was due to be a meeting in Stuttgart later this week to decide future plans.

The team were obviously disappointed that Hannu Mikkola didn't win the Safari, particularly since he dropped back with such a small problem. The radiator was holed when the electric fan worked loose on its mounting and moved forward to wear its way through the cooling system. Mikkola stopped by the side of the road, but he was unable to radio for help since his own set wasn't working and he had to wait until Andrew Cowan arrived, about ten minutes later. Then the service crew had to drive 25kms

down a foggy road to the point where Hannu was stranded.

While he was waiting Hannu had taken the radiator out of the car but, since the service crew didn't have a spare radiator, they could only patch the holed one with sealant and then replace it. Hannu could have done the job himself with the radiator in position.

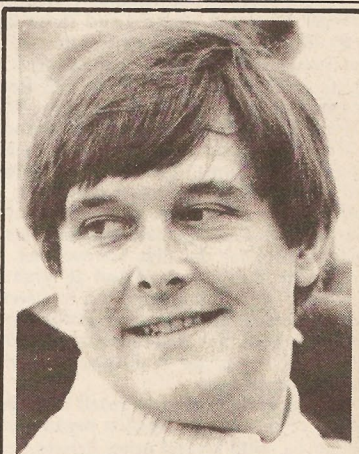
The teams other major problem was the broken rear suspension bolts which put Vic Preston and Bjorn Waldegaard out of the event. Apparently this failure was caused by the bolts being overtightened. Andrew Cowan had a similar problem when he suffered from a puncture and couldn't get the wheel nuts undone. Eventually he had to string several spanners together in order to get enough leverage on the nuts, which had been done up by a 'local' service mechanic.

Cowan's other problem on the event was a broken pipe in the power steering system, a fault which also hit Joginder Singh. Without the power steering the car was very heavy to turn into corners and didn't have any 'self-centring' on the steering.

Sanders in Scotland

South African rally driver Eric Sanders is coming over to Britain to drive a David Sutton Cars prepared Escort RS1800 on the Lombard Esso Scottish Rally.

This will be his rally debut in this country, having driven for Bernie Marriner's Ford team last year and Datsun this year in South Africa. Although the car is being built by Sutton it will be serviced on the rally by Tony Maslen's International Rally Services.



Polish fatality

In a tragic accident on the Crocuses Rally in Poland at the weekend top Polish rally driver Jerzy Landsberg was seriously injured and his co-driver Janusz Szajng was killed. Landsberg, who rallies a Renault 5, was still unconscious a day after the accident in which his car went left instead of right on a fast bend. Szajng, although not a member of a works team, was one of Poland's most experienced co-drivers.

No sooner was Russell Brookes home from the Circuit of Ireland than he was away to the Phillipines, where he will be doing a rally this weekend. The rally is called the 4th Asean Phillipines International Motor Rally and Russell has been invited by a firm called Car Masters Incorporated to drive their Group 5 Ford Escort RS2000. The three day event is being run over 30 special stages which add up to 300 stage miles. The start is from Baguio, the finish in Manila and Russell will be co-driven by Ho Puay Koon, with whom he was teamed for the Thailand Rally.

New look Scottish

This year's Lombard Esso Scottish Rally will have a new look which includes a new start venue, more stage and less road mileage, and the use of target timing for the first time.

The Royal Scottish Automobile Club sent out a questionnaire to 1978 competitors about what changes they would like to see for the rally and they have incorporated these into the 1979 format.

For the first time since 1975 the start will be in Glasgow but, as in the past couple of years, the overnight halts and finish will be in Aviemore. The new start will also mean a new start time with the first car getting away at 6pm on Saturday, June 9.

The Post Office will, as is usual now on British international rallies, be running a Dial-A-Rally results service, but for the first time this Buzby service will be going international. This means that people from other countries can dial the service direct by using their own access code to the international equipment followed by the UK code 44 and the number minus the initial 0 from the STD code.

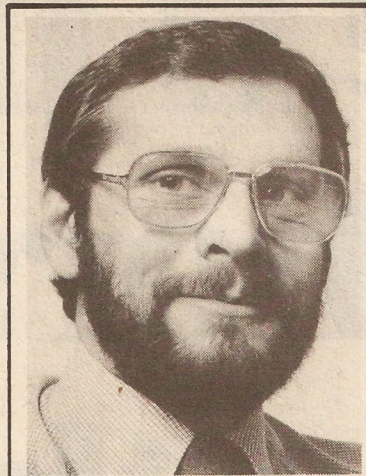
Further information regarding entries can be obtained from Jonathan Lord, RSAC, 11 Blythswood Square, Glasgow, G2 4AG, tel: 041 221 3850.

DTV's double take

Dealer Team Vauxhall have found the answer to the problem of converting a car from left to right hand drive — when you build it, put in two of everything including steering columns.

This system has been used by the team on the car that Pentti Airikkala will be driving on the Motogard Rally in New Zealand. General Motors in New Zealand, who have ordered the car for their new team, want a RHD car, but Pentti, who will be giving it its first run wants to drive a LHD car. The simple way round this is to build two sets of everything into the car so that the change over will take place in next-to-no time. "This is the prototype of the dual control rally car," explained DTV Press Officer Paul Davies, with tongue in cheek.

DTV are very busy at the moment turning out Group 4 Vauxhall Chevettes for customers all over the world, most of which are built to LHD specification. Two of their latest customers are the Norwegians Tom Joelsen and Lars Sundling. Both drivers did the recent Werraland Rally in Germany with Joelsen finishing second and Sundling lying fourth until troubles struck near the end of the event. They will be rallying their cars in Britain for the first time on the Phonepower Welsh Rally.



John Horton, currently Rally Manager for Dunlop, is to join Dealer Opel Team at the beginning of May as their Public Relations Manager. John will handle the team's contacts with the media and also liaise with the 229 Opel dealers who back the team. He will also bring his own unique brand of humour to future DOT forums.



Another chance

Somebody got it right! Although the current postal problems very nearly stopped the second Dry Cane Special Stage, in much the same way as the petrol problems nearly stopped the Benson & Hedges Circuit of Ireland, one of the many readers who did get through got the result exactly right. Congratulations to Miss Claire Tyrer of The Black Swan, Helmsley who correctly predicted a win for Pentti Airikkala and a second for Billy Coleman. Your 2½ bottles of Dry Cane and your tee-shirt are on their way to you at this very moment.

Now then lads, how about a crack at the third Dry Cane Special Stage which starts now and will finish at the first post on Thursday May 10. The event is, of course, the Phonepower Welsh Rally which starts and finishes in Cardiff.

Once again we need to know who will come first and second on the rally. The event itself consists of approximately 250 miles of stages of which 90% will be on forestry track and the remaining 10% will be on tarmac. Last year's event was dominated by Hannu Mikkola in his Ford Escort and Hannu starts this year's rally at number one.

The other entries are as printed in this week's Special Stage pages. So, get your entries in now if you want to stand a chance of winning 2½ bottles of Dry Cane White Rum and a Dry Cane Tee-shirt. The address is: Dry Cane Special Stage, Autosport Editorial, 54-62 Regent Street, London W1.

Castrol
Autosport
NATIONAL RALLY
CHAMPIONSHIP
 1979

Daylight in Cumbria

The organisers of the Pirelli Tour of Cumbria have found some new stages in their area which means a change of format for the rally, which will now all be run in daylight.

Originally the rally, on September 29, the seventh round of the Castrol/Autosport Championship, was due to start at midnight on the Friday with competitors tackling stages in Kielder before breakfast. The rally will now start from Carlisle on Saturday Morning, have a lunch halt back there at the Pirelli factory, and finish in the town late afternoon.

The Cumbria Motor Sport Group are still negotiating for stages but they are hoping for one stately home stage never used for rallying before. They will be using at least five of the famous Lake District stages, including one that has only been used on international rallies up to now.

Another very good piece of news is that they have managed to get the services of Ron Palmer to act as Competitor Liaison Officer, which should ensure that any queries are dealt with quickly and efficiently.

The organisers are hoping to encourage competitors from the other side of the Irish Sea and are at the moment trying to work out a package deal for them, which will include the cost of the ferry, accommodation and entry fee.

The entry will be limited to 120 starters with regulations being available in June from Paul Gilligan, County Garage, PP Box 29, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA1 1JE, tel: 0228 24234



Last year's Welsh Rally winner, Hannu Mikkola, in action on the event.

LEADING PHONEPOWER WELSH RALLY ENTRIES

1, Hannu Mikkola/Arne Hertz	Ford Escort RS1800
2, Pentti Airikkala/Risto Virtanen	Vauxhall Chevette
3, Stig Blomqvist/Bjorn Cederberg	Saab Turbo
4, Markku Alen/Iikka Kivimaki	Fiat 131 Abarth
5, Per Eklund/Hans Sylvan	Triumph TR7 V8
6, Russell Brookes/Paul White	Ford Escort RS1800
7, Jean Pierre Nicolas/Phil Boland	Chrysler Sunbeam
8, Simo Lampinen/To be nominated	Triumph TR7 V8
9, Roger Clark/Jim Porter	Ford Fiesta
10, John Taylor/Phil Short	Ford Escort RS1800
11, Tony Pond/Monty Peters	Chrysler Sunbeam
12, Henri Toivonen/Bryan Harris	Ford Escort RS1800
13, John Buffum/John Brown	Ford Escort RS1800
14, Malcolm Wilson/Terry Harryman	Ford Escort RS1800
15, Andy Dawson/Kevin Gormley	Datsun Violet
16, Brian Culcheth/Neil Wilson	Opel Kadett GT/E
17, Jim Donald/Derek Tucker	Ford Escort RS1800
18, Jimmy McRae/Mike Nicholson	Vauxhall Chevette
19, Graham Elsmore/Stuart Harrold	Triumph TR7 V8
20, Terry Kaby/Brian Rainbow	Triumph TR7 V8
21, David Stokes/John Warner	Ford Escort RS1800
22, Tony Fowkes/Peter O'Gorman	Ford Escort RS1800
23, Tim Brise/Lyn Jenkins	Opel Kadett GT/E
24, Jeff Churchill/Roger Evans	Ford Escort RS1800
25, George Hill/Ron Varley	Vauxhall Chevette
26, Lasse Lampe/Pentti Kuukkala	Ford Escort RS1800
27, John Lyons/Jimmy Davison	Datsun 160J
28, Henry Inurrieta/Dave West	Ford Escort RS2000
29, Alan Carter/Brendan Nevill	Ford Escort RS2000
30, Mike Jackson/Steve Howard	Ford Escort RS1800

Sedan points

The Sedan Open Rally Championship is now being led by Stig Blomqvist with 20pts, followed by Pentti Airikkala who picked up his first 15 score on the Circuit of Ireland. In equal third place are Per Eklund and Billy Coleman with 10pts apiece.

In the manufacturers category of the championship, Saab and Vauxhall are battling for the lead with Saab on 22pts and Vauxhall on 21. Third place is being held by Ford with 18 while Opel are fourth with 13.

We'll provide the horses, you take the reins

170bhp from single cam Chevette

If you're serious about competing, right up to and including national level, you need the highest power to weight ratio your budget will buy — **the incredible Single Cam Clubmans Chevette.**

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Jumping problems

The fact that both Russell Brookes and Tony Pond wrote their cars off on one jump of the Circuit of Ireland once again raised the thorny problem of caution boards on Irish tarmac events. Brookes was fairly philosophical about the whole affair, admitting that he had been trying very hard and that he had taken the risk of not lifting for the jump.

Rather ironically, there was a warning of a jump in the road book for that particular spot. In fact, the jump that drivers were warned about was 200 yards beyond the one that did all the damage and wasn't so bad. Not even local inhabitants (such as Bertie Fisher) knew of the big jump, probably because it was on the approach to a major cross-roads where anybody driving on the open road would be braking rather than accelerating.

Most of the Irish rally drivers seemed to be firmly against the wave of hysteria which built up after the Galway International and one of the most interesting comments came from Noel Smith, one of Ireland's most experienced competitors. "I don't think they should use caution boards at all. Once you start putting the responsibility with the organisers, when do you stop? Special stage rallying was started as driving over unseen roads and that's the way it should stay."

Arriving on the Circuit was generally of a high standard, though Pentti did overshoot a couple of junctions early in the event. Rather more worrying was the fact that, during the course of the weekend, Pentti met three non-competing cars on stages. Fortunately in each case he had plenty of time to take avoiding action, but the Finn was a little shaken by the experience.

Billy's ECR points

With his second place on the Circuit of Ireland, Billy Coleman picked up enough points in the European Rally Championship to move into second place, just behind Antonio Zanini. Coleman now has 121 points, Zanini 140 pts and third place is held by Jochi Kleint with 116 pts.

Coleman would obviously have competed on the Circuit whether it was a round of the European Championship or not, but that doesn't mean that he isn't taking the series seriously. His next outing will be in a couple of weeks time in Elba and after that he is going to the Four Regions Rally in northern Italy. Plans after that depend on how the points tally stands, but Billy was particularly upset at missing the Zlatni Ptassatzi, a coefficient 4 event which was won by Zanini.

Coleman's current Escort, backed by Motorcraft and Ford of Cork, is now looking a little tired and he is hoping for



Above: Brian Culcheth came seventh on the Circuit in his Group 2 Opel Kadett. Below: First lady home in Ireland was Rosemary Smith in her Chrysler Sunbeam.



Circuit fuel shortage

Ireland's current petrol shortage was very nearly the downfall of the Benson & Hedges Circuit of Ireland. When the rally arrived in Killarny only the top teams had enough fuel left to compete on the batch of stages — and some of them were running low. Saab were down to their last few gallons and had to borrow some from BL in order to get through.

The petrol shortage was brought about by a combination of problems. First the exploding at Widdy Island earlier this year has diminished the amount of petrol that can be imported into Ireland. Secondly, there was a crane drivers strike in the docks during the weeks leading up to the rally. This meant that no big ships or tankers could be berthed in any Irish harbours. Thirdly, there were suggestions that the petrol companies were hanging on to stocks of fuel pending a price rise which is due in the next few weeks.

This last allegation was strengthened when the Irish Minister for Energy took over the control of all fuel supplies on the Tuesday before the rally started. The organisers got in touch with him and asked for an assurance that petrol would be guaranteed for the event but no such assurance was forthcoming. Instead, the UAC turned to the Tourist Board and to the local petrol distributors for help.

The Tourist Board has always been a supporter of rallying in Ireland and their local officers told the UAC that they would arrange for fuel to be delivered to certain stations along the route. In the face of this information, the club decided to go ahead with the rally and issued an amended list of fuel halts.

As soon as the event got over the border it was obvious that there were going to be problems. Never mind, there would be petrol in Galway — but there wasn't, and the Clerk of the Course, Donald Grieve, laid the blame firmly at the door of the local Tourist Board.

Whether the petrol was ever delivered to the petrol stations remains unclear,

any petrol in Galway for several days. "If we'd been the organisers, we would have cancelled a couple of days ago," one leading light told me.

It must be conceded that the petrol could have been delivered to the garages who then decided to hang on to it and sell it to the locals rather than the rally crews. Such action is fair enough — but hardly compensation for those who ran out of petrol on stages having passed three empty fuel halts.

Briefly...

● The winner of the unofficial Sunday Run was Ian Cathcart, codriven by Martin Whale, in his Escort RS1800. Ian had retired from the main rally exhaust and alternator failure just before the supper halt at Lough Key. He had been expecting some serious opposition on the Sunday Run with both Timo Salonen and Roger Clark out getting some useful experience. As it was, both these stars dropped out once again, and Ian was left with a clear run.

● Fortunately Adrian Boyd has a sense of humour. His troubles on the Circuit started in *parc ferme* before his Dolomite Sprint had even crossed the ramp. The car wouldn't start so he got some friends to tow him round the car park until the engine finally fired. He and co-driver Brian Boyd then decided to change the plugs but their own plug spanner was broken so they had to borrow one from another competitor. They dropped that one down into the engine! Finally they got going, complete with new plugs, only to have the engine fail on the second stage. Now, back on to the drawing board.

● Making a return to international rallying on the Circuit of Ireland was John Brown, who accepted an invitation to co-drive for Simon Everett in a Group 1 Escort RS2000. The pairing had a rather traumatic rally, with Everett getting used to the Brown organisation and Brown getting used to the Everett driving. They bent the cross-member to the Escort on one jump and suffered the problems of jamming steering as a result, then put the car on its side on the Arigna Mountain stage and dropped out of the G1 running as a result. Later in the event they put the car off the road again but they did manage to finish, fourth in G1. Everett later found that Brown had been writing down every accident in the margin of the road book — quite a volume.

● Hard luck story of the Circuit of Ireland must be that of Ron Neely, the amazing Ron was leading his class (1300, G1) in his Mini by an Irish mile and was lying 13th overall when, three stages from the end, a drive-shaft broke. A sad end to an incredible drive in such an underpowered car.



Winner of Spain's Firestone Rally at the weekend was Pio Alonso in his Chrysler Spain entered Simca 1200 Ti. Alonso had to battle against Carlos Torres in his Escort RS2000, who finished fourth, and Jose-Luis Salient in his Opel Kadett. He

Birkett wins at last

Geoff Birkett and Dave Orrick scored their first win in a *Motoring News* Rally Championship event at their 29th attempt last week end when, after a fine night's tough rallying, in Welsh border country, they took the major honours on the Owen Motoring Club's AGBO Rally.

Surviving a touch of professionalism at the conclusion of the event they took their Opel Kadett to victory ahead of the usual horde of Escorts in 19m 39s, a win which has moved them into joint second place in the series after three rounds.

Current leader Mick Briant and Dave Kirkham finished runners-up in their Escort RS2000 and another very happy crew were Ron Beecroft and John Millington who brought their new Sunbeam 1900 into third place, a mere six seconds down on Briant.

With a fine night — for a change — the pace was fast, furious and somewhat dusty right from the start. From the Church Stretton start the entry, minus John Bloxham's Fiat again, (this time the driver going down with a bug at the last minute) the rally wound its way up towards Welshpool. Such was the pace of the leaders that they managed to clean two of three selectives in this section.

As the crews paused for breath Briant held a minuscule lead over Birkett with Beecroft only five seconds off the pace and a determined Mike Pattison fifth. The second loop, of about 60 miles, took the rally into the well known lanes north of Welshpool and Briant maintained his fractional advantage with Beecroft moving into second only six seconds down. Pattison was charging and had taken third spot from Birkett, who at this stage had dropped 37 seconds behind. Harold Morley featured in the top five for the first time and was 1m 5s off the pace.

At last Geoff Birkett and Dave Orrick won a *Motoring News* event — the Agbo Rally.



The event was won and lost in the last third, approximately 70 miles, crews having taken their second gasp for fresh air at Penybontfawr. Birkett really turned the screws on as he took over the lead dropping only six minutes on the way home to beat Briant who dropped eight minutes.

Pattison dropped out of contention as tiredness began to take its toll of concentration but he still finished a creditable fourth albeit two minutes behind the Sunbeam men. Neil Jones, son of Lawrence, was the star of the night, however. Taking over from his father, the 18-year old drove the Triumph TR7 V8 for the first time and acquitted himself with honour taking fifth place ahead of Bill Gwynne and Steve Fellows. The latter fell foul of a rule which forbade them starting a selective early and the added four minutes penalty was too much of a burden although Gwynne did manage to pull back two minutes of the deficit.

Harold Morley was there or thereabouts until late on when he clobbered a bank a short distance into the last section south of Castle Caereinion and a half shaft broke as a result.

Briant still leads the championship with 29 pts but Birkett and Gwynne are now joint second on 21 pts.

1. Geoff Birkett/Dave Orrick (Opel Kadett), 19m 39s;
2. Mick Briant/Dave Kirkham (Escort RS2000), 21m 2s;
3. Ron Beecroft/John Millington (Sunbeam), 21m 8s;
4. Mike Pattison/Dave Taylor (Escort RS2000), 23m 26s;
5. Neil Jones/Peter Watts (Triumph TR7), 24m 27s;
6. Bill Gwynne/Steve Fellows (Escort RS2000), 24m 33s;
7. Theo Bengry/Paul Watkins (Opel Kadett), 24m 44s;
8. Graham Evans/Jon Savage (Escort RS2000), 28m 2s;
9. Ted Cowell/John McKerrrell (Escort RS2000), 28m 51s;
10. Roger Morani/Steve Potter (Escort RS2000), 31m 6s.

Maximum points for Powley

Roger Powley and Brian Goff took maximum points in the Welsh Assn Road Rally Championship last Saturday night when they won the Quinton Hazell 1979 Rally run by North Wales CC over a compact 190 mile route in North Wales. Starting and finishing at the spacious premises of the sponsor, the event attracted a full house of 90 crews all hoping to do well on the first fine night for many months.

Several crews should have won the event comfortably but had disasters of one kind or another. Geoff Kitney and Alan McCann threw their chance away early after a two minute delay going down a wrong slot. Then not long after, Roy McBurnie and Alun Edwards were forced to become spectators when their exhaust fell off while in the lead. Meanwhile Powley was having to cope with bumper problems on the D... which

badly off as Dennis Pollington who drowned in the ford on the second selective and lost more than two minutes reaching the next control a few feet the other side of the water. He later retired with a broken exhaust.

Finally the mixed crew award winners Suzanne Kenton and Dave Taylor can thank a group of spectators for their award as they got well and truly stuck on a hairpin and needed much manpower to get them underway again.

1. Roger Powley/Brian Goff (Dolomite Sprint), 65m 56s;
 2. Geoff Kitney/Alan McCann (Escort RS2000), 67m 37s;
 3. Joe Roberts/Fred Jones (Porsche Carrera), 71m 6s;
 4. Geraint Evans/Edwin Evans (Toyota Corolla), 72m 50s;
 5. Danny Owens/Andrew Sleeman (Escort RS2000), 77m 9s;
 6. Gareth and Gwyn Mawby (Escort RS2000), 77m 51s.
- Semi-experts: Tony Hornet/Keith Hughes



Steve Bannister won his first rally — Saturday Elcar Forest Stages Rally.

Success for Bannister

Steve Bannister from Malton, near York, scored his first rally success last Saturday when he won the David Brown MC's Elcar Forest Stages Rally from an entry of 133 crews.

Eight stages, in Dalby, Langdale, Wykeham and Bickley were used for the 30 miles of competition and Bannister and his co-driver pulled steadily away from the field to win the event by 14 seconds. He was fastest on four of the seven stages which were finally to count, the eight having to be deleted following a nasty incident in which a Mk1 Cortina slammed into the trees on a fast left hander putting Paul Noon the co-driver into hospital with a broken arm. Driver

Dave Harrison escaped without serious harm but the car was wrecked.

The organisers were grateful to the MOGY organisation (Medical Officers Group Yorkshire), who were onto the incident within a few minutes and who were present on all stages. Once again the rally passed off without protest for at least the third year in succession.

1. Steve Bannister/Adrian Robson (Escort RS1800), 30m 9s;
2. John Laley/Jim Goodman (Escort RS1800), 32m 3s;
3. Dick Rowland/Peter Williams (Escort RS2000), 33m 2s;
4. Pip Dale/Richard Stark (Vauxhall Chevette), 34m 3s;
5. Mike and Gill Taylor (Vauxhall Chevette), 40m 4s;
6. Paul Stephenson/Anthony Biggin (Escort RS1800), 42m 3s.

Wolf in sheep's clothing

The wolf in sheep's clothing. That's the insignificant looking Ford Anglia of Richard Mawson and George Tindall. But beneath the bonnet there's an RS1800 engine and this thundered out the power which left the crew handsome winners last Saturday night of the Greencroft MC's Motor Centre '79 Rally in Northumberland and Durham.

Nearly eight crews tackled a 150 mile route which included eight selectives and Mawson and Tindall romped away into the lead and won easily. But there was a great scrap for second with Mike Auston

and David Scaife, in a Vauxhall Chevette and an Escort RS 2000 both totalling the same penalties, Austin, with Pete Christie taking the runner-up spot on furthest cleanest.

1. Richard Mawson/George Tindall (Anglia), 75m penalties;
 2. Mike Auston/Pete Christie (Vauxhall Chevette), 96m 1p;
 3. David Scaife/Dave Sherwen (Escort RS2000), 96m 1p;
 4. Dave Lewis/Peter Pringle (Escort TC), 98m 1p;
 5. Eddie and Trudi Binks (Escort RS1600), 102m 0p;
 6. Brian and Andy Turnbull (Escort RS2000), 106m 3p.
- Class winners: R Roughead/L Biggins (Escort Sport), 152m 7p; M Collier/K Knox (Escort Mexico), 140m 7p.

Bright night in the valley

Gaining their best result of the year, Graham Dale and Bob Shutler went home last Sunday morning with two headlamps and four spots courtesy of Cibie after winning the Chess Valley MC's Three Counties Rally.

Ninety crews, the maximum, started the 150 mile route in Oxfordshire, Warwickshire and Buckinghamshire on a fine night and, in the early stages, Dick Mauger led the event in his Escort. He dropped behind when a high tension lead fell off and he lost over five minutes. His misfortunes came in the second half on the infamous Spelsbury 'white' and he eventually had to settle for fourth

place.

Competition was keen for the first three places, their destiny being decided on times from the short four and a half mile selective where Dale and Shutler outpaced Robin Rees and Paul Maynard to win by 21 seconds.

1. Graham Dale/Bob Shutler (Escort RS2000), 24m 54s;
 2. Robin Rees/Paul Maynard (Escort RS2000), 25m 15s;
 3. Will Rudd/Pete Tilling (Escort RS2000), 26m 12s;
 4. Dick Mauger/Dick Steptoe (Escort 1600), 28m 54s;
 5. Dennis Gregory/Mike Wise (Escort RS2000), 29m 13s.
- Semi-experts: William Hitchcock/John Griffin (Vauxhall Magnum).
Novices: Garry Wiggins/David Smith (Escort RS2000).
Best Chess Valley: Michael Royal/David Blackborrow (Escort GT).

Hutchinson gets it taped

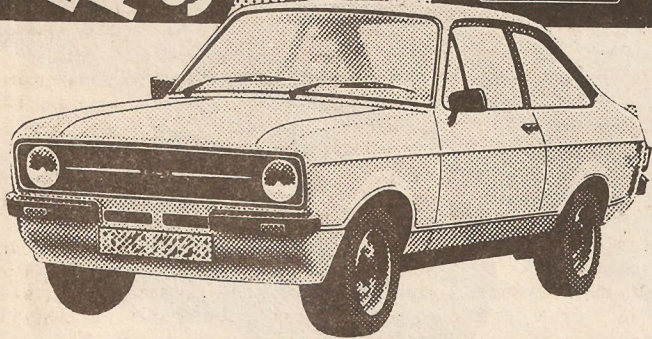
Mike Hutchinson took his TDK Tape Cassettes sponsored Escort RS2000 to victory by more than two minutes on the DFS Rally run by Matlock & Dist MC last Saturday night. With late replacement navigator Nigel Harris stepping in for the absent Eric Cowcill, the pair dropped 15m 32s on the 150 mile route in Derbyshire.

The one selective was the famous Goyt road north west of Buxton and, by the time that Hutchinson had arrived at this point, he had no rear brakes on his

just 2m 10s behind were Mike Farmer and John Chadwick in their Brocklehurst Sunbeam, the two leading crews opening up a sizeable gap over the rest of the 90 crews taking part in the first round of the East Midland Rally Championship.

1. Mike Hutchinson/Nigel Harris (Escort RS 2000), 15m 32s;
2. Mike Farmer/John Chadwick (Sunbeam), 17m 42s;
3. M Farmer/M Atkinson (Ford Mexico), 22m 5s;
4. Rob Branthwaite/Mike Roper (Escort RS2000), 22m 46s;
5. Rob Hughes/Howard Wilcock (Escort RS2000), 23m 10s;
6. ...

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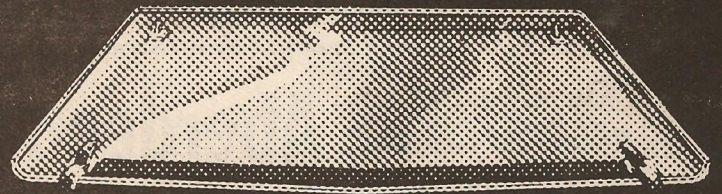


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Long Beach controversy

While normally admiring the attitude taken by your *Editorial* column, I find it sad that the effort in your April 12 issue to stir a controversy over the Long Beach start was based on so little knowledge of the rule, the regulations and the facts.

1. It is the business of the competitor to make himself familiar with the Rules and Regulations and ignorance is no defence.

2. The start procedure at Long Beach has not changed since last year when Reutemann on pole (and incidentally, Villeneuve in second spot) had no problem in spotting the startline.

3. The only change at the start was that the start lights had been moved from the left-hand side to the right of the track. But Villeneuve, despite being on pole for the first time in a Grand Prix, made no physical effort to check their position, neither did he attend the pre-race drivers' briefing.

4. While there may be exceptions, it is neither the rule nor normal practice for officials to stand in front of the field at the start. The regulation states "An official, holding a numbered board, will stand level with each line of the grid." At Long Beach, due to the 1x1x1 staggered formation of the grid, there were 24 boards approximately 24ins x 15ins, clearly numbered, being held out. It is inconceivable that any driver in pole position could miss all 24 of them.

5. It is not "arguable" whether Villeneuve was under starters orders. The Sporting Code clearly defines this as from the moment the starter raises the flag (or in this case gives the appropriate signal — ie turns on the red light). The red light was never on, the field was not under starter's orders, and in consequence there was no 'jumped-start' and there could be no question of a time penalty.

6. In view of the chaos caused by Villeneuve's failure to stop, and in order that there should be a fair and proper start, there was no alternative other than that the cars should return to the dummy grid and the five-minute countdown re-commence.

7. The regulation regarding the closure of the pit road is also well established and Reutemann should know that it clearly states "Any car still in the pits will only be allowed to start the race after the entire field has passed the pit exit on their first racing lap."

It is not for me to comment on the size of the fines imposed, but should the Stewards of the Meeting have failed to react to these infringements of the regulations by two drivers of Formula 1 stature, then indeed the LBGPA, the SCCA administration and all concerned would be open to criticism.

ROBERT LANGFORD,
Race Executive, RAC.

LONDON NW1

We really must defend ourselves against the accusation that our leader was intended to stir up a controversy. Are we not to be allowed to criticise without being so accused?

Our comments were made not in ignorance of the rules, but in the awareness that they were found wanting. It appears that all Grand Prix organisers have no choice (rightly or wrongly) but to do things precisely by the book, and also that, at Long Beach, the rules were inadequate, since they permitted Villeneuve to make such a basic mistake.

Of course, Villeneuve must be criticised for failing to attend the drivers' briefing. Perhaps this is a good example of inadequate rules for, in our view, every Grand Prix driver should be compelled to attend the drivers' briefing, under threat of exclusion from the race. Where exceptional circumstances exist, as they do at Long Beach, the briefing assumes even greater importance than elsewhere.

Villeneuve, however, must obviously carry some of the blame for the Long Beach startline incident. Our April 12 Editorial, in fact, was largely concerned with the extent of his fine. We did not discuss the Reutemann incident.

We welcome Robert Langford's letter which, we are sure, was written solely in order to put forward the facts as he sees them. However, we stand by our criticisms. The essential point is that, whether because of inadequate regulations or unsatisfactory procedure, there was scope for the incident to occur. The organisers should have ensured that there was no room for

Mike Cookson's letter (below) presents another view of the incident, and includes an interesting observation about the efficiency of Robert Longford's 'numbered boards'. — Ed.

Eye witness

It seems a little unfair that the Long Beach organisers should have fined Gilles Villeneuve for their own startline fiasco.

Sitting at the startline, I was able to witness the whole incident. The cars slowly approached the start, which is about 500 yards down from the first hairpin on Shoreline Drive. Between the hairpin and the startline, there was one marshal post. As the cars came up to the start, these marshals remained behind the barriers, and there were no waved yellow flags to warn drivers to be prepared. At the startline itself, marshals were ready with poles with numbers to indicate grid positions, but again these were not used, the marshals chatting among themselves! There was no marshal to indicate the front line, just the light gantry high above the circuit (against the sun).

It is little wonder that anyone on the front two rows of the grid wondered what was going on, and effectively just continued. Had the organisers copied other Grand Prix starts, this confusion would have been avoided.

The BBC would do well to note the amount of American TV coverage. This amounted to approximately three hours live coverage, with excellent camera positions including the Goodyear airship. Dan Gurney and Brett Lunger were on the commentating team. The whole programme was then repeated at 11.30pm the same night.

Between the two 'starts', the time was filled in with recorded interviews with various drivers; one of these showed Gilles Villeneuve shopping for a Ferrari 250 GTO (with a price tag of \$82,500), and he stated he is also looking for a Ford GT40 for his collection! Perhaps he bought it after the race!

The police organisation of the traffic was fantastic — within twenty minutes of the race finishing I was driving out towards Los Angeles wondering what had happened to all the other traffic. Having read recent correspondence in *AUTOSPORT*, it seems to me that the traffic problem is one of the major deterrents in keeping crowds away from our own circuits. If circuit owners, together with the police, could sort this problem out, they might find they would be getting bigger gates.

WARRINGTON

MIKE COOKSON.

Aurora unrealis . . .

I feel I must put pen to paper having witnessed the Gold Cup at Oulton Park on Good Friday. It was, to say the least, what motor racing is all about. The race lasted for 65 laps and there was not one boring second, or even the slightest hint of the race becoming the procession that we have come to expect from Formula 1.

At the beginning of the year, I was full of hope for the Aurora series, and I would like to congratulate John Webb and thank all who participated at Oulton Park. I have not seen such a fine race for about ten years.

Watching the Race of Champions on TV on Sunday, I could not help feeling sorry for the vast crowd that had gone to watch *seven Grand Prix drivers*. If Bernie Ecclestone can turn out a two-car team, why couldn't the rest put more effort in? I can only hope that the Aurora section, of which we did not get a glimpse on TV, produced a better spectacle.

To those who weren't at Oulton Park, I would suggest they go on June 30. The Northern circuit is a splendid drivers' circuit and Good Friday proved that Formula 1 at Oulton does work. When, oh when, is MCD going to get its finger out and spend some money on what could easily be Britain's greatest track, and save it from the degradation it is now suffering?

Finally, I would just like to say thank you to Rupert Keegan and David Kennedy *et al* for not being afraid to race. Two Formula 1 cars rubbing wheels going onto the last lap! Overtaking on the outside (shades of Jacky Ickx)! I am certain that if they had had the faster rubber at Brands and better facilities and equipment they would have shown up some of today's 'playboys'

Snetterton danger

As a crew of marshals who have worked together regularly for over ten years, we would like to draw your attention to the siting of the marshal's post by the centre of Russell Bend at Snetterton circuit.

The incident that has brought this matter to a head was in practice for the Formula 3 race on April 1, when car number 16, driven by John Bright, came into the corner and crashed into the barrier in a direct line to the marshal's post. The marshals (for their own safety, to avoid the debris from the incident), jumped down from the post, and one injured his leg.

However, the pit road runs immediately behind the post and the speed at which cars pass, is, as can be expected, excessive. We would like to put forward a suggestion that this point be moved to behind the pit road on the end of the paddock bank.

ELY, CAMBS. DAVID T. RATCLIFFE AND OTHERS.

John Milner-Smith

I should like to contribute a small appreciation for John Milner-Smith, who did so much to help us right from the beginning of the Racing Car Insurance Scheme with his expertise.

When I started the Insurance Scheme, John was above all a motor racing enthusiast. He wrote to me as a Loss Adjuster to ask if he could be involved in our various schemes. In 1975 John joined Graham Miller & Co, and set up his own Motor Racing Insurance Department.

During these years John made many friends, from Formula 1 constructors to the smallest club racer. His job on occasions was not the most popular or the easiest, but every time John came through with a smile and a thank you. It was his great sense of humour and integrity that earned him his nickname of the Jolly Green Giant. On his familiar anorak he even wore a special badge of the Jolly Green Giant, clutching a damaged car in one hand and a bag of gold in the other. A well known Lloyd's Underwriter, on meeting John for the first time, remarked, "Jolly yes, Giant yes, Green no".

John was only 36. Above all I have lost a great friend. He leaves a wife, Penny, and two sons, James and Guy.

IAN BRACEY,

LONDON SE1

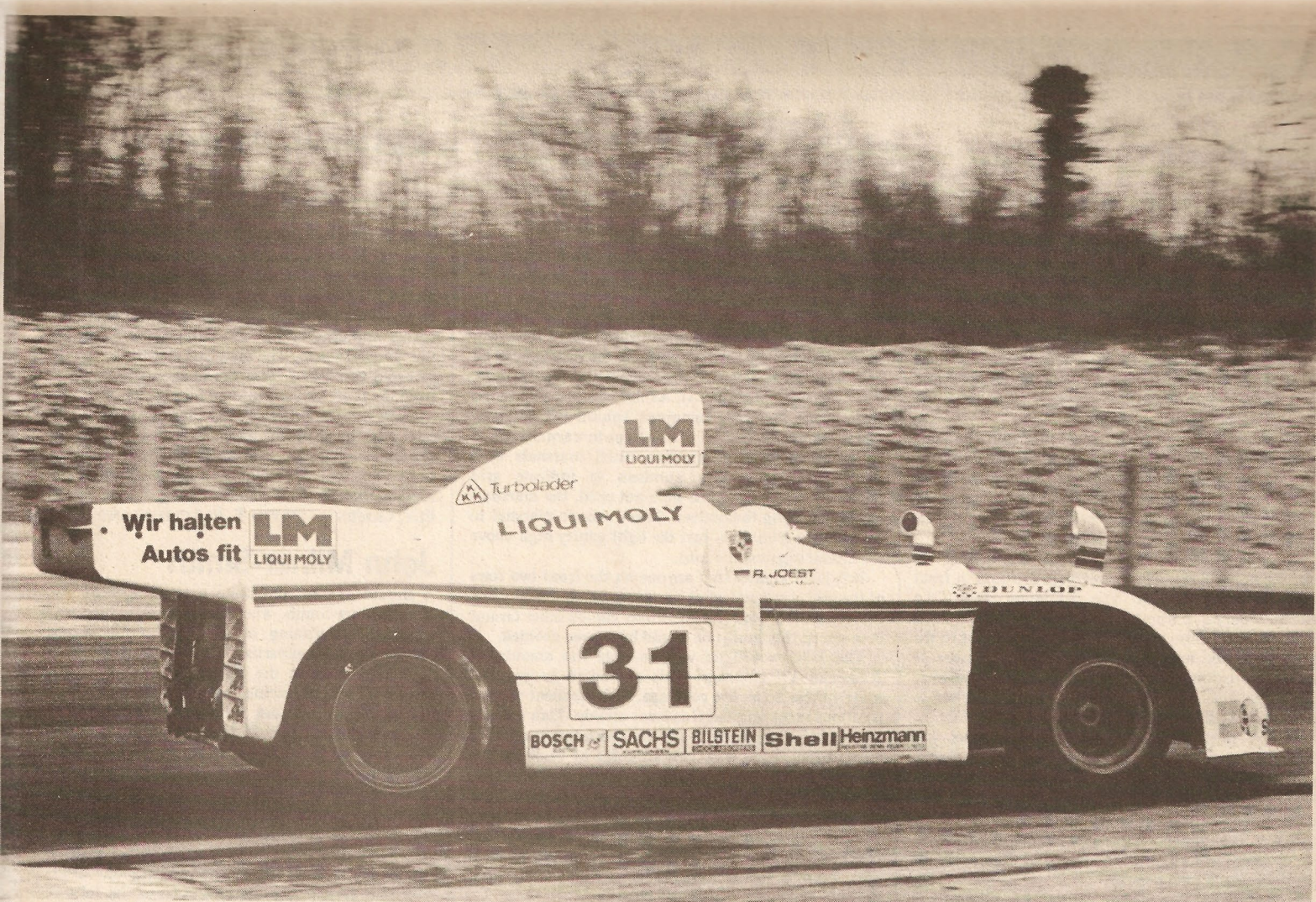
Chandler Ibec International Ltd.

Then as now?

On Easter Monday 25 years ago the BARCs Goodwood meeting provided two race wins for Ken Wharton's BRM, in the five lap Chichester cup and the 21 lap Glover Trophy (*AUTOSPORT*, April 23, 1954). The longer event was enlivened by Wharton's splendid struggle for the lead with Roy Salvadori's Maserati, which ended only when the two gently collided and spun off at Lavant. Salvadori stalled his engine, but Wharton resumed racing, still in the lead, and pulled away to an effortless win from Ken McAlpine's Connaught. In brilliant sunshine the record crowd, said to have exceeded 55,000, saw new Grand Prix cars from Maserati, Ferrari, HWM and Connaught: their speed showed that already these 2½-litre cars were becoming highly-developed.

At the Pau street circuit in France, Jean Behra gave French racing a boost by narrowly winning the third Formula 1 Grand Prix of the year in his Gordini from Maurice Trintignant's works Ferrari. During a tremendous dice with Trintignant, Behra broke the lap record six times and finally slipped past his former team-mate seven laps from home. Farina started his Ferrari from pole but made a pathetic getaway, then, trying to recover, he let the clutch in violently and shunted the back of Onofre Marimon's Maserati.

A good crowd attended Brands Hatch for the first meeting to use the new Druids loop. It is hard to imagine racing *up* Paddock bend, but until this meeting that was the way round Kentish circuit: Stuart Lewis-Evans adapted most easily to the changes, establishing the lap record and winning two races in his Cooper.



Now sporting a twin-turbo motor, Reinhold Jöst's venerable Porsche was easily the quickest car at Dijon.

A Group 6 victory

Another dull sports car event — Jöst/Merl/Ketterer win with elderly Group 6 Porsche 908 — Loos Porsche 935 of Ickx/Wollek/Schurti is second — Report & Photography: BOB CONSTANDUROS.

Fastest in practice, without doubt the fastest car in the race, that was Reinhold Jöst's elderly Porsche 908 at Dijon last Sunday. The 3-litre Group 6 car easily took the Dijon 6 Hours, third round of the World Championship of Makes. Although Jöst's co-drivers (Mario Ketterer and Volkert Merl), were not as quick as he, they maintained the advantage built up by Jöst in the early stages to win by four laps.

Second was the remaining healthy Group 5 Loos Porsche 935 of Bob Wollek/Jacky Ickx/Manfred Schurti. The second Loos 935, that of Manfred Schurti/John Fitzpatrick/Bob Wollek, finished down in 13th place after losing about 50mins with an ignition problem. Third was the similar Porsche of Dieter Schornstein/Edgar Doren, 12 laps behind the Loos car.

Not a very exciting race . . .

WCM WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP OF MAKES 3
DIJON

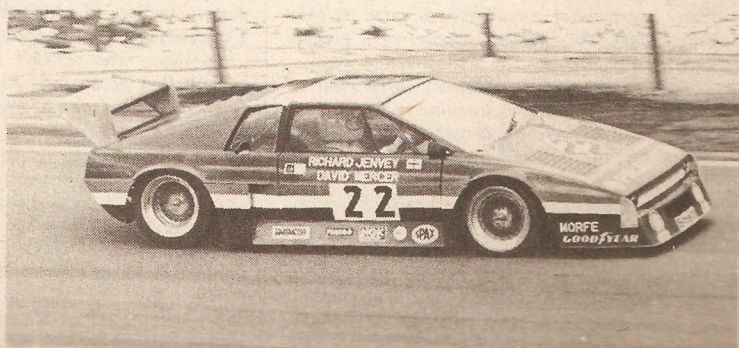
ENTRY & PRACTICE

The entry for the third round of the World Championship of Makes brought the usual cries: this, a World Championship? In the Group 5 category, there was the competitive Loos team, and several less competitive Porsche 935s; in the 2-litre class there were only three cars. That made ten G5 cars in total. Nine Porsche Carreras and 934s made up the Group 4 class, and ten Group 6 cars boosted the total to 29 in all. Missing were Carlo Facetti/Martino Finotto with their Porsche 935, the Kremer team of Porsche 935s, and the still unraced Lancia Beta Monte Carlo turbo.

There was a total of four hours of practice on Saturday to determine the 26-car grid. In the rather cold if dry conditions, it was the one G6 car in the over 2000cc class which captured pole position. Reinhold Jöst brought out his seven-year-old Porsche 908 and easily took pole position in 1m 17.77s. The Porsche is now painted in Liqui Moly colours (Jöst's G5 sponsors in Germany) and is fitted with the latest twin-turbo 2.1 engine, similar to those used in the Porsche 936s. If his time was nearly 3secs faster than the next quickest car, and that in itself scarcely promised a battle for the lead, one had doubts about the speed of his two co-drivers, Volkert Merl and Mario Ketterer. But the Porsche had a 160-litre fuel tank (compared with the

FASTEST QUALIFIERS

Reinhold Jöst/Volkert Merl/Mario Ketterer	2.1	Porsche 908/4	1:17.77
John Fitzpatrick/Manfred Schurti	3.0	Porsche 935 77A	1:20.63
Francois Servanin/Laurent Ferrier	2.0	Chevron-Chrysler B36	1:20.75
Jacky Ickx/Bob Wollek	3.0	Porsche 935 77A	1:21.12
Bruno Sotty/Gerard Cuyenet/Marc Frischnecht	2.0	Lola-BDG T294/6	1:21.68
Daniel Brillat/Jean-Pierre Aeschlimann	2.0	Cheetah-BMW G601	1:21.80
Claude Haldi/Herbert Lowe	3.0	Porsche 935 76A	1:22.86
Jean-Louis Lafosse/Michel Leclere	3.0	Porsche 935 76A	1:23.13
Dieter Schornstein/Edgar Doren	3.0	Porsche 935 77A	1:23.13
Jean-Marie Lamerle/Alain Levie/Pierre-Francois Rousselot	2.0	Lola-Chrysler T296	1:24.48
Mario Luini/Philippe Roux/Philippe Jeanneret	2.0	Cheetah-BDG G501	1:24.90
Michel Elkoubi/Max Cohen-Olivar	2.0	Lola-BMW T296	1:24.97
Bernard Verdier/Noel Del Bello	2.0	Chevron-Chrysler B36	1:25.00
Peter Hahnlein/Franz Geschwender/Klaus Boehm	3.0	Porsche 935 76A	1:26.91
Renaud Laverre/Jean-Pierre Danet	1.8	Lola-FVC T296	1:27.95
Peter Zbinden/Edi Kofel	3.0	Porsche 934	1:29.53
Alain Dechelette/Charles Dechelette	2.0	Chevron-Chrysler B36	1:29.60
Jacques Guerin/Gerard Bleyria/Jean-Louis Schlessler	3.0	Porsche 911	1:29.96
Richard Jenvey/David Mercer/Mike Whittenden	2.0	Lotus Esprit	1:31.06
Roland Ennequin/Georges Bourd/lat	3.0	Porsche 934	1:31.69



Richard Jenvey raced the very new G5 Lotus Esprit.

practice was cut short by an annoying oil leak which was hard to race. The team are supported by Polarroof and Shell, but have been held up waiting for their Vegantune engine, and the car was scarcely tested.

RACE

Amusingly, there was some doubt as to the length of the race on Sunday: was it 1000 kilometres, or 6 hours? M Chambelland, the co-director of the race, cleared it up as best as he could by announcing that it was either 6 hours, or 1000 kilometres, whichever came first!

Although Schurti was the first man into the corner after the rolling start, by the end of the first lap Jöst was already into the lead and pulling away. In fact he had an enormous lead over Schurti, Ickx and Haldi after only two laps, and started opening up the gap at 2½secs a lap. While Jöst was in the car, there would be no stopping it. Within seven minutes he was lapping the tailenders, and after a quarter of an hour had over 20secs lead.

Schurti was weaving his way through the backmarkers in second place, not an easy task for the faster drivers at Dijon, which requires all the drivers' attention for nearly all the circuit but the straight. Overtaking had to be undertaken prudently...

Behind the three twin-turbo Porsches of Jost, Schurti and Ickx came Haldi, but after half an hour he was lapped. Five minutes later Ickx went the same way, and another eight minutes later Jöst lapped Schurti to be a lap in front of the rest of the field.

Behind Haldi, in fifth place but left behind by the other Porsches, was the Schornstein/Doren 935, followed by the first of the 2-litres, the ROC Chevron of Ferrier/Servanin, followed by the Cheetah of Brillat/Aeschlimann.

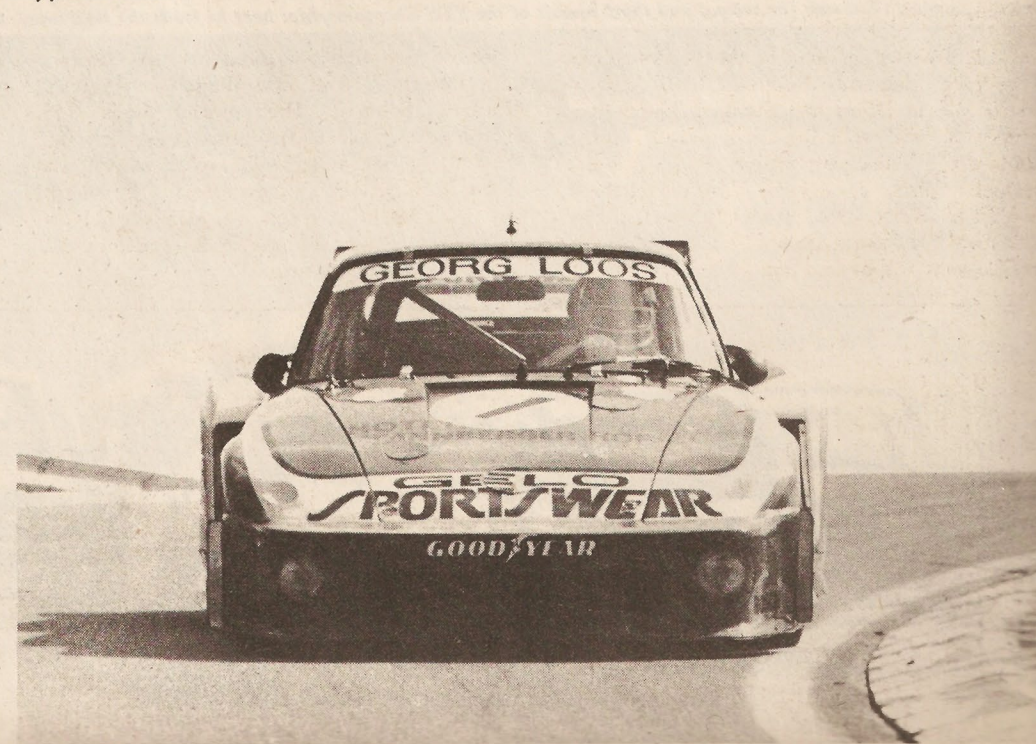
Lafosse had had trouble when he hit a slowing 2-litre car which was staggering back to the pits. The impact damaged a front strut on the Porsche, and Lafosse lost 10 mins having it replaced.

Also out at this stage was the Lotus. After fuel pressure trouble had delayed the car at the start, Jenvey then had to play with the fuel pumps for the first laps, and then stopped out on the circuit. Later the engine went sick, and Jenvey found pieces of aluminium piston in the engine.

At the one-hour mark, there was little change in the order, if only because the more powerful Porsches were stopping to refuel for the first time. But after Schurti had handed over to Fitzpatrick, the Englishman only did a lap before pitting again. The trouble was that the car was leaking fuel from the front filler, but there was little that could be done immediately. Meanwhile Lowe had taken over from Haldi, and the inexperienced driver not only lost time learning to race the turbo Porsche 935, but also had a slow puncture.

After two hours the Porsche 908 had a lead of more than three laps over the first 935, that of Wollek/Ickx, and then came the Fitzpatrick/Schurti 935, two laps further back. In fourth place, another lap behind, came the first 2-litre car, that of Servanin/Ferrier, going very well and on the same lap as the Schornstein/Doren 935. Three laps behind came the 935, of Haldi/Lowe. In seventh spot came the Brillat/Aeschlimann Cheetah, although Lemerle/Levie/Rousselot had been further up but had to change the

In spite of the superb driver line-up of Jacky Ickx/Bob Wollek/Manfred Schurti, the best Loos Porsche 935 could only finish second.



The Porsche 935 shared by Claude Haldi/Herbert Löwe, sandwiched here by the slower 934s of Perrier (49) and Vanoli, finished in fourth place, 20 laps down on the winner.

120 litres of G5 cars) and would consume less petrol than the thirsty 3-litre Porsche 935s.

John Fitzpatrick and Manfred Schurti were next quickest in the first of Georg Loos's Porsche 935s with a time 0.19sec slower than the fastest 935 time set in last year's practice. Although they had no major problems, the second Loos car for Bob Wollek/Jacky Ickx did not handle so well, and was fourth fastest in Ickx's hands.

Splitting the 935s was the 2-litre ROC Chrysler-powered Chevron B36 of Francois Servanin/Laurent Ferrier. Another 2-litre was fifth fastest, the Pronuptia Lola of Bruno Sotty/Gerard Cuyenet/Marc Frischknecht. For much of practice, their BDG-powered car was fastest in the class, but then Sotty hit a kerb and broke a brake caliper, which ended his second session.

Close behind the Lola came the Cheetah-BMW of Daniel Brillat/Jean-Pierre Aeschlimann, despite practising only in the second session because a rear tyre lost its tread in unofficial practice on Friday and badly damaged the rear bodywork.

Third fastest of the G5 cars was the Porsche 935 (single-turbo) of Claude Haldi/Herbert Lowe, and two more 935s filled the eighth and ninth spots on the grid. Jean-Louis Lafosse's, co-driver eventually turned out to be Michel Leclere, although both Jean-Pierre Jarier and Bernard Darniche were at one time suggested. Sharing the Frenchmen's time was the twin-turbo Porsche 935 in Sekurit colours for Dieter Schornstein/Edgar Dören. Over a second slower, completing the top ten, were Jean-Marie Lemerle/Alain Levie in their Chrysler-powered Lola T296 ahead of the Cheetah-BDG G501 which was well-driven to a good time considering this car has done over 100 events. Drivers were Mario Luini/Philippe Roux, who was gaining experience for his Le Mans debut later in the year.

Michel Elkoubi has put together a good team for Le Mans of two new Lola T296s sponsored by Lambretta. The 1979 car he was driving with Max Cohen-Olivar was 12th fastest although it was very new, and didn't handle too well, while the second car was a 1978 model and was fitted with some experimental bodywork for Le Mans, but was once again none too stable. Fastest of the G4 was the 934 of Peter Zbinden/Edi Kofel.

Three places further back came England's Richard Jenvey/David Mercer/Mike Chittenden in the fastest 2-litre G5 car, the interesting and very new Lotus Esprit. After some gearing adjustments in the first session, they got down to an excellent time before their

practise motor during their first pitstop.

After 25 minutes of the third hour, Schurti brought the third placed 935 into the pits. Fuel was still leaking from the filler, but the problem this time was the engine. Although they fired up the car after a few minutes, it sounded horrible, and the red Porsche stayed in the pits for 51mins. The trouble was finally traced to the distributor.

At exactly half-distance, Ickx showed what he thought of the leading Porsche when he overtook Merl to chop back the advantage by only a lap. Jöst had been lapping in around 1m 19s, but Merl and Ketterer were both expected to be some 5secs slower. It was Ketterer's turn to drive after 3hrs 25mins when the leading Porsche stopped for a second time, and the Swiss took over.

In the next hour, the 2-litre cars began to hit trouble. The Servanin/Ferrier class leading car had its distributor cap broken by a stone, and had to be pushed back by the team to the pits in order to have it changed. But it dropped down the order. The Sotty/Cuyenet/Frischknecht car stopped out on the circuit with ignition trouble, and the Cheetah of Brillat/Aeschlimann retired with a broken engine. And after four hours, the Rousselot/Lemerle/Levie suffered from a misfire. This promoted the older Cheetah of Luini Roux/Jeaneret to first in class and, at four hours, to fifth place.

The 908 had a four laps lead at that time, followed by Ickx/Wollek who had been joined by Schurti. Another seven laps behind were Schornstein/Doren and fourth, two more laps behind, were Haldi/Loewe.

To the fifth hour, there was precisely one change in the top ten when the Guerin/Bleynie/Schlesler Porsche took over ninth place at the expense of the Calderi/Spavetti/Severi Porsche and the Dechelette brothers' Chevron, which had been misfiring virtually from the start.

The ninth-placed car sadly emitted a great cloud of smoke with only a few minutes to go; despite this, they tried to finish, but were not permitted out onto the track (a gearbox seal had gone). Rousselot coaxed his Lola to the finish, pulling off at the end, and Lafosse had brake troubles during the final laps.

Finally, as if to liven things up, the gendarmerie decided to check everyone in the pits to ensure they had the right passes. It was that kind of race — but at least there were 19 cars running at the end.

Dijon 6 Hours World Championship of Makes, round 3 Dijon, France, April 22

1. Reinhold Jöst/Volkert Merl/Mario Ketterer (2.1 Porsche 908/4), 255 laps, 602.10 miles 100.335mph;
2. Jacky Ickx/Bob Wollek/Manfred Schurti (3.0 Porsche 935 77A), 251 laps;
3. Dieter Schornstein/Edgar Doren (3.0 Porsche 935 77A), 239 laps;
4. Claude Haldi/Herbert Lowe (3.0 Porsche 935 76A), 235 laps;
5. Peter Haehnlein/Franz Gschwender/Klaus Boehm (3.0 Porsche 935 76A), 232 laps;
6. Mario Luini/Philippe Roux/Philippe Jeaneret (2.0 Cheetah-BDG G501), 232 laps;
7. Peter Zbinden/Edi Kofel (3.0 Porsche 934), 226 laps;
8. Jean-Louis Lafosse/Michel Leclere (3.0 Porsche 935 76S), 224 laps;
9. Alain Dechelette/Charles Dechelette (Chevron-Chrysler B36), 223 laps;
10. Enzo Calderari/Willy Spavetti/Athos Severi (3.0 Porsche Carrera RSR), 222 laps.

Fastest lap: Jöst, 1m 18.6s, 108.146mph.

Bruno Giacomelli

The European Formula 2 champion looks forward to his first race with Alfa Romeo's new V12 Grand Prix car, with BOB CONSTANDUROS.

"I really want to get into Formula 1 and stay there. I was very depressed at the end of last year, and even now my problem is not solved. I want to race in Formula 1 from the beginning of the season to the end." Bruno Giacomelli talking.

It is not surprising that he is depressed. After winning the 1978 European Formula 2 Championship for March-BMW, Bruno had scarcely an offer to drive in Formula 1. Before he was taken on by Alfa Romeo to test their Formula 1 car, and ultimately to race it, it was a very difficult time for Bruno. It really did look as though he would be left on the side lines. After a number of races with McLaren, the young man from Brescia was being written off as uncompetitive in what was, to be honest, a less than competitive Formula 1 car.



Bruno Giacomelli: back to F1 with Alfa Romeo.

Now Bruno Giacomelli is with Alfa Romeo. How are things there? "We are still testing the very first car using the flat-12 engine. We have been modifying this car all the time, and the completely new wing-car, using the V12, should be ready soon.

"We do a lot of testing, then we modify the car, and then it's test, test, test again. That is our power. I don't think anyone else but Ferrari tests as much as we do. It is very good for us, the whole team. It's certainly very important for me to keep driving a racing car. Because I do so much testing, I'm in form, I'm not forgetting how to drive. And I'm more confident with Alfa Romeo than I was with McLaren. The project is really in my hands, there is no one else doing the testing."

Bruno is particularly happy with Alfa's testing policy because it allows him to gain experience with a Formula 1 car away from the public's gaze. After criticism of his initiation to Grand Prix racing in 1978, he is very mindful of getting used to his car: "I like to

do things as a programme, to keep my feet on the ground. I want time, time and experience. It is not possible to win easily in Formula 1 these days.

"Last year people criticised me for not going well in the McLaren, but too few people asked me for a reason why. You must understand that I have to be completely confident in a car. I had that confidence in Formula 2, but I can tell you that it's not easy to win eight out of 12 F2 races. But it's not true to say that 500bhp is a problem for me, that's bullshit. To drive an F2 car quickly is as difficult as it is to drive an F1 car quickly. The power to weight ratio is one factor, the tyres another.

"I need to gain this confidence, and that is what Alfa Romeo are allowing me to do. This isn't everyone's problem, but it is mine. I don't want to climb into the car and push down the power, that's silly. I don't want to show people destroyed cars — I want to show people race victories. And I want people to trust me in a

racing car."

While Bruno gains his Formula 1 experience, he also has quite a full programme of top league motor racing. "I will be doing the Pro-Car series in a BMW Italia I'm still very close to BMW, I like them, they are very serious people. I am also doing four races in the BMW Italia CSL in Group 2. I'd never started a saloon car race before the first round of the European Touring Car Championship at Monza. Sure, I'd driven the BMW 320i Turbo in practice and testing, and I've driven the M1, but I'd never raced a saloon before. They're not difficult to drive — a single-seater is harder!" Bruno won the second and third rounds of the series earlier this month.

Do Alfa Romeo object to him driving other makes of cars? "No, their attitude is that I must keep driving, that is my job. My contract says that I can even drive another Formula 1 car. As for the Pro-Car series, they feel that a single-seater make is different to a production car make, so I'm free to drive that too."

And what about a Formula 2 again, as was at one time suggested? "Not in Europe. I did my job last year, now it's someone else's turn! I enjoyed working with Robin Herd of March last year in F2, and in Formula 3 before that. However, I might do some Formula 2 in Japan for the Le Mans company, and I have an offer for the Temporada series if that takes place."

Now Bruno is living back at home in Brescia, having based himself near March Engineering's factory in Bicester, Oxfordshire before. But with Alfa Romeo testing at Circuit Paul Ricard and the company's own Balocco test track (near Turin), he must now be on hand to test when required.

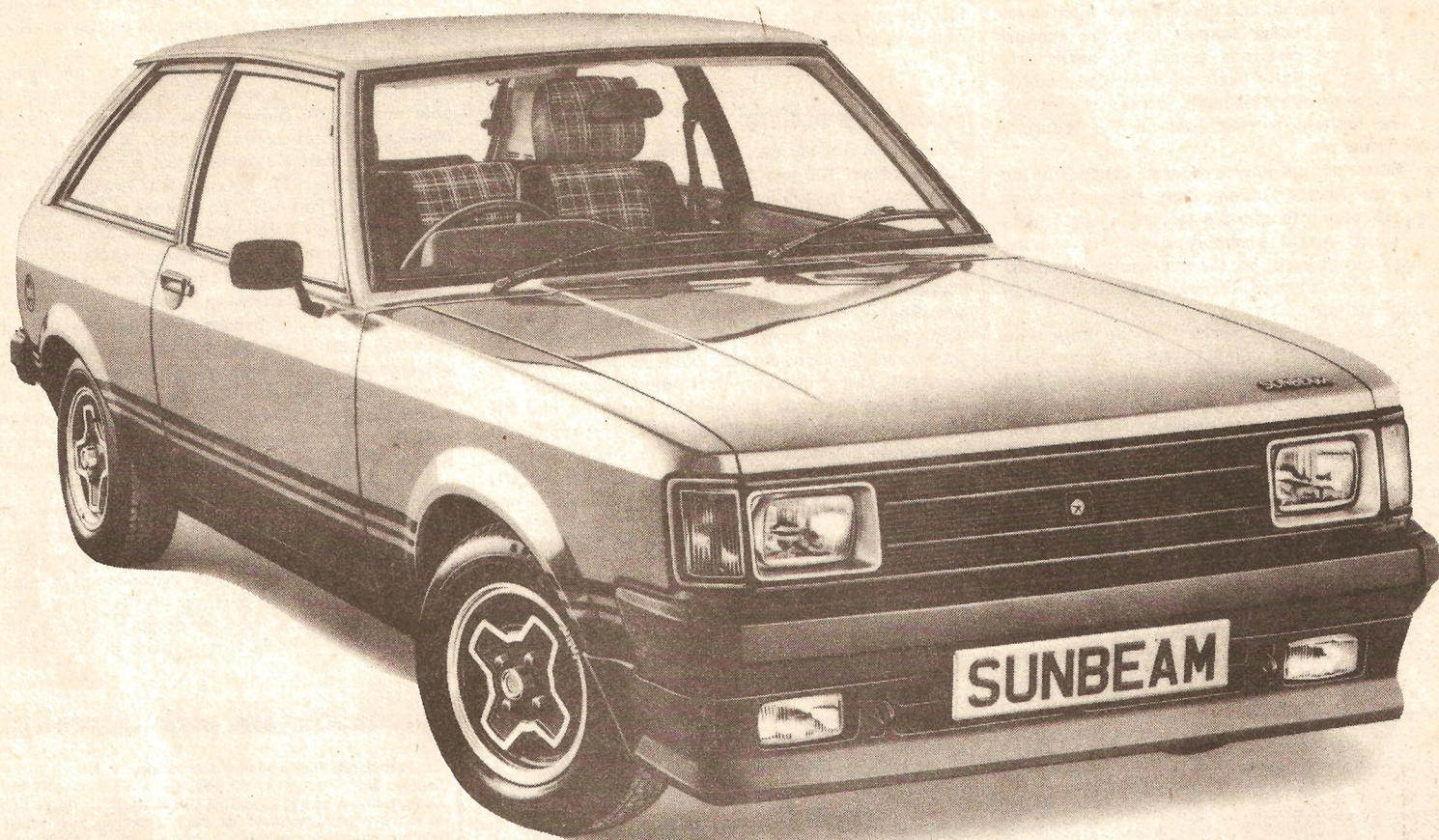
The week before I spoke to him, two days of testing scheduled for Paul Ricard had been called off because of the weather, so he had done a day at Balocco instead. "I've had this car (an Alfetta GTV) for five days now, and I've already done 3000kms in it, such is my programme. I do all my business work myself. A lot of drivers have their own managers who take a percentage, but I'm still not earning enough money to do that. I don't particularly want someone else to do this work for me. If I do it myself, I know what I'm doing and exactly what I'm earning, and I also have personal contact with the people who pay me."

Being the works driver for Carlo Chiti's Alfa Romeo team puts him on a level with Gilles Villeneuve and Jody Scheckter as the darling of his fellow-countrymen. But such attention never seemed to worry him in the past, and scarcely does now. There are no super-star trappings for Bruno. He is working quietly and systematically towards the scheduled debut of the new Alfa Romeo V12 car at Monza on September 9, and then, he says, "We shall see. But I must tell you that I race for one thing, and that is to be World Champion." ■

Bruno Giacomelli has won the second and third rounds of the ETC Championship: here he leads the field away at Vallelunga.



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Alfa Romeo's new big six

It is most interesting that Alfa Romeo, having concentrated for a good many years on four-cylinder cars of moderate size, have decided to return to the six-cylinder field where they used to be so active. The Alfa 6 is a big car, with an overall length of 15ft 7.4 ins and a dry weight of 26 cwt 64 lb.

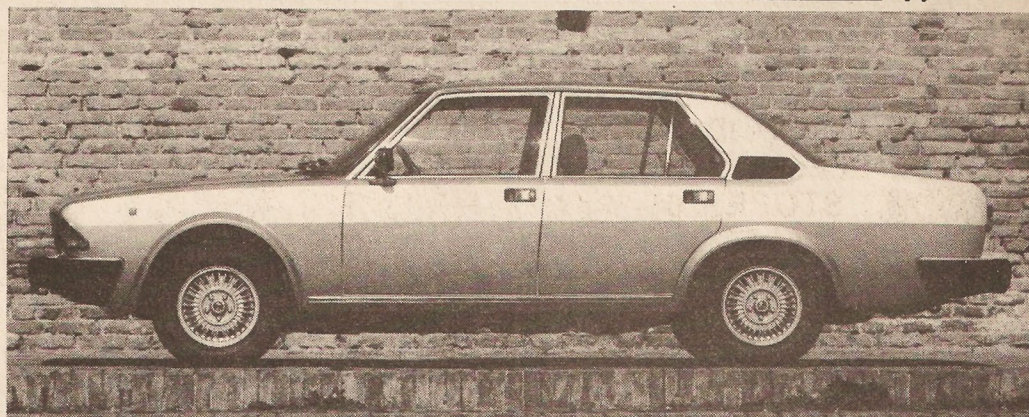
The engine is entirely new and does not follow the traditional Alfa Romeo twin-cam design. It is an over-square V6 of 2492 cc, the cast-iron liners in the light-alloy cylinder block being set at an included angle of 60 deg. The steel crankshaft has hardened journals and runs in four main bearings.

The valves are at an angle of 46° 45', the exhausts being sodium-cooled. To that extent, normal Alfa Romeo design practice is followed, but the valve operation is entirely new. Each head carries a single overhead camshaft, driven by a toothed belt that is hydraulically tensioned, and operating the inlet valves directly through bucket tappets. For the exhaust valves, there are pushrods across the heads and rockers. Each inlet valve has a separate downdraught carburettor, so there are six in all, feeding into vertical ports. The ignition is electronic on the inductive discharge principle.

The Alfa 6 does not have a separate gearbox at the rear like the Alfetta. In any case, the new engine develops 160bhp with massive torque in the middle ranges, which would probably stress the existing transmission to its limit. So, the well-known five-speed ZF box has been adopted, conventionally mounted in unit with the engine.

The Italians are late starters in the automatic transmission field, but many buyers of luxury cars demand this feature. Accordingly, a conventional fluid torque converter and three-speed planetary box are optional. In either case, the propeller shaft drives a chassis-mounted hypoid unit with a limited-slip differential. Constant velocity driveshafts take the power to the rear hubs, which are carried on a tubular De Dion axle.

Laterally, the axle is positively located by a Watt's linkage and there are two radius arms which sweep forward to a single ball joint. The tube is therefore free to move both vertically and in roll, but it is restrained in the latter sense by an anti-roll bar, the actual suspension medium being coil springs. In front, there are



The size is right, the design is modern, and it is pleasant to see Alfa Romeo back in the executive market.

wishbones sprung on longitudinal torsion bars, again reinforced by an anti-roll bar.

Of great interest is the steering, which is by rack and pinion with power assistance. The amount of assistance given is controlled by a governor, so that although the car is light to manoeuvre, the driver can feel the road at high speeds. The brakes are discs all round, ventilated in front.

Road Impressions

The Alfa 6 is a big car, with a spacious interior and sober styling. The four doors are easy to enter and the boot is large, though it must be loaded over a high lip. The doors have centred locking but, curiously enough, on both the cars I drove this operation did not work for unlocking. Surely the whole point of the thing is to unlock all the doors at once when your passengers are standing in the rain? There is an electrical height adjustment, with a range of 2ins, for the driver's seat and the height of the steering wheel can also be quickly changed. The windows are electronically operated.

The engine warms up quickly from cold and the choke need only be employed in wintry weather. I drove both automatic and manual cars and covered a considerable mileage; one of the things I can do really well is to get lost on Italian country roads and at one point I found myself driving along the side of Lake Maggiore when I should have been at Como, so the kilometres mounted up.

The automatic transmission is excellent, with a very rapid kick-down and about the best manual selector I have tried. The car accelerates very strongly but the gearing seems rather low for high-speed cruising on the

autostrada. The manual box is the ZF, with first gear off to the left and back against a spring. The other four gears are placed as in a four-speed box, with fifth to the right and back. The lever is strongly spring loaded in the second and third plane and I must admit that I was at home than with the usual Alfa box. Even on the overdrive fifth speed, the gearing is on the low side at 19.7mph per 1000rpm.

The big machine reaches 110mph very quickly and I have no doubt that it would exceed 120mph under suitable conditions, though that would take the rev-counter to the red part of the dial. In their literature, Alfa Romeo emphasize the great power that is normally in reserve, and certainly that is one of the car's best features. However, the engines of both 'my' cars were surprisingly noisy when pressed. One hopes that the production models will be more refined.

The Alfa 6 handles well and feels nicely balanced. The graduated power assistance of the steering worked well in practice, with plenty of castor return after rounding hairpin bends in the mountains. There is a welcome absence of tyre noise during fast cornering but the disc brakes tended to whistle on occasion. The car remains very level during normal driving and only rolls moderately when cornered hard; there is a small degree of understeer and the De Dion axle is always well behaved.

The ride and the seats are more German than French, that is to say firm rather than soft, though this is a comfortable car. As the price is evidently going to be high, one has a right to be critical, and one hopes that the engineers will continue on the silence and refinement. The size is right, the design is modern, and it is pleasant to see Alfa Romeo back in the executive market.

Specification and performance data

Car Tested: Alfa Romeo Alfa 6 4-door saloon.
Engine: Six cylinders at 60 deg, 88 x 68.3mm (2492cc). Compression ratio 9 to 1. 160bhp DIN at 5800rpm. Single belt-driven overhead camshaft per bank, operating inlet valves. Pushrod-operated exhaust valves. 6 downdraught carburettors.

Transmission: Single dry plate clutch. 5-speed ZF synchromesh gearbox, ratios 0.79, 1.0, 1.94, and 3.42 to 1. Hypoid final drive, ratio 4.54 to 1. Automatic transmission is optional. Limited-slip differential.

Chassis: Combined steel body and chassis. Independent front suspension by wishbones, torsion bars, and anti-roll bar. Rack and pinion steering with speed-conscious power assistance. De Dion rear axle with converging radius arms. Watt's linkage, coil springs, and anti-roll bar. Servo-assisted dual-circuit disc brakes, ventilated in front, with rear control valve. Bolt-on steel wheels, fitted 195/70 HR 14 tyres. Light alloy wheels optional.
Dimensions: Wheelbase 8ft 6.4in. Track 4ft 7.4in/4ft 5.7in. Overall length 15ft 7.4in. Width 5ft 6.3in. Weight 1 ton 6cwt 64lb.

Performance: Max speed 121mph. Standing quarter-mile 16.7s.
Fuel Consumption: (steady speed) 56mpg, 31.4mpg, 75mpg, 25mpg. (maker's figures).



There was a time when Renault had the 40CV to top their range, with an engine of over 9 litres capacity, and that ain't hay. Since the days of Louis Renault's sacred monster, the Régie has concentrated on cars of a more practical size, but now there is a move up-market.

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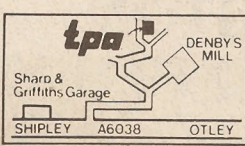
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BY T.P.A.

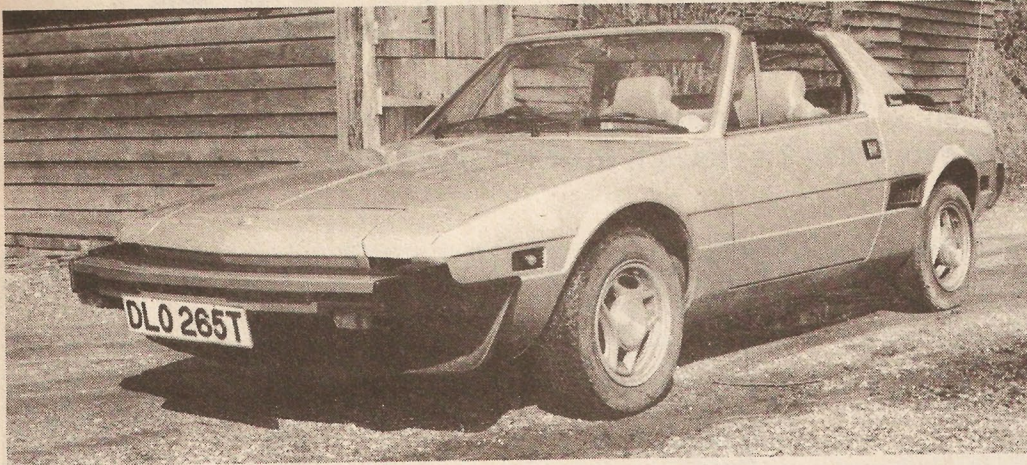
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by John Bolster



It gets within a whisker of 110mph, in spite of an exterior shape that is not particularly smooth.

There is a considerable demand for a small mid-engined sports seater with a detachable roof. To design such a car *ab initio* would be extremely costly, but the Fiat engineers had the splendid idea of taking the engine and transmission of one of their transverse-engined front-drive cars, and putting it where the rear seat would have been. The original X1/9 was developed from such a metamorphosis of the 1.3-litre 128 Sport.

Unfortunately, the detachable roof entailed the addition of a lot of extra steel to the floor pan, and though the car became very popular, it was essential to play tunes on the gearbox all the time, otherwise it felt less lively to drive than a standard 128 saloon. Now, all that has changed, for the little machine has the 1498cc engine and five-speed gearbox of the Ritmo.

Unlike mid-engined racing cars, the engine of the X1/9 is transversely mounted between the rear wheels, which makes a lot more space available. The spare wheel reposes behind the driver's seat and the petrol tank behind that of the passenger, which makes it possible to provide a small luggage boot aft of the engine and a large one in the long nose, an unheard-of luxury among mid-engined cars.

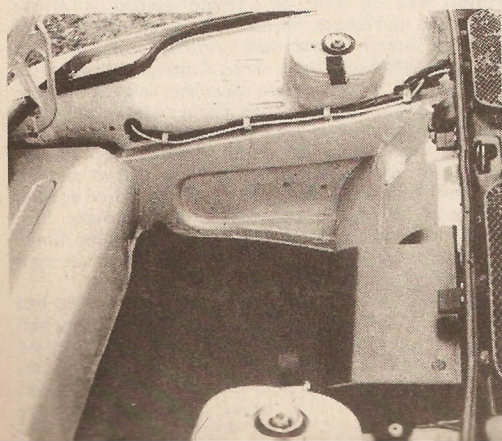
The seats are comfortable but the rear bulkhead prevents them from reclining, while the leg room would be barely adequate for a very tall driver. The driving position is not too Italian and the pedals are properly placed for heel and toe. One has a good all-round view and the instruments are easy to read.

It is not always simple to engage a gear from rest, but once on the move the ratios can be swapped with ease and rapidity. The new engine, with its single overhead camshaft, is a glutton for revs and 100 mph may be achieved on fourth gear. As for fifth, it gets within a whisker of 110 mph, in spite of an exterior shape that is not particularly smooth.

Completely transformed

The new engine completely transforms the X1/9 from a rather dull little vehicle to a real fun-car. Not only is there an extra 12 bhp, but the increased torque in the lower and middle ranges gives a delightful feeling of liveliness. The engine picks up well on the higher gears, without any rumbling, and it is always ready for a burst of revs when overtaking is required.

The long nose houses the large front luggage boot.



FIAT X1/9 1500

More fun from Fiat

Nevertheless, the test car had poor carburation, and there was often a moment's hesitation when the accelerator was floored. Cold starting was somewhat laborious and stalling was a problem during warming up, but I'm sure that the boys at Weber's could soon put a stop to that.

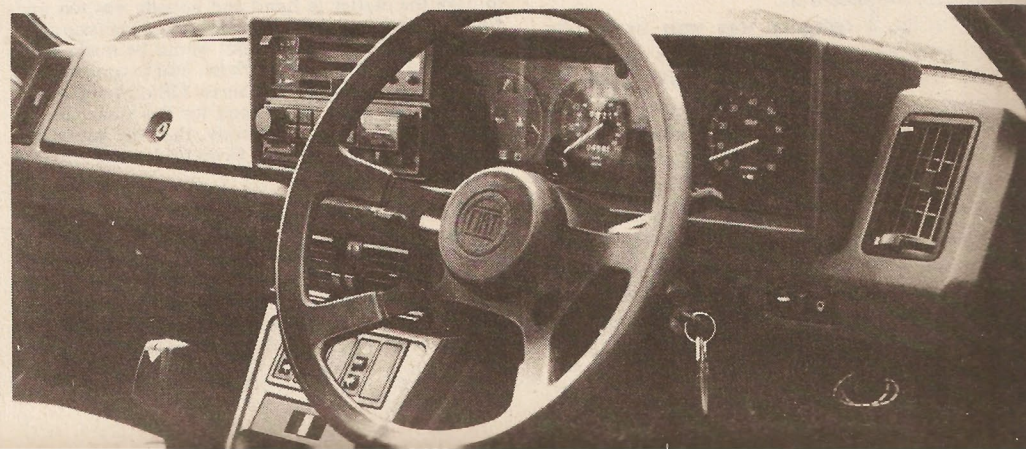
Mechanically, the engine was not noisy but the exhaust was curiously strident, booming on the over-run and inducing echos in the body panels. In these respects, the new car was less refined than the old one, especially as the transmission emitted an audible whine, but it was quieter when driven at traffic speeds because there was far less gear changing. The detachable roof caused some wind noise but there was a welcome absence of tyre roar.

Improved handling

Although there are no changes in the specification of the chassis, there have obviously been some rewarding developments in this area. The old car tended to wag its tail after being forced into the gutter, but that rather alarming trait seems to have been subdued. There is still a fairly abrupt change to oversteer if one lifts off in a corner, but a flick of the wheel looks after that. Mid-engined cars often tend to lock their front wheels under the brakes, especially on wet surfaces, but the new X1/9 is vastly better in this respect, too. Though the larger engine has brought about a remarkable improvement in performance, the handling has more than kept pace with the greater speed potential.

The ride is on the firm side and the seats, though comfortable, do not absorb the bumps very effectively. Probably most purchasers of little sports cars prefer suspension that is on the hard side, and though small bumps are felt, the larger ones seem to be absorbed

The driving position is not too Italian, and the driver has a good all-round view from the cockpit.



This Fiat will bring back the pleasure in driving.

pretty well. Certainly, the car has a taut feeling about it that adds to the pleasure of driving it fast on all sorts of roads.

While some Italian manufacturers are still unable to understand heating and ventilation, the Fiat engineers have now fully mastered the problems. The heater is powerful and very easy to regulate, while the separate cool air inlets pass plenty of air at all but the lowest speeds. The detachable roof fits under the lid of the front boot and while the car then becomes draughty at high speeds, it is delightful for a gentle cruise in the country, enjoying the beautiful scenery. The retractable headlights pop up quickly, though they might be a little more powerful with advantage, but I'm so glad that those vulgar go-faster stripes have gone.

The new engine has made the Fiat X1/9 into a marvellous little fun car for the enthusiastic driver. If anything, it seems to use even less petrol than before, which is splendid news. Though it now has a very sporting character, it is just as useful and practical as it always was. Some people might prefer an exhaust system with a less audible note, but this is a car that will bring back enjoyment to many people who thought they were tired of driving.

Specification and performance data

Car Tested: Fiat X1/9 1500 two-seater coupé, price £4575.
Engine: Four cylinders 86.4 x 63.9mm (1498cc). Compression ratio 9.2 to 1. 85 bhp DIN at 6000 rpm. Belt-driven overhead camshaft. Weber twin-choke downdraught carburettor.
Transmission: Single dry plate clutch. 5-speed all-indirect gearbox with central remote control, ratios 0.863, 1.042, 1.454, 2.235 and 3.583 to 1. Helical spur gear final drive, ratio 4.076 to 1.
Chassis: Combined steel body and chassis, with detachable roof. Independent suspension of all four wheels by coil spring and damper struts with lower wishbones. Rack and pinion steering. Dual circuit disc brakes. Bolt-on light-alloy wheels, fitted 165/70 SR13 tyres.
Equipment: 12 volt lighting and starting. Speedometer. Rev-counter. Oil pressure, water temperature, and fuel gauges. Heating, demisting, and ventilation system. 2-speed and intermittent windscreen wipers and washers. Reversing lights. Radio. Flashing direction indicators.
Dimensions: Wheelbase 7ft 2.8in. Track 4ft 4.5in/4ft 4.8in. Overall length 13ft 0.3in. Width 5ft 1.3in. Weight 18 cwt.
Performance: Maximum speed 109 mph. Speeds in gears: fourth 103 mph, third 74 mph, second 48 mph, first 30 mph. Standing quarter-mile 17.1s. Acceleration: 0-30 mph 3.0s, 0-50 mph 7.2s, 0-60 mph 10.0s, 0-80 mph 18.1s, 0-90 mph 25.5s.
Fuel Consumption: 30 to 38 mpg.

V for Vauxhall victor

Pentti Airikkala wins the Circuit of Ireland — Petrol shortage causes stage cancellations — High retirement rate for front-runners — Dessie McCartney wins Group 2 — Report: RUPERT SAUNDERS — Photography: COLIN TAYLOR PRODUCTIONS

The Circuit of Ireland is a long and tough event. With over 600 miles of stages condensed into the five days and two nights that the rally is on the road, it is perhaps one of the most difficult rallies in Europe. To win the Circuit of Ireland you need to have more than just sheer speed. You need to have pace; you need to have a reliable car; you need to have a well organised service crew; you need to have stamina; and you need to have luck.

The Finn, Pentti Airikkala, co-driven by Risto Virtanen and driving a Dealer Team Vauxhall Chevette HS, combined all these assets to dominate this year's Benson & Hedges sponsored Circuit, giving the Chevette its first international win since the dark days of eligibility squabbles last April. Pentti certainly had the speed, setting fastest time on 25 of the special stages during the event. He also had the pace, stretching himself over the longer stages to demoralise his opposition with the margin of victory. He also had some luck, and a well organised service crew. Three times in the first leg of the rally he broke the axle location on the car. Three times the service crew were in a position to fit a new axle — that kind of luck comes from good planning.

The rally itself was a somewhat disjointed affair. A long running telephone strike meant that communication around the island of Ireland was not easy and that it was almost impossible to transmit times back from the stages to rally headquarters. As a result, information on who was leading whom was somewhat sketchy. More important, a drastic shortage of petrol throughout the Republic meant that a large section of the rally had to be cancelled just to ensure that competitors reached the overnight halt in Killarney safely. The rally became split into three separate legs; from the start on Friday lunchtime till breakfast on Saturday morning; from Sunday morning to Sunday afternoon; and from Monday lunchtime to the finish on Tuesday morning. They were almost three different rallies.

After a thoroughly consistent drive, Billy Coleman and Frank O'Donoghue came home in second place driving their Ford of Cork Escort RS. Billy was never in a position to challenge Pentti and never looked threatened himself, keeping clear of trouble and picking up some very useful points for this challenge to the European Rally Championship title. Bertie Fisher/Austin Frazer took third place after an incredible last night of the rally when four of the leading cars dropped out.

The Group 2 category was won by Dessie McCartney/Peter Scott driving a two-litre Chrysler Sunbeam — beating Stig Blomqvist in the process — and the Group 1 category was won by John Lyons, who put in a more mature showing than we have seen of late, in an Escort RS2000 owned by co-driver Jimmy Davison.

The rally was a round of the European Rally Championship (coefficient 3) in which Billy Coleman now lies second, the Sedan Products Open Championship, led by Stig Blomqvist, and the Tudor Photographic Tarmac Championship, led by Billy Coleman.



Despite his co-driver suffering from fractured ribs, Pentti Airikkala took command of the Circuit of Ireland from the very first stage.

The Circuit of Ireland never has had a permanent base for its start and finish, so that, although the rally starts and finishes in the north of Ireland, somehow Killarney, the rest halt for Saturday and Sunday nights, seems to be the home of the event. This year the rally started from the ancient town of Carrickfergus, nestling on the northern shore of Belfast Loch, and finished at Newcastle where the mountains of Mourne came down to the sea. Scrutineering was held in the unfinished Carrickfergus Leisure Centre and it must be said that the people of that town were friendly and helpful, though the lack of any sizeable hotels did mean that much of the pre-event atmosphere was lost.

Most of the discussion at the start concerned the petrol situation. Those who had travelled up from the Republic gave dire warnings of the state of supplies and the works teams were all well stocked up with extra cans and tanks. Not so the privateers, of course, but the organisers, the Ulster Automobile Club, appeared to have the matter in hand and nobody was too worried. The club had, in fact, been looking for assurances at ministerial levels that petrol would be made available to the rally but, failing these, had to content itself with promises from local Tourist Officers and petrol suppliers that they would open for the event. In this atmosphere of slight uncertainty, the rally got underway on the stroke of noon on Good Friday.

RALLY

Everybody expected this to be a highly competitive event, after all, the entry list was truly international, but even so the pace from the start must have caught some people on the hop. The first three stages were to the west of Belfast, through winding country lanes and the Escorts were quickest off the mark. Malcolm Wilson was fastest on the first and third stages and Brian Nelson, quickly getting the hang of his new car, was fastest on the second.

By the third stage, the action had started. Both Jimmy McRae and Stig Blomqvist suffered

here, McRae's being a left-hand front tyre just a couple of miles into the stage which meant that he thumped the bank on the next corner and broke yet another spoiler. For Blomqvist there were signs of even more serious problems. The brake pads that were fitted to the Saab were clearly not man enough for the job and were literally melting onto the discs. By the end of the first couple of stages Stig had no brakes left at all and for most of the rally the Saab team were changing pads and discs in an attempt to overcome the problem.

That same stage, the third, also saw the demise of one of the fancied Group 1 runners, Tim Brise, who rolled his Opel Kadett comprehensively. Tim tried to drive out of the stage after the roll but seized the engine in the process, leaving the G1 battle to wage between Alan Carter, John Lyons and Trevor Cathers.

After four stages, the rally headed away into less populated countryside and the drivers saw their chance to make a move. But the very next stage, Knockmany Forest, was the scene of a tragic accident involving spectators and had to be cancelled. Towards the end of the stage there was a very fast downhill section followed by a fast left-hand bend. Several drivers admitted to having slight moments here when they left the braking a bit too late and it was Ernest Kidney who actually lost control of his car and went off the road on the outside of the corner. Some spectators, who had been warned by both the marshals and the spectator control cars not to stand there, were hit by the car and crushed against the wall of the house they were standing outside. Five people were detained in hospital, all with broken limbs and one with head injuries but, happily, they are now all on the road to recovery.

The stage was cancelled for the back runners but this was little consolation to Roger Clark who had retired at the end of the stage with engine troubles on the Fiesta. A lobe had worn off the camshaft, an unexplained failure on an engine which is so well known and widely used as that 1600cc unit. Having had the engine rebuilt, Roger went on to compete on the 'Sun-

Notes on the cars

Ford

With Ari Vatanen unable to start the rally because of his back injury, the official Ford team was reduced to the solitary Escort of Russell Brookes/Paul White and the development Fiesta of Roger Clark/Jim Porter. In support was the Haynes of Maidstone Escort of John Taylor/Phil Short.

Brookes' car was built at Ford Competitions in Boreham and was a brand new tarmac specification machine, sponsored as usual by Andrews Heat for Hire. For Irish tarmac rallies the Ford cars are now fitted with long travel rear suspension and coil springs on the rear in addition to the standard leaf type. The engine is fitted with Kugelfischer fuel injection and now uses a single bore exhaust pipe off a four-into-one manifold. Brookes' car was fitted with extra-wide rear wheel arches to accommodate tyres up to 11 inches in width.

"It was the fastest car I've ever driven", commented Russell and he plans to take the same machine to Ypres.

Roger Clark's G2, 1600cc Fiesta was the same as he had used on the Monte Carlo Rally, although now backed by Esso. The engine is still in a fairly mild state of tune, delivering just over 150bhp, but already the problem seems to be traction out of slow corners. There is a lot of wheel spin out of first and second gear corners and the team are working on various suspension settings in order to try to cure this. Through fast corners the car is very stable and easy to drive, though Roger Clark admitted that there can be problems when "having a moment."

John Taylor's car ran to almost the same specification as Brookes'; indeed Taylor did much of the development for the suspension in Galway. As ever, Taylor used Lucas fuel injection on his engine and the car wasn't fitted with the extra wide wheel arches.

Backing up the works involvement were any number of quick Irish drivers. Bertie Fisher in his Castrol/Bush Performance Centre Escort, Billy Coleman in his Ford Ireland car — now looking a little tired around the edges — the promising Ernest Kidney in his Permapost car and Brian Nelson in a brand new, David Sutton built, Tuca Tiles Escort. This car also featured some interesting new rear suspension ideas which Sutton admitted were 60% Boreham, 40% Sutton.

There were two other potential Escort winners, the two Total cars for Malcolm Wilson/Terry Harryman and Henri Toivonen/Bryan Harris. Wilson's car had been built by Thomas Motors but both cars were serviced on the event by Peter Clarke Autos.

Vauxhall

The Dealer Team Vauxhall challenge consisted of two brand new cars for Pentti Airikkala/Risto Virtanen and Jimmy McRae/Frank Main. There were no particularly new developments to the cars and Pentti proudly explained that his car was actually fitted with the same springs he had used on the RAC Rally.

Obviously DTV have done a lot more work on their engines although they only claim to have found small improvements. The cars were able to take the 11 inch rear tyres that Dunlop supplied for the event but these were dropped after it was thought that they might be contributing to the axle location breakages that Airikkala suffered. The bracket which mounts the Panhard rod to the axle tube was sheering off.

Airikkala's car was registered YEB 624T and McRae's was YEB 623T.

BL Cars

With new signing Per Eklund joining the team BL were able to field three cars, two running in their own colours and one running in the black and white of Chequered Flag garage. Eklund was co-driven by Hans Sylvan while the other factory team entry was Graham Elsmore/Stuart Harrold. The Chequered Flag car was driven by Derek Boyd, co-driven by Roy Kernaghan who has done a number of events with Derek in the past.

The team had done quite a lot of testing since Galway and thought that the cars were a great improvement on the specification used earlier in the year. They too had wide rear arches to take 11 inch tyres and found that these improved traction and stability. With 8 inch tyres fitted to the front, the cars would still turn into corners fairly well.

Saab

The Circuit marked the debut of the two-door Saab Turbo in Group 2 form. This is the car which won the Swedish in Group 4 and which uses the old EMS body-shell fitted with the Turbo engine.

Tarmac rallying is something new to Saab and team manager Bo Swaner admitted that they had not been able to get in as much tarmac testing as they would have liked. However, they had done some work on shock absorbers and springs and had found some improvement. On the engine side, the team have dis-

the car, only to retire for a second time when the steering rack started to come apart.

On stage 6 Derek Boyd retired when he clipped a rock with the front suspension of his works V8-engined TR7 and knocked a wheel off and, on stage 7, Ballyreagh, the rally lost two more front runners, Tony Pond and Russell Brookes. Pond was lying second behind Wilson and Brookes had just decided that it was time to make his move; in fact on the stage before he had broken both steering arms on a jump. Neither driver lifted for an apparently harmless jump in the middle of a flat out straight and both drivers destroyed their cars on landing.

Brookes managed to keep going somehow and dragged his car to the end of the stage but it was obviously pointless going on. The shell was twisted and the back axle hanging out. Pond stopped at the next crossroads, radioed his service crew for help and then had the suspension rebuilt by the service crew in the middle of a flat out straight and both drivers destroyed their car's suspension on landing.

Over the border the rally was led by Wilson with Brian Nelson hanging on to second place and Billy Coleman third. Group 2 was led by Dessie McCartney and Trevor Cathers in the Avenger led Group 1 after John Lyons had had problems with his brakes and then run on the wrong tyre, and Alan Carter had hit a cow.

"The bloody thing just stepped out of the hedge in front of me," commented the shocked New Zealander. "I'd already missed one and there was nothing I could do but take his legs away." Nobody else reported seeing the cow on the stage so presumably it recovered and ran off, leaving only a bent Escort as its record.

The first stage in the Republic was the 14-miler at Glengevlin and two more top runners dropped out here. Henri Toivonen, who had struggled with pulling brakes for seven stages, then set third fastest time on stage 8, retired on stage 9 when the gearbox broke and Timo Salonen, who was also just beginning to enjoy the Irish stages, clipped a rock with the front wheel of the Fiat and broke the suspension. Spare parts were brought in to the stage but the crew were out of time before repairs could be effected.

After losing two minutes with axle location failure on stage 6, Airikkala was fully into his stride by now with team-mate Jimmy McRae just behind him. On Glengevlin he was 22 secs quicker than Coleman, on the next stage he was 8 secs quicker than McRae and on Arigna, the longest stage of the rally he was five secs quicker than McRae, with Nelson trailing by a further 8 secs. It seemed as if the Vauxhalls would have it all their own way.

Supper was taken at the Lough Key Forest Park and already fuel was starting to run short. The promised petrol halt in Boyle wasn't open and several back runners faced running out in the next block of stages, across on the west coast of Ireland and down to Connemara. Wilson lost the lead of the event here when he picked up a puncture near the start of the 19 mile Sheefrey Bridge stages and stopped to change the wheel, a wise precaution given the length of the event.

Brian Nelson found renewed form with his new Ford Escort. He was lying fourth until he left the road.



Airikkala continued to set the pace, overhauling both Nelson and Coleman to bring himself to the head of the field while the lead in G1 now went to John Lyons after Trevor Cathers had lost time with a broken gearbox. The same problem actually put Chrysler Ireland driver John Coyne out of the rally. He tried to change the gearbox in his Sunbeam after the ninth stage and ran out of time doing it.

There was no petrol at a fuel halt in Westport and there was no petrol at a fuel halt in Clifden which meant that things really were getting desperate. Worse still, when the crews reached Galway at 4am on Saturday, there was no fuel there either. It was obvious that the rally was about to grind to a halt unless something drastic was done. The nearest confirmed petrol supplies were in Ennis, about 40 miles south and on the road to Killarney. It was decided that the rally should be diverted directly to Killarney with all the intervening stages cancelled but nobody had any idea how many back runners were already stranded on stages.

The decision to cancel the stages was a cruel twist of fate for John Taylor, who had retired out in Clifden with a blown head gasket on his Escort. The car was still driveable and there was a chance that, with plenty of service time now available, he could have survived the stages in from Clifden to Galway and then changed the head gasket. As it was, he shrugged his shoulders and headed for home.

The rally convoyed to Killarney at whatever speed each individual felt was most economic on petrol for his particular car. Queues built up at each petrol station that was open on the way and there was a mad scramble for fuel in Killarney itself. Here supplies seemed better and a meeting between the organisers and the Killarney Chamber of Commerce was sufficient to ensure that such fuel as there was, would be allocated to the rally competitors. The Sunday Run and the rest of the rally would go ahead as planned.

Pentti Airikkala went into the Sunday Run with almost three minutes lead over Billy Coleman and it seemed a forlorn hope that the Irishman could pull back any significant time. Despite being willed on by the fans (the petrol shortage hadn't stopped them reaching the rally) Billy in fact lost out to Pentti over those stages and, on one particular stage was over 45 seconds slower than the Finn.

Behind these two the battle for third place was being fought between Brian Nelson and Malcolm Wilson with Wilson just getting the edge over the Sunday stages despite having a throttle pedal spindle break, a repeat of a problem earlier in the rally. Jim McRae, Bertie Fisher and Ger Buckley followed on.

But it was to the luckless BL team that the first drama fell. The day's run started with the classic Moll's Gap and then turned inland to run around the Ring of Kerry in what tourists would call 'the wrong direction'. On the second stage, Liberty Hall, Graham Elsmore just tipped his TR7 over a bank. The car was relatively undamaged but there was no way of getting it

CONTINUED

back on the road and BL hopes now rested firmly on Per Eklund.

The rally continued west to one of the most unusual stages yet held on a Circuit, the nine-miler on the island of Valentia which actually ran through the delightful little village of Knightstown. The stage wasn't the most popular with drivers since it was very fast, but it was certainly popular with the people on the island — and they saw their share of drama. Ronnie McCartney, driving his Escort and not the widely advertised Mercedes Diesel, had a halfshaft break right in the middle of the town. With true rallymanship he hopped on the ferry across to the mainland to try to find his service crew, unfortunately to no avail.

The pace of the rally was starting to tell by now. Noel Smith retired his Porsche with fading oil pressure and Ger Buckley lost a minute when he had a gearlever come away in his hand on the Ballinskelligs stage. In fact his car was beginning to sound a little rougher as the exhaust system gave way under the constant pounding of the mountain roads.

In G2 Dessie McCartney was working hard to stay in front despite some front suspension troubles which meant a strut change, and in G1 Alan Carter was just holding off John Lyons, though the latter had been delayed by a broken anti-tramp bar. In the end it was these two crews who provided most of the excitement for the rest of the day. Carter put his RS2000 on its side briefly on the Loch Carragh stage and that brought the two crews level. Then, just a couple of stages from the end of the day's motoring, on Desmonds Grave, Carter did the job properly. He was tired, and the car ran wide on a corner, climbed a bank and rolled 40ft down the mountain. It had been a long hard event for the New Zealander whose spirits weren't improved by the news that his sponsors had pulled out just before the start.

So, after the highly successful, and relatively un-

Notes on the cars continued

pensed with an old water injection cooling system that they were using and now use an "inter-cooler" to lower the temperature of the input mixture prior to ignition. As a result of this more efficient method they have been able to reduce the boost pressure from 1.55 to 1.5 and still obtain a slightly increased power figure.

The crew for the Circuit were Stig Blomqvist/Bjorn Cederberg driving JNF 756, the car which won the Swedish.

Fiat

Fiat (UK) with help from Fiat Ireland, entered just one car, for Timo Salonen/Seppo Harjanne. This was in fact the same car as Fiat (UK) had used all last year although it had been back to Turin for a complete rebuild and for fitting with tarmac suspension.

Working from knowledge gained on this event last year, the team stuck to 205 Pirelli tyres all round and Salonen was surprisingly competitive over the few stages that he completed. A decision to run in the unofficial 'Sunday Run' in order to get more exposure in the Republic, proved to be disastrous when the car rolled on the second stage.

Chrysler

The most interesting new car at the start of the event was the newly homologated Group 4 Chrysler Sunbeam for Tony Pond/Monty Peters. This was a brand new car built up for the season (Reg: DHP 853 T) and the team apparently now have three cars almost completed, including one for Chrysler France.

The car uses the 2.2-litre Lotus engine which has been worked on to give 240bhp and a maximum of 185ft lb at 5000rpm. The engine will rev to 8500rpm though there is room for improvement in this area. A five-speed ZF gearbox is fitted along with a Salisbury rear axle.

The car had proved to be incredibly quick in testing. Pond covering a three mile mountain section in pouring rain in just over two minutes, and the team having been working hard on the traction in order to get the car out of corners quickly.

In addition to the official Chrysler team, there was a team of Sunbeams entered by Chrysler Ireland. These were two-litre G2 cars for Dessie McCartney/Peter Scott, John Coyne/Christy Farrell and Rosemary Smith/Pauline Gullick.

Opel

With no outright rally winner in the stable at the moment, Dealer Opel Team are sticking to their G2 Opel Kadett driven by Brian Culcheth/Neil Wilson. This car is backed by GM Oil and is now painted in a striking blue and white livery.

In the G1 category, Tim Brise/Derek Smyth entered Tim's own Kadett, though this was being serviced by DOT.

dramatic, day of stages, the rally returned to Killarney. Malcolm Wilson had pulled past Brian Nelson again but that was the only major change. Now service crews had their last chance to do any major work on the cars before the long run back to the north. Pentti Airikkala, having already had a new clutch, now had the gearbox changed; Per Eklund also took a new gearbox having suffered the almost standard TR7 problem of losing fifth gear; Bertie Fisher put in a new clutch and Ger Buckley had his exhaust fixed, a repair which lasted only a couple of stages.

The Circuit of Ireland is by no means over when the Rally leaves Killarney. This year, instead of following the more traditional route to the east of Ireland, the rally ran more or less up the middle of the country, so avoiding some of the well known classic tests such as Sally Gap and Aughavannagh. That didn't mean that the stages were any easier though and the rot started to set in on a well known section, Sugar Hill.

Coleman was slowing slightly and Airikkala was firmly in charge of the pace, with both Malcolm Wilson and Brian Nelson going well. Then Malcolm spun on Sugar Hill and slid backwards off the road. It only cost him 15 seconds but there was damage to the underneath of the car and he was now 1 sec behind Nelson. Two stages later he was out of the event. A halfshaft broke towards the end of Ballyquirk and, although he got off the stage and had the shaft changed, there was damage to the bearing and he was forced to retire.

Ballyquirk wasn't a stage for the Brits because it was here also that Jimmy McRae hit his first serious trouble. McRae had been driving incredibly consistently throughout the whole event and his car had hardly needed a spanner laid on it. While Pentti had undoubtedly been number one, Jimmy had been an ideal number two; until an oil pipe broke in the middle of the stage. The Scotsman spent over 30 minutes in the stage, picked up a maximum penalty and yet still kept going, dropping only one place in the process.

With supper approaching Nelson had pulled to within a minute and half of Coleman and looked set for a challenge on second place. Fisher was over three minutes behind him and McRae another four minutes down. In G1 John Lyons had pulled himself clear of Jim Logan and Trevor Cathers, the latter having dropped from contention when he hit a donkey in the middle of a stage. The problem was not so much damage to the car or the donkey, but an electrical circuit which shorted in the accident. In G2 the pressure was now on Dessie McCartney. Saab had found some new brakes in Killarney and Blomqvist was making his move. Whether he would make up the deficit before the finish was anybody's guess.

Then the Saab team had a stroke of luck. The Circuit organisers threw in a couple of stages with loose sections in the middle of them. In two stages Blomqvist took 1½ mins back off McCartney. 'They must have done that just for us', commented Swane but, if he was happy, other drivers weren't. They felt that a tarmac rally should include only tarmac sections.

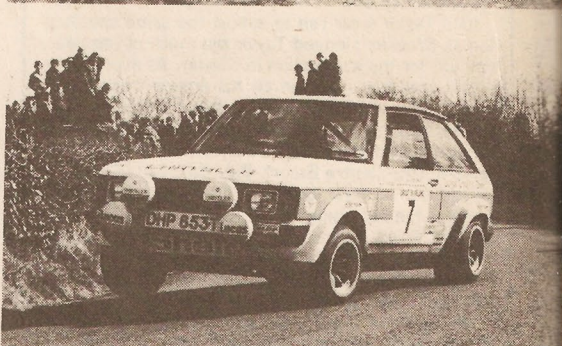
Positions may have looked settled but that was far from the case. Brian Nelson was caught out by the sudden loose surface and put his Escort off the road and then, a couple of stages later Jimmy McRae had the clutch fail on his Chevette. Although it was changed it was obvious that the Scot was out of time; there had been too many delays already.

So, as the rally crossed over the border and into the north, approaching the finish in Newcastle, it was Airikkala, from Coleman, Fisher, Buckley and Eklund. It must be over now, but the final dramas were yet to come. With four stages to go, Brian Culcheth's Opel developed a head gasket leak. There was nothing to do but hope and pray and, amazingly, the car limped in to the finish, the radiator being topped up at every stage.

Less lucky was Per Eklund. With just one stage to go his TR7 engine threw a con-rod, completing BL's triangle of misery. Only in those last few stages had Per really made any impression on the leaders and a finish would have been some reward for all the hard work. Dessie McCartney hung on to G2 and Lyons had G1; here at least reliability had shone through.

The hero of the weekend should have been Pentti Airikkala but for once on an International rally it was the co-driver who stole the limelight at the prizegiving. Risto Virtanen revealed that he had done most of the rally in considerable agony. On the very first special stage some hard braking had re-cracked an old broken rib. Not once did he complain about the very considerable pain that he must have been in. In fact the only ill affect seemed to be his inability to eat at the after rally party, a deficit which Risto filled with powerful beverage by way of a panacea.

Airikkala's drive had been a classic. The 1979 Benson and Hedges Circuit of Ireland will go down as the one which almost got away — it really was that close to grinding to a halt. For all that, the stages were well organised, the marshalling good and, apart from a couple of doubtful arrows on the early sections, the organisation well up to the usual high standard. Next year perhaps the strikes will leave rallying in Ireland alone for once.



Top: One of the most impressive drives came from Dessie McC... the new G4 Sunbeam its debut but destroyed the car on a jum... by Alan Carter. Below: Malcolm Wilson led the rally briefly and...





who won the Group 2 category. Above left: Tony Pond gave the right: John Lyons won the G1 category after being pressed third place until retiring on the last night.



Benson & Hedges Circuit of Ireland

April 13-17, 1979

European Rally Championship, round 13

- 1, Pentti Airikkala/Risto Virtanen (Vauxhall Chevette), 509m 29s;
- 2, Billy Coleman/Frank O'Donoghue (Ford Escort), 520m 15s;
- 3, Bertie Fisher/Austin Frazer (Ford Escort), 522m 51s;
- 4, Ger Buckley/John Caplice (Ford Escort), 529m 06s;
- 5, Dessie McCartney/Peter Scott (Chrysler Sunbeam), 537m 31s;
- 6, Stig Blomqvist/Bjorn Cederberg (Saab Turbo), 538m 23s;
- 7, Brian Culcheth/Neil Wilson (Opel Kadett), 544m 48s;
- 8, John Lyons/Jimmy Davison (Escort RS2000), 554m 41s;
- 9, Jim Logan/Derek Ervine (Escort RS2000), 561m 57s;
- 10, Trevor Cathers/Bert Young (Chrysler Avenger), 571m 08s.

136 starters; 54 finishers

Group 1

- 1, John Lyons/Jimmy Davison (Escort RS2000), 554m 41s; (8 o/a)
- 2, Jim Logan/Derek Ervine (Escort RS2000), 561m 57s; (9 o/a)
- 3, Trevor Cathers/Bert Young (Chrysler Avenger), 571m 08s; (10 o/a)
- 4, Simon Everett/John Brown (Escort RS2000), 571m 44s; (11 o/a)
- 5, Dessie Coates/Mervyn Dunn (Escort RS2000), 580m 22s; (12 o/a)

Class 1 G1 up-to-1300cc

- 1, Trevor Noble/Kenny Campbell (Fiat 3P), 614m 00s; (23 o/a)
- 2, Gerry McGarrity/Dan Hackett (Honda Civic), 621m 32s; (24 o/a)
- 3, Eamonn Cotter/Martin Ward (Fiat 127), 623m 02s; (25 o/a)

Class 2 G1 up-to-1600cc

- 1, David Wright/Leslie Fannin (Avenger GT), 590m 21s; (13 o/a)
- 2, Peter Jones/Barry Martin (Avenger GT), 599m 49s; (18 o/a)
- 3, Kevin Doyle/Neil Fitzsimmons (Avenger GT), 604m 37s; (20 o/a)

Class 3, over 1600cc

- 1, John Lyons/Jimmy Davison (Escort RS2000), 554m 41s; (80 o/a)
- 2, Jim Logan/Derek Ervine (Escort RS200), 561m 57s; (9 o/a)
- 3, Trevor Cathers/Bert Young (Avenger GT), 571m 08s; (10 o/a)

Class 4, G2 up-to-1600cc

- 1, Willie McVicker/Eric Hughes (Chrysler Sunbeam), 603m 09s; (19 o/a)
- 2, David McIlroy/Ronnie McKee (Chrysler Sunbeam), 623m 50s; (25 o/a)

Class 5, G2 over 1600cc

- 1, Dessie McCartney/Peter Scott (Chrysler Sunbeam), 537m 31s; (5 o/a)
- 2, Stig Blomqvist/Bjorn Cederberg (Saab Turbo), 538m 23s; (6 o/a)
- 3, Brian Culcheth/Neil Wilson (Opel Kadett), 544m 48s; (7 o/a)

Class 6, up-to-1600cc

- 1, George Drew/Liam Dundon (Avenger), 657m 40s; (39 o/a)

Class 7, up-to-2000cc

- 1, Billy Coleman/Frank O'Donoghue (Escort RS1800), 520m 15s; (2 o/a)
- 2, Bertie Fisher/Austin Frazer (Escort RS1800), 522m 51s; (3 o/a)
- 3, Ger Buckley/John Caplice (Escort RS1800), 529m 06s; (4 o/a)

Class 8, over 2000cc

- 1, Pentti Airikkala/Risto Virtanen (Vauxhall Chevette), 509m 29s; (1 o/a)
- 2, Will Corry/Stuart Carphin (Vauxhall Chevette), 628m 25s; (28 o/a)
- 3, J.K. Cassidy/Dan Doherty (Porsche 911 SC), 663m 14s; (43 o/a)

Class 9, Diesel, any capacity

- 1, Donal Joyce/P.J. Gannon (Golf), 680m 31s; (47 o/a)

Class 10, G2 up-to-1300cc

- 1, James McConnell/George McConnell (Opel Kadett), 644m 25s; (34 o/a)
- 2, Robert Elliott/Alphonsus O'Hara (Chevette), 651m 06s; (36 o/a)

Best stage times

- SSI, Carmavy Hill (5.11m); Wilson 5m 14s, Taylor 5m 15s, Brookes 5m 19s, Pond 5m 19s, McRae 5m 19s, Coleman 5m 20s, Nelson 5m 20s.
- SS2, White Port (6.80m); Nelson 5m 32s, Airikkala 5m 35s, Boyd 5m 35s, Cathcart 5m 35s, McRae 5m 37s, Brookes 5m 38s, Pond 5m 38s.
- SS3, Aghanliss (8.96m); Wilson 8m 13s, Pond 8m 18s, Boyd 8m 19s, Kidney 8m 20s, Taylor 8m 21s, Nelson 8m 21s, Fisher 8m 21s.
- SS4, Willies (5.55m); Airikkala 5m 30s, Salonen 5m 34s, Toivonen 5m 34s, Brookes 5m 35s, Pond 5m 35s, Wilson 5m 35s.
- SS5, Knockmanney Forest (6.47m)% Cancelled accident
- SS6, Screeby (19.33m); Salonen 17m 44s, Wilson 17m 44s, Coleman 17m 57s, Nelson 17m 57s, Brookes 17m 59s, Toivonen 18m 00s.
- SS7, Ballyreagh (14.55m); Airikkala 10m 39s, Coleman 10m 46s, Wilson 10m 47s, Taylor 10m 55s, Salonen 10m 57s, Fisher 10m 57s.
- SS8, Killycat (11.03m); Nelson 9m 06s, Coleman 9m 07s, Toivonen 9m 09s, Wilson 9m 14s, Taylor 9m 15s, Salonen 9m 19s.
- Glengevin (14.83m); Airikkala 12m 43s, Coleman 13m 05s, McRae 13m 05s, Nelson 13m 07s, Wilson 13m 13s, Taylor 13m 23s.
- SS10, The Poor House I (12.55m); Airikkala 11m 46s, McRae 11m 54s, Nelson 11m 57s, Wilson 12m 03s, Taylor 12m 16s, Buckley 12m 23s.
- SS11, Arigna Mountain (21.60m); Airikkala 21m 04s, McRae 21m 09s, Nelson 21m 17s, Taylor 21m 36s, Wilson 21m 39s, Coleman 21m 48s.
- SS12, Zion Hill (6.42m); Airikkala 5m 49s, Coleman 6m 09s, Wilson 6m 09s, Nelson 6m 11s, Fisher 6m 18s, Taylor 6m 26s.
- SS13, Lough Feagh (12.76m); Airikkala 12m 51s, Wilson 13m 36s, McRae 13m 41s, Taylor 13m 47s, Coleman 13m 54s, Nelson 14m 04s.
- SS13, Sheefrey Bridge (19.14m); Airikkala 16m 35s, Fisher 17m 21s, Nelson 17m 22s, Buckley 17m 23s, Coleman 17m 27s, McRae 17m 37s.
- SS15, Tully Cross 8.53m; Airikkala 7m 32s, Buckley 7m 52s, McRae 7m 53s, Coleman 7m 56s, Taylor 7m 56s, Wilson 7m 57s.
- SS16, The Sky Road (7.76m); Airikkala 7m 30s, Buckley 7m 48s, McRae 7m 52s, Wilson 7m 53s, Fisher 8m 01s, Coleman 8m 04s.
- SS17, Toombeloa (17.94m); Airikkala 16m 50s, Wilson 16m 57s, McRae 17m 05s, Coleman 17m 11s, Buckley 17m 21s, Fisher 17m 26s.
- SS18, Ballybuck (10.40m); Cancelled, petrol shortage
- SS19, Maghera (9.54m); Cancelled, petrol shortage
- SS20, Kilclaran (10.66m); Cancelled, petrol shortage
- SS21, Old Kildimo (8.28m); Cancelled, petrol shortage
- SS22, Glen William (8.35m); Cancelled, petrol shortage
- SS23, Knockanebane (6.83m); Cancelled, petrol shortage
- SS24, Gortawanna (14.00m); Cancelled, petrol shortage

results

- SS25, Molls Gap (14.89m); Coleman 12m 58s, Wilson 12m 58s, McRae 13m 00s, Airikkala 13m 06s, Elsmore 13m 13s, Fisher 13m 19s.
- SS26, Liberty Hall (15.06m); Airikkala 15m 46s, McRae 15m 55s, Wilson 16m 02s, Buckley 16m 02s, Nelson 16m 14s, Fisher 16m 17s.
- SS27, Ballaghabela (17.01m); Coleman 17m 01s, McRae 17m 13s, Buckley 17m 13s, Airikkala 17m 14s, Nelson 17m 14s, Eklund 17m 20s.
- SS28, Ballinskelligs (13.69m); Airikkala 12m 01s, Coleman 12m 21s, Wilson 12m 24s, Nelson 12m 29s, Fisher 12m 31s, Eklund 12m 38s, McRae 12m 38s.
- SS29, Valencia (9.29m); Coleman 7m 00s, Wilson 7m 00s, Airikkala 7m 02s, Fisher 7m 05s, Nelson 7m 08s, McRae 7m 09s.
- SS30, Cahirsiveen (5.67m); Wilson 5m 49s, Airikkala 5m 52s, McRae 5m 55s, Fisher 5m 58s, Buckley 5m 58s, Lyons 6m 01s.
- SS31, Bean Hill (7.17m); Wilson 6m 18s, McRae 6m 21s, Airikkala 6m 23s, Coleman 6m 25s, Nelson 6m 25s, Fisher 6m 28s.
- SS32, Loch Carragh (13.72m); Coleman 11m 43s, Airikkala 12m 00s, McRae 12m 09s, Wilson 12m 15s, Nelson 12m 27s, Buckley 12m 27s.
- SS33, Glenellen (10.37m); Airikkala 11m 14s, Wilson 11m 16s, Coleman 11m 24s, Buckley 11m 26s, Nelson 11m 31s, Fisher 11m 34s.
- SS34, Quarry Hill (6.32m); Airikkala 5m 51s, Buckley 5m 57s, Coleman 5m 58s, McRae 5m 58s, Wilson 5m 58s, Fisher 6m 00s.
- SS35, Desmond Grave I (11.15m); Airikkala 10m 42s, Coleman 10m 49s, Wilson 10m 49s, Buckley 10m 50s, McRae 10m 54s, Nelson 10m 57s.
- SS36, Knockacullig II (6.52m); Coleman 5m 46s, Fisher 5m 55s, Buckley 5m 55s, Airikkala 5m 56s, McRae 5m 57s, Nelson 5m 57s.
- SS37, Knockacullig II (6.52m); Coleman 5m 46s, Fisher 5m 55s, Buckley 5m 55s, Airikkala 5m 56s, McRae 5m 57s, Nelson 5m 57s.
- SS38, Mount Eagle (10.32m); Airikkala 10m 22s, Nelson 10m 24s, McRae 10m 28s, Wilson 10m 28s, Coleman 10m 36s, Fisher 10m 36s.
- SS39, Desmonds Grave II (9.70m); Nelson 10m 20s, Airikkala 10m 28s, Wilson 10m 28s, Buckley 10m 29s, Fisher 10m 31s, McRae 10m 32s.
- SS40, Sugar Hill (10.26m); Airikkala 8m 43s, Coleman 8m 54s, Nelson 9m 04s, McRae 9m 05s, Buckley 9m 06s, Fisher 9m 11s.
- SS41, Tountinna (14.55m); Airikkala 15m 10s, McRae 15m 39s, Nelson 15m 42s, Wilson 15m 52s, Buckley 15m 56s, Fisher 15m 59s.
- SS42, Ballyquirk (.58m); Coleman 5m 18s, Airikkala 5m 21s, Buckley 5m 27s, Nelson 5m 28s, Eklund 5m 34s, McCartney 5m 37s.
- SS43, Carrowreagh (10.80m); Airikkala 10m 55s, McRae 11m 06s, Buckley 11m 15s, Buckley 11m 17s, Fisher 11m 18s, Nelson 11m 22s.
- SS44, Toberdan (8.65m); Airikkala 8m 49s, McRae 8m 57s, Eklund 9m 03s, Fisher 9m 08s, Blomqvist 9m 14s, Nelson 9m 14s.
- SS45, Brackna (5.45m); Cancelled.
- SS46, White Hill House (6.27m); Cleaned by the top crews.
- SS47, Cornafushin (6.60m); Airikkala 4m 17s, Fisher 5m 36s, McRae 5m 38s, Eklund 5m 43s, Buckley 5m 44s, Coleman 5m 45s, Nelson 5m 45s.
- SS48, Drumshanbo (9.44m); Airikkala 9m 38s, Eklund 9m 40s, Fisher 9m 40s, Buckley 9m 42s, Blomqvist 9m 44s, McRae 9m 46s.
- SS49, Poor House II (14.61m); Cancelled, misplaced arrowing.
- SS50, Meeney More (17.51m); Airikkala 17m 06s, Fisher 17m 47s, Nelson 17m 49s, Blomqvist 17m 59s, Coleman 18m 01s, McRae 18m 07s.
- SS51, Dough Mountains (11.40m); Blomqvist 11m 54s, Airikkala 11m 55s, Eklund 12m 05s, Coleman 12m 19s, McRae 12m 26s, Buckley 12m 35s.
- SS52, Ballagh Cottage (8.35m); Eklund 9m 03s, Blomqvist 9m 04s, Buckley 9m 07s, Coleman 9m 15s, McRae 9m 20s, Airikkala 9m 22s.
- SS53, Tullanauquiggy (9.75m); Airikkala 8m 51s, McCartney 9m 14s, Fisher 9m 16s, Eklund 9m 19s, Blomqvist 9m 22s, Buckley 9m 22s.
- SS54, Cammy (10.20m); Eklund 11m 11s, Airikkala 11m 16s, McCartney 11m 19s, Blomqvist 11m 23s, Fisher 11m 26s, Buckley 11m 37s.
- SS55, Sweat House (11.03m); McCartney 12m 12s, Airikkala 12m 14s, Blomqvist 12m 21s, Culcheth 12m 44s, Coleman 12m 46s, Fisher 12m 48s.
- SS56, Dublin Hill Road (10.10m); Fisher 8m 20s, Eklund 8m 23s, Blomqvist 8m 24s, McCartney 8m 26s, Coleman 8m 37s, Airikkala 8m 47s.
- SS57, The Diamond (20.45m); Fisher 20m 59s, Blomqvist 21m 09s, McCartney 21m 09s, Airikkala 21m 38s, Everett 21m 52s, Culcheth 21m 55s.
- SS58, Loughisland Reavy (10.23m); Fisher 10m 10s, Blomqvist 10m 14s, McCartney 10m 17s, Coleman 10m 19s, Cathers 10m 25s, Everett 10m 25s.

Leading retirements

Russell Brookes/Paul White (Escort RS1800), suspension, 6 stages completed; Per Eklund/Hans Sylvan (Triumph TR7), engine, 56 stages; Timo Salonen/Seppo Haraanne (Fiat 131 Abarth), suspension, 8 stages; Tony Pond/Monty Peters (Chrysler Sunbeam), suspension, 6 stages; John Taylor/Phil Short (Escort RS1800), engine, 15 stages; Jim McRae/Frank Main (Vauxhall Chevette), out of time, 53 stages; Derek Boyd/Roy Kernaghan (Triumph TR7), accident, 5 stages; Graham Elsmore/Stuart Harrold (Triumph TR7), accident, 26 stages; Malcolm Wilson/Terry Harryman (Escort RS1800), axle, 41 stages; Brian Nelson/Rodney Cole (Escort RS1800), accident, 51 stages; Roger Clark/Jim Porter (Ford Fiesta), engine, 4 stages; Henry Toivonen/Bryan Harris (Escort RS1800), gearbox, 8 stages.

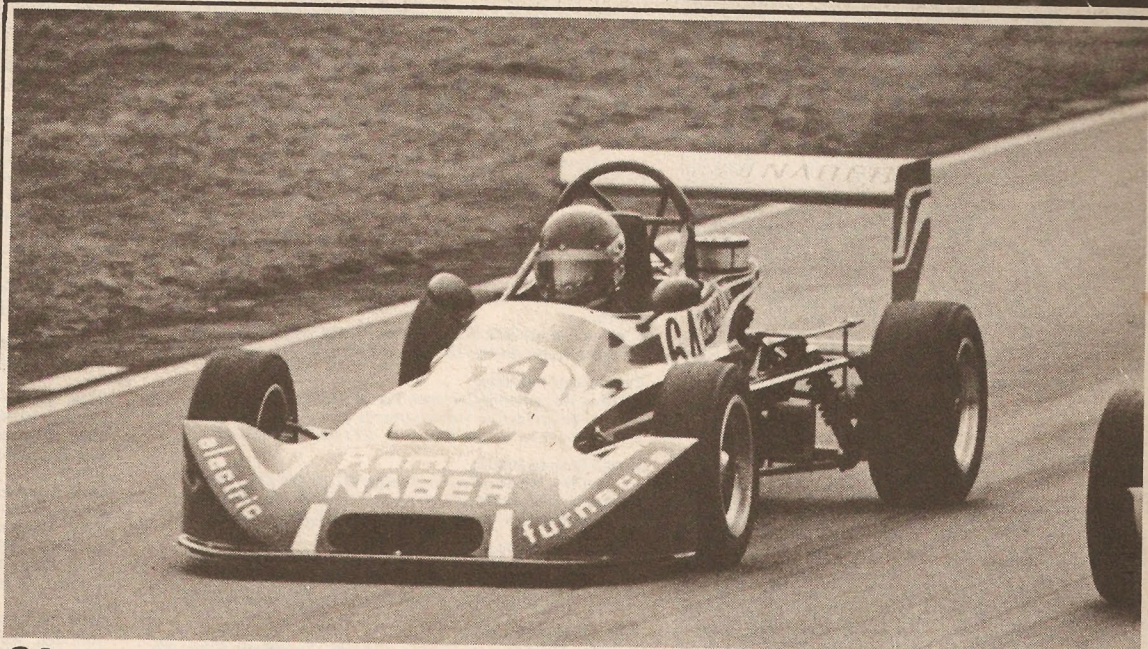
Analysis of stage times

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
Airikkala	25	10	5	—	—	2
Coleman	7	8	2	9	5	3
Wilson	7	6	7	6	1	1
Nelson	3	2	9	7	6	4
Fisher	3	4	3	6	8	6
Eklund	2	2	2	3	1	1
Blomqvist	1	3	3	3	2	—
Salonen	1	1	—	—	—	2
McCartney	1	2	2	1	—	1
McRae	—	10	11	3	5	3
Buckley	—	5	6	4	7	3
Pond	—	1	2	1	—	—
Taylor	—	1	—	3	6	—
Boyd	—	1	1	—	—	—
Toivonen	—	1	1	1	—	—

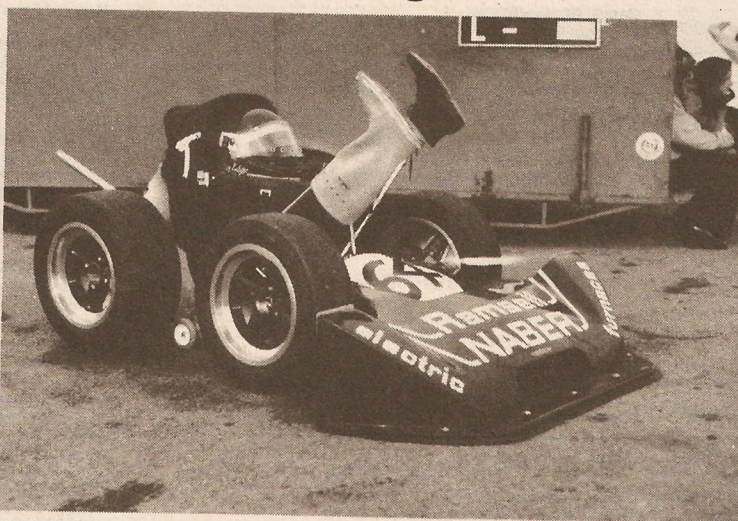


Motus soon

Dud Moseley (above), the former karting and clubmans specialist who turned his hand to Sports 2000 last year, has this year constructed his own chassis with which to contest the Chequered Flag Sports 2000 series. Reviving the Motus name made infamous in the kart world by the fibreglass monocoque Mk7s (of which Moseley made about 30) the new Mk9 should be ready for testing in the next 10 days or so. The spaceframe device is said to be 10ins longer than the existing Lolas, a few inches narrower and, amazingly, seven inches lower. Sponsorship for Dud's enterprising venture comes from Bell Products, the Harpenden firm who manufacture a range of "Get you Home" accessories. Moseley hopes to debut the Motus at the May 7 supporting event.



Close to the Edge



Enjoying their first association with motor sport are Ramsell Naber electric furnaces, a Sutton Coldfield-based company who are sponsoring Ray Edge in FF2000. Edge, who raced a variety of Minis in Se7en, 850, 1000 and special saloon guise until 1974, is best known for his efforts in the clubmans formula having won the Northern Champagne Championship in 1975 and '76 in an ex-Richard Mallock U2. The following year should have seen Ray out once more in the car but a spate of mechanical disasters left him "financially embarrassed" and he went into self-imposed retirement while he decided what to do.

A brief taste of FF1600 with a hired Hawke inspired Edge to move into FF2000 this year and, to that end, he purchased the smart red Lola-Titan T580 (above). The team also have a development prototype (left) which was seen at Silverstone on Easter Monday. Design, construction and testing, albeit somewhat abortive, was carried out within a day, says reader D M Clark who submitted the photo.

Scotsprint

The Executive of the Esso Scottish sprint championship report that 144 registrations have been received for their series, an improvement of over 100 per cent on the 1978 figure. Over 30 newcomers have expressed their intentions to compete which is, in itself, a healthy sign.

Deltas dominate Benelux and Scandinavian FF2000

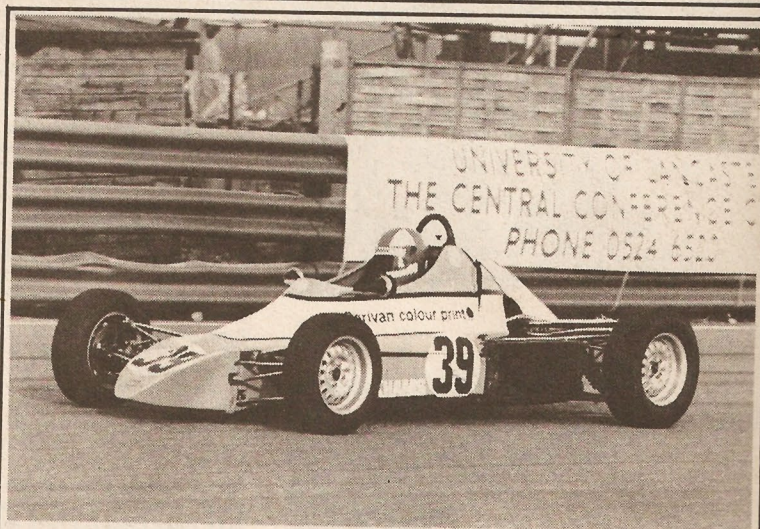
Delta chassis continue to dominate FF2000 events in Europe and Scandinavia even though overall victories have eluded them in England this season. At the opening round of the Scandinavian FF2000 series at the Djurslandring last year's T78 model of Leif Jorgensen headed a one-three-four for the marquee. An outstanding performance at the second Jyllandsringen round was put up by former kartist Christian Nissen whose T79 chassis scored an impressive victory in only the driver's second car race.

At Zolder on Sunday, Delta Race Cars' Dutch importer Ron Kluit won a Benelux championship round in his T79, narrowly defeating the underrated Mike White — who himself won last year's British BAF series — by the narrowest of margins. White was offered a guest drive in the chassis normally pedalled by Gerry Witenden (the South African's F3 plans sadly fell through following desperate financial problems) and led the race in the British Racing Green machine, backed for the occasion by Levis jeans, before losing time with a moment on some oil. By way of consolation, Mike set an excellent new lap record as he tigered back in pursuit or

Kluit's Society Shops car.

Other Delta pilots to show well were Fred Krab and Carel van Hoogenhuyze who finished fourth and fifth respectively (the latter raced an FF1600 Crosslé 30F at the FF Festival last year) while Bob Schippers, Hugo de Groot, Peter van Ispelen and John Vos were also out in the Horseless Carriage Company of Hove's attractive vehicles.

On the home front Gerry Witenden now has a new Nelson engine for his car so should be fully competitive; Basil Mann will be hoping to end his run of bad luck, the former South African FVee champion having borrowed Barry Brown's *Construction News* car at Brands Hatch after his own was damaged in a testing shunt. Poor Frank Bradley had a hairy "end over end" accident at Silverstone after Nick Foy had rammed him, the Tredaire machine now being completely rebuilt while Keith Fitzsimmons has begun to go well in his ex-Bradley T78. American John Herne's Medenica Racing example has shown good form. Nick Crossley's works team should certainly steal the limelight at their next meeting though, when they debut their new 58 foot articulated transporter/mobile workshop.

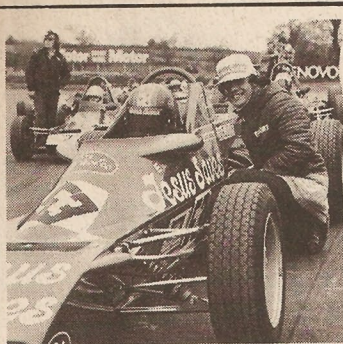


Perivan's new Image

BBC newsreader Richard Baker did the honours at a recent reception in Southend to introduce Perivan Colour Print to the field of motor sport sponsorship. The launch, which took place in Perivan's factory, marked the debut of the company's brand new Image FF4 chassis which is to be driven throughout the year by Brian Sims, who introduced SodaStream to racing back in 1977.

The car is finished in the orange and white livery of its sponsors and will be run by Robert Foden and Mark Picken of RF Racing in Sandbach, Cheshire. Further backing comes from Duckhams and Baroque of Salisbury. Perivan colour print are producers of high quality colour printing to a wide variety of industries and their well-attended press launch was notable for a showing of the tremendous Esso FF1600 film "The Young Tigers" and a superb Scalextric layout on which guests challenged Sims during the day.

edited by Marcus Pyel



Another Ribeiro

In only his second race in this country, Alex Ribeiro's younger brother, Fernando, qualified his brand new Minister-powered Van Diemen RF79 on pole position. A time of 50.6s on his first visit to Mallory Park represents a pretty fair attempt! 22-year old Fernando, who has backing from Alex's old sponsors Rastro as well as Jarjour, also boasts the 'Jesus Saves' banner on his overalls, helmet and car. He was beaten off the line by David Wheeler's Royale but remained very close behind for the first two laps before the race was stopped following an incident at Gerards. Ribeiro did not see the crossed flags until too late — Wheeler had already slowed and the Brazilian's nosecone and radiator were too badly damaged on the Royale's gearbox for him to start the new race. During the short time he had been on the track, however, he had been very impressive and, after karting and Formula Ford experience at home, should be a man to watch.

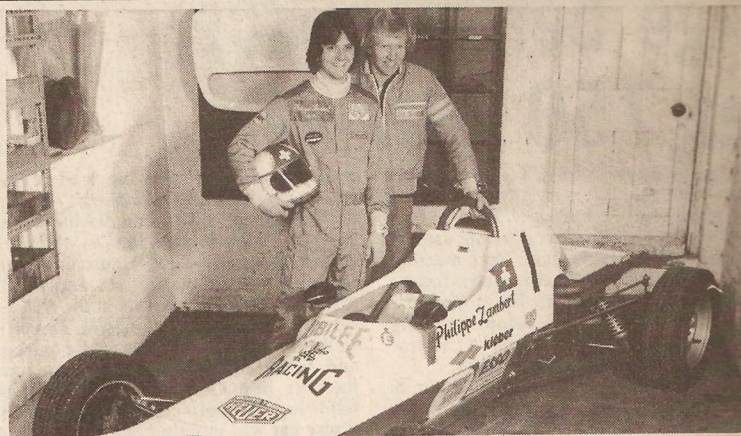
● A familiar face in one of Harlequin Racing's Van Diemens over the Easter weekend was that of American Fred Sigafos. Alas, his comeback was to be a short one for he was punted off at the first corner. Sigafos has not raced regularly for three years but last season helped to develop Colin Brown's Elden-based Zigg 78/4 for the AMHEC F4 series.

Briefly . . .

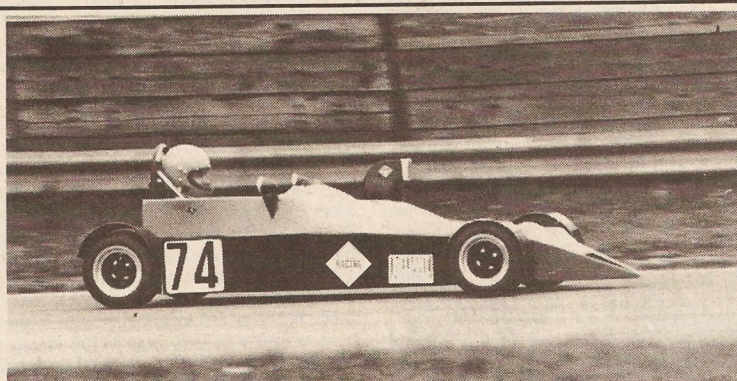
● Angmering's John Poxon has unfortunately had to delay his return to the tracks yet again as a shortage of Hewland gearboxes will make it impossible to complete his Setyres/Rivi & Grimaldi wheels Lola T492 for about another week. It seems, though, that he is not the only Sports 2000 or FF2000 gearboxes experiencing such difficulties for Delta Race Cars who prepare the Lola are awaiting supplies to finish Soren Aggerholm's new T79 chassis. Incidentally, Poxon's highly competitive GRD 374/76 which he was to have used in F4 this season is still for sale.

● West country hillclimb specialist Chris McCavana is entered at Wiscombe Park this weekend in the interesting sounding Marlin (note, not Marlyn as of Sir Nick Williamson fame) HS79, sharing the car with Roger Jordan. Further details shortly we hope.

● The Darlington & DMC race meeting scheduled for Croft this Sunday has been cancelled. A hectic Easter and high attrition rates at last weekend's meeting have been blamed for the poor entry received. The club hope to organise a replacement date later in the season.



Aiming towards F3 in 1980 the promising young Swiss driver Philippe Lambert is contesting the entire Townsend Thoresen FF1600 championship as well as rounds of the RAC, Esso, BARC Normandy Ferries and European series again with a Crossle 32F maintained and run by Steuart Veitch's Jubilee Race Hire concern. Lambert came to England last year, showing very well in the Dunlop Star of Tomorrow championship and he has secured assistance from Minister engines, Sunoco, Kleber (on whose tyres the European FF1600 drivers are obliged to run) and Heuer Timing for 1979. Philippe came fifth in the opening Townsend Thoresen round but currently lies 'ninth after a brief 'off' at Snetterton. He also lies third overall in the RAC championship. Lambert (left) looks to be one of the best Swiss hopes of recent years and is sure to be a man to beat this season.



Rod Hill gave his latest Mystic T3 its first serious outing last Sunday in the Reliant 750 Formula Championship race at Mallory Park. This very small new car is designed around some of the tiny six-wheeler Tyrrell tyres which Rod has acquired and has been the subject of nearly two year's hard labour in his lock-up garage in Ashby-de-la-Zouch. It is beautifully constructed and features inboard front suspension with rocking arms and has adjustable roll-bars front and rear. It is also extremely light! Rod was a regular 750 Formula campaigner up until 1975 when he finished a fine second in the Championship and is hoping to go one better than that with this car. His first race for over 3 years was hampered by a few teething problems, including a broken rear mudguard, but the Mystic could be a front-runner before too long in this thoroughly competitive formula.

● An interesting addition to the regular Hitachi FATlantic runners at Brands this weekend should be Emilio de Villota in the works Lyncar chassis. The Spaniard's ex-works/Rebaque Lotus 78 which runs in the Aurora AFX championship in Madom colours is based at Martin Slater's Slough works so it is natural that Emilio should be nominated to drive the Swindon-powered Atlantic car.

● Some good news for American Peter Argetsinger is that he has found someone to support his Formula Ford 1600 efforts. Peter's new Hawke Mk21, which is nearing completion at the factory in Southend, will be backed by a Dartford firm Chinell Engineering, who make precision components such as steering boxes. The first outing for both the sponsor and the car should be at Silverstone this weekend.

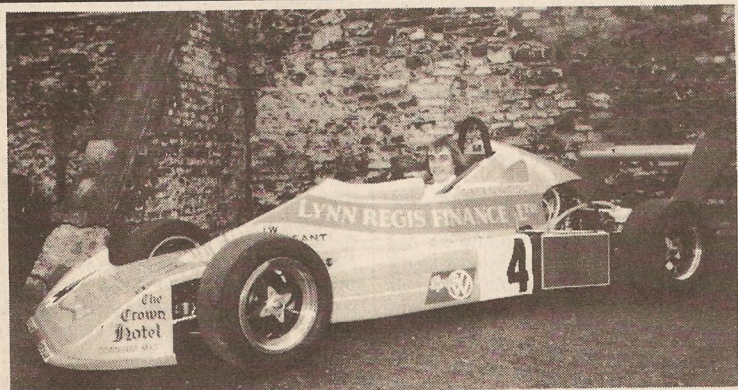
● Entries for the MGCC T-type championship race at Snetterton on Sunday include the TCs of Ron Gammons and Gerry Brown, George Edney's TB and the TAs of Stuart Dean and Paddy Wilmer.

● Midland Radiator (Birmingham) are entering the Mini of Terry Mulloy in the Austin Morris Mini 1000 Challenge this year. Preparation is in the capable hands of former Mini 850 champion Bob Fox.

● Former Lotus Elan driver Danny Arundel who competed in Southern modsports events a couple of years back, returns to the circuits this weekend with a Davrian-Imp MkVII. He will race in the BRSCC Modified Sports race at Snetterton.

● Although she is still seeking sponsorship to run her Sark FF2000 car in the BARC London & Home Counties Centre speed championship, Lorina Boughton kicks off her season at Lydden on Sunday driving an 850 Mini in the special saloon event. The car belongs to Ascot driver Peter Davey and is currently for sale as Davey himself now has a 1-litre Imp. Both cars will appear in Peter's customary white and purple livery.

● The Lancashire AC will be running three meetings at Aintree this season having lost their Longridge venue and are organising an Aintree Race Challenge in conjunction with the Mid-Cheshire AC over five meetings. The first round is on May 19 and points, irrespective of class or category will be awarded on race results with bonus marks for all race starters and fastest laps. The series carries a £250 prize fund with £100 cash and a trophy to the winner. All competitors must register first with Tony Linton on 0254 884572.



Maintaining his challenge on the Formula Vee Association Great Britain's VW Silver Cup series for FSV is Norfolk garage proprietor Dave Greenwood who started racing in FVee events in 1977 following a few outings in FF1600. Dave drove his Scarab Vee to the National championship in 1977 and moved into FSV last year with an ex-Rick Gorne Elden Mk18/22 into which was slotted one of the first water-cooled VW units to be raced in England. Greenwood secured backing from Lynn Regis Finance Limited and had a good season, finishing a promising fourth in the Silver Cup championship. On his first international foray, to Zandvoort, he came home sixth in distinguished company.

Greenwood now has the prototype Reynard FSV chassis (in fact a modified FF2000 car) powered by a works Brabham engine producing over 170bhp on Lucas fuel injection. With assistance from Adrian Reynard the car will be developed throughout the season and will again run in the striking yellow and green livery of Lynn Regis Finance. Additional backing comes from The Crown Hotel, Downham Market; W Sargeant, butchers from Stow Bridge; Barry Burton Road Transport of Seith and RGD Engineering. Dave finished second at the opening British Championship round at Castle Combe, relinquishing an early

● A fascinating magazine by the name of *Pit Road* landed on the Club Editor's desk last week. Aimed specifically at race car modellers, the very first issue deals specifically with the modelling of the Arrows FA1, ATS HS1, Brabham BT46 and derivatives, March 782, Porsche 936, Martini MK23 and Hesketh 308E to 'perfectionist' standards. *Pit Road* also contains general motor racing modelling news and represents good value at 60p. Copies are available from Denecot, Toadsmoor, Brimscombe, Stroud, Gloucestershire (Tel: Brimscombe 5207 for details) as are subscription rates.

● Entries for Saturday's second round of the BRSCC Dunlop 'Star of Tomorrow' championship at Brands Hatch include the JP Racing Royales of Craig Tyler and Robin Aspinall, Kevin Gillen's Jean Pierre Debacker-run Van Diemen, Tim Atkinson's similar car and Malcolm Delicâte's Elden.

● The original Anson SA1 which Gary Anderson and Bob Simpson built for F3 a few seasons back has re-emerged on the hills this year. In its heyday the car was driven by Dick Parsons with a Triumph Dolomite power unit but this was sold to make way for the pretty SA2 model (talking of which, where has it gone?). The old car was bought by Nick Harrison and used on the hills last season but has now passed on to Eryl 'March 713M' Davies and John Bevan

Age before beauty at 750 Mallory

Daventry driver John Giles is probably the oldest regular competitor in the 750 Formula but he certainly puts all his experience to the fullest possible use. At the 750MC's first Mallory Park meeting of the season last Sunday, John fought out a superb battle with Keith Cooper's newer Wessex CH767 before bringing his own JGS Mk5B home a narrow winner after ten entertaining laps.

The first of the 'low-cost' Carlton & Bullen series of Challenge races for FF1600 cars — that is for cars of at least five years of age — opened the afternoon and provided a good dice for the lead between Derek Fowler's ex-Derek Lawrence Titan Mk6 and the Piercy's Electronics Elden Mk10 of Peter Bell. Peter Hancock also closed up at one stage with his Merlyn Mk20A but slipped back a little towards the end. Fowler led each lap past the finishing line scoring his first-ever win but his car was suffering from a lack of front brakes and Bell was able to close up each time on the approach to Shaw's.

The typically close-fought Mini 850 race saw an excellent battle for the lead between three cars. Chris Tyrrell and Patrick Watts spent most of the first lap side-by-side before Watts found himself on the outside line at the hairpin and running out of road. In lifting off, he lost a couple of places to Graham Woskett and Ben Dutson, although Watts was soon back up into second again and

challenging Tyrrell for the lead. Chris was taking some extraordinary lines at the Lake Esses, including driving for at least 75 yards on the grass — which, of course, provided much amusement and the ploy seemed to be working until, eventually, on lap 8, Watts in the All Car Equipe Mini hauled alongside Tyrrell's Calbrook Mini on the exit to the hairpin and edged ahead as the cars went past the pits into Gerards Bend. A close-fought Woskett also passed Tyrrell, whose car was jumping out of gear, and this was the order in which they finished. Dutson could not keep pace with the leading trio but still ended up just clear of a massive battle for fourth place. Jim McDougall led the pack for most of the time as well as across the finish line for the all-important final time.

The Formula Vee race wasn't as close as some of last year's but at least the cars were well-presented. Glenn Hay extended his lead throughout the 10 laps to score a clear win with his ex-Ian Flux Scarab, while Mark Briggs (Project 73B) took second place after Doug Copeland suffered a disagreement over lines with a backmarker at the final corner and ended his race against the bank. Copeland, in fact, had driven his ex-John Holmes 1978 championship-winning Hawk well to climb from fifth place to second by half-way but Briggs then regained his place at the hairpin when Copeland was slightly baulked. Cope-

land was, understandably, less than amused by the last lap incident which broke the rear suspension of his Hawk.

The Varley Batteries Monoposto event was enlivened only by a fine recovery drive from Anthony Ford in his beautifully constructed Emberton. He challenged Julian Pratt's JPS 3 for the first three laps but then spun at Gerards and lost the best part of three-quarters of a lap as well as 10 places. Undeterred, the Birmingham driver drove as hard as he could, especially over the last two laps when he overtook seven cars to take the flag in third place only a few yards behind Mike Murphy's March 703.

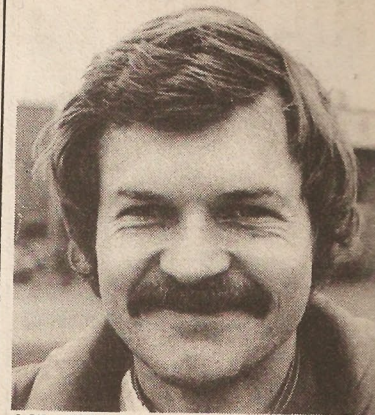
An exciting 750 Formula race featured a fine battle for the lead between John Giles (JGS) and Keith Cooper (Wessex), these two swapping places several times. Giles held the upper hand for most of the time to win, while, behind them, Richard Muston (Silman) and Simon Fry (DNC) continued their battle from the opening round at Silverstone. Muston this time finishing narrowly in front. A massive scrap for fifth place lost front row man Peter Woodcock (Centaur) on the last lap with a blown head-gasket so Gary Randall took the place ahead of Bob Wright and Tony Marsden.

The Wilkes 750MC FF1600 Challenge race had to be stopped after three laps to remove a couple of cars from the middle of the track at Gerards and it was the stopping of the race that led to the downfall of pole-man Fernando Ribeiro. Alex's younger brother had been closely following David Wheeler's SDC Royale RP26 and was concentrating so hard that he didn't see the crossed flags until after Wheeler had slowed. The unfortunate Brazilian rammed into the back of Wheeler's car and damaged his Van Diemen's nose and radiator beyond immediate repair. At the restart, therefore, Wheeler led away, although locked brakes and a missed gear at the Hairpin allowed Andy Harben's similar RP26 into the lead. Wheeler soon caught him up and sliced neatly through into the lead entering Gerards for the seventh time. Coming out of the corner though, a backmarker failed to use his mirrors and moved straight across in front of the two leaders. Wheeler had to take to the grass but kept his car in a straight-line while poor Harben was forced to cut back inside the slow Merlyn and spun off into the infield. Tony Trevor's PRS also encountered a slower car at the hairpin to the detriment of his nosecone but still kept second place ahead of Wil Arif's Crosslé.

The AMHEC Formula 4 event saw the usual result: Ian Briggs won by miles in his well-prepared CP Hydraulics Delta. Brian Turner again took second place in his modified Hawke DL14, while Iain Rowley took an equally secure third in his Spartan.

Rain, unfortunately, greeted the Midget race contestants although most drivers took a chance, running on dry tyres. In the diabolical conditions, Keith Ashby kept his Park Vending car well under control to score a good win although David Sheppard and Richard Ibrahim were very close behind at the finish. Sheppard having spun no less than three times *en route!* Steve Dowler passed Tim Cairns for the lead of the road-going class on the last lap but then spun it all away at the Esses, so it was Cairns's Sprite which took a good fifth place overall.

The final 750 Formula consolation race turned into something of a joke. Only six starters braved the awful conditions and but two were still running at the finish. Mick Harvey (Darvi) and former grass-track man John Lorrimer (ex-Muston DNC) both led at one stage but retired with mechanical trouble so Dave Roberts slithered onward to victory and a thoroughly deserved bottle of champagne.



Mike White — narrow defeat.

Importer beats Delta

Mike White and the Delta team took one of their latest T79s to Zandvoort on Easter Monday for a sales exercise but were narrowly beaten into second place by the Delta importer Ron Kluit. The sleek lines of the Deltas really gave them a tremendous advantage, only the experienced Maarten Henneman in his F&S Lola T580 being able to seriously challenge the Patrick Head design. In fact the superior braking capabilities of the Lola gave Henneman the lead on the third lap but was always slower on the straight and had to settle for third place. Fred Krab and Carel van Hoogenhuize also in Deltas) took the next two places with the pole positioned Crosslé 33F of Henk Robijn completing the top six.

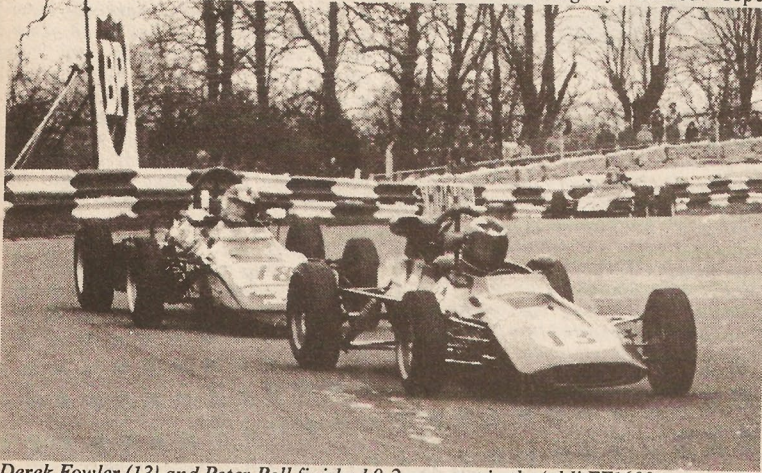
1978 BAF FF2000 Champion White, who is still without a regular drive this year, not only took second place on his first visit to Zandvoort but also set a new lap record at 2m 35.51s to complete a successful day for Delta.

Racing for the first time were Sports 2000 cars. Ros de Giaxa da Salvi and Huub Vermeulen, both in Lola T492s, ran away from the rest of the field and finished just 0.13sec apart at the finish, with da Salvi's F&S car covered in black tyre marks from Vermeulen's attacks! Rob Slotemaker, Albert Vanierschot, Henny Vollenburg and Jum Vermeulen completed the top six, all in Lolas. The only non-Lola was Lammie van der Heuvel's Tigo but he retired with an iced-up carburettor.

● At Zolder last Sunday, Lammie van der Heuvel took pole position in his Tigo and ran away with the Sports 2000 race winning by 3.1secs from de Giaxa da Salvi, who now leads the championship from Huub Vermeulen who finished third. At the moment there are 15 cars competing on the Benelux championship and the racing is good — an encouraging start to the season.

● Only 19 cars turned up at the South-sea MC's round of the BTRDA Autotest Championship staged at Huxfords premises and an adjoining supermarket car park at Fareham last Sunday, and Dick Squire romped home to an easy win and maximum points in his Sprite. A dozen tests were arranged and, after four had been completed, John Larkin, back after gearbox problems, was in the lead by 1sec. This was the incentive Squire needed and he eased himself to the fore and eventually won the event on 464.8s.

BTD: Dick Squire (Sprite), 464.8s.
Class winners: Steve Connor (Mini), 505.6s; John Larkin (L275 GT), 481.3s; Peter Draper (Dutton), 526.9s. Clubmen: BTD: Roy Baker (Mini), 533.8s.



Derek Fowler (13) and Peter Bell finished 0.2sec apart in the 'old' FF1600 race.

results

Carlton & Bullen Challenge Race for Formula Ford 1600 (10 laps): 1, Derek Fowler (Titan-Titan Mk6C), 9m 02.1s, 89.65mph; 2, Peter Bell (Elden-Minister Mk10), 9m 02.3s; 3, Peter Hancock (Merlyn-Minister Mk20A), 9m 05.5s; 4, Michael Dicken (Elden-Scholar Mk10C), 9m 10.8s; 5, Nick Taylor (Jomic-Rowland 2A), 9m 12.5s; 6, WR Latham (Elden Mk10C), 9m 13.9s. **Fastest lap:** Fowler, 53.0s, 91.70mph.

Austin Morris Mini 850 Challenge Race (10 laps): 1, Patrick Watts, 10m 20.1s, 78.37mph; 2, Graham Woskett, 10m 20.9s; 3, Chris Tyrrell, 10m 21.4s; 4, Ben Dutson, 10m 30.2s; 5, Jim McDougall, 10m 31.8s; 6, Nigel Gaymer, 10m 32.7s. **Fastest lap:** Woskett, 1m 00.4s, 80.46mph.

Formula Vee Challenge Race (10 laps): 1, Glenn Hay (Scarab), 9m 16.7s, 87.30mph; 2, Mark Briggs (Project 73B), 9m 29.1s; 3, Mike McDermott (Austro Vee 74V), 9m 32.5s; 4, Tim Flynn (Scarab), 9m 39.7s; 5, Chris Taylor (Grist 79V), 9m 52.2s; 6, John Anderson (Link Vee), 9m 54.2s. **Fastest lap:** Hay, 54.8s, 88.69mph.

Varley Batteries Monoposto Championship Race (10 laps): 1, Julian Pratt (JPS 3), 8m 40.9s, 93.30mph; 2, Mike Murphy (March 703), 9m 16.2s; 3, Anthony Ford (Emberton Mk2C), 9m 16.9s; 4, Norman Greenhalgh (Chevron B18), 9m 17.7s; 5, Brian Toft (Anco), 9m 18.9s; 6, Rupert West (Royale RP11), 9m 20.1s. **Fastest lap:** Ford, 50.1s, 97.01mph.

Reliant 750 Formula Championship Race (10 laps): 1, John Giles (JGS Mk5B), 9m 44.9s, 83.09mph; 2, Keith Cooper (Wessex CH767), 9m 45.3s; 3, Richard Muston (Silman RS1), 9m 59.2s; 4, Simon Fry (DNC Mk5TF), 9m 59.6s; 5, Gary Randall (Wessex CH767), 10m 03.3s; 6, Bob Wright (Centaur), 10m 04.2s. **Fastest lap:** Giles, 56.5s, 86.02mph.

Wilkes 750MC Formula Ford 1600 Challenge Race (10 laps): 1, David Wheeler (Royale-Titan RP26), 8m 43.7s, 92.80mph; 2, Tony Trevor (PRS-CES RH01), 8m 45.8s; 3, Wil Arif (Crosslé-Rowland 35F), 8m 49.2s; 4, Peter Williams (Crosslé-GGS 32F), 9m 01.6s; 5, Peter Bell, 9m 06.5s; 6, Stephen Lightfoot (Hawke-Minister DL15), 9m 06.7s. **Fastest lap:** Wheeler, 51.1s, 95.11mph.

AMHEC Formula 4 Championship Race (10 laps): 1, Ian Briggs (Delta-Hartwell/Imp 784), 8m 33.6s, 94.63mph; 2, Brian Turner (BTC-Ford 004), 8m 51.8s; 3, Ian Rowley (Sparton-Imp), 9m 11.1s; 4, Bob Laughton (Ensign-Ford LNF4), 9m 15.1s; 5, Alan Morgan (Cirrus-Richardson/Imp 004), 9m 15.3s; 6, Mike Whately (March-Ford 773/4), 9m 16.1s. **Fastest lap:** Briggs, 48.8s, 99.59mph.

MG Car Club Midget Championship Race (10 laps) — overall and Modified class: 1, Keith Ashby (1.5 MG Midget), 11m 29.7s, 70.47mph; 2, David Sheppard (1.4 MG Midget), 11m 30.3s; 3, Richard Ibrahim (1.5 MG Midget), 11m 33.4s; 4, Andrew Shilstone (1.5 MG Midget), 11m 56.0s. **Fastest lap:** Ashby, 1m 05.7s, 73.97mph. **Road-going class:** 1, Tim Cairns (1.3 Austin Healey Sprite), no speed given; 2, Steve Dowler (1.3 MG Midget); 3, John Vernon (1.3 Austin Healey Sprite). **Fastest lap:** Dowler, 1m 08.8s, 70.64mph.

Reliant 750 Formula Consolation Race (10 laps): 1, Dave Roberts (DNC Mk6), 13m 49.2s, 58.61mph; 2, Alan Raine (DNC Mk6), 15m 12.2s; no other finishers. **Fastest lap:** Dick Harvey (Darvi Mk5B), 1m 20.6s.

Aintree reopens for cars

Motor racing returned to Aintree on Easter Saturday after a gap of nearly two years and, with a full paddock of competitors, a constant flow of spectators and a clear blue sky overhead, all looked well for the BRSCC Northern Centre's second championship meeting. The centre, which lost Rufforth two years ago, at least had the Yorkshire circuit's armo on loan.

The flag dropped to signal the return of racing to Aintree and the large crowd were treated to a close Formula Ford 1600 thrash which P. J. Fallon (PRS) led into Club, only to be taken by Richard Peacock (Crosslé). Within 10 laps, both Rick Whyman (Royale) and Dave Manners had taken their turn to lead before the latter retired with mechanical problems. Suddenly Fallon extended his lead and, with four laps to go, it was Richard Peacock back into second place after an earlier late-braking exercise had seen him lose three positions.

The classic saloons certainly gave value for money with screeching tyres and long sliding exits at the corners. The lead changed frequently in the early stages with first Bill Postin's Zephyr and then Bill Pinkney's Jaguar, at the head of the field until the eighth lap when Pinkney went through to keep the lead. Due to some confusion, the flag dropped after 10 of 12 programmed laps. Graig Hinton in the larger Jaguar MkVII had a walk over in the larger class and Anthony Raine redeemed himself by

taking the small class from Tom Hinds, both drivers in A35s.

Jon Fletcher's Lotus Elan was handling peculiarly after the previous week's shunt at Brands and it took him until half distance to overhaul the leading Nicky Ellis and the hard changing Davrian of John Pugsley. Ellis pressed him to the flag just 1 sec behind and the Davrian dropped back to third overall and an obvious class win with Bill Higgins Ginetta taking fourth overall and the class C win.

In the saloon car race, leader Jimmy Robertson had Derek Walker slip inside the Skoda and, from then on, the Cardenden driver had to work hard to regain the lead. He did so eventually, in the latter stages. Richard Simms eventually passed Walker on the penultimate lap, but then Robertson had a clear 5secs lead to the finish. George Thompson's Escort took the middle class and Malcolm Bell's Imp the smaller one.

The *Formule Libre* race, if not the most exciting of the day, was certainly interesting. George Holroyd's GRD went round County Corner to lead from the Clubman of Andy Smith; Fastest man in practice, Paul Gardener, booted his March past on the long straight but then had his engine go off song and George Macmillan's Chevron go through to lead. The lead was only short lived, however, as the Berwick driver's engine expired on the 15th lap.

TONY DELAHUNTY

results

FF1600 race (20 laps): 1, Patrick Fallon (PRS), 21m 25.2s, 91.87mph; 2, Richard Peacock (Crosslé 32F), 21m 28.2s; 3, Keith Lawrence (Van Diemen Auriga RF79), 21m 28.4s; 4, Rick Whyman (Royale Titan RP26), 21m 28.9s; 5, Dave Abram (Royale-Adams RP24), 21m 37.7s; 6, Alan Stringer (Crosslé-Minister 30F), 21m 44.7s. **Fastest lap:** Fallon, 1m 03.3s, 93.27mph.

Classic Saloon race (10 laps). Overall and 1902-2700cc: 1, Bill Pinkney (2.4 Jaguar), 12m 53.9s, 76.28mph; 2, Bill Postin (2.6 Zephyr), 12m 56.6s; 3, Alan Mills (2.5 Zephyr), 13m 25.4s. **Fastest lap:** Pinkney, 1m 15.4s, 78.30mph. **Over 2700cc:** 1, Graig Hinton (3.0 TVR), 73.19mph. No other finishers. **Fastest lap:** Hinton, 1m 21.3s, 72.61mph. **1252-1901cc:** 1, Tim Colman (1.5 MG), 65.75mph; 2, Paul Harrison (1.5 Borgward). **Fastest lap:** Colman, 1m 26.7s, 68.09mph (record). **Up to 1251cc:** 1, Antony Raine (1.0 A35), 72.07mph; 2, Tom Hinds (1.0 A35); 3, Brian Pallett (1.0 A35). **Fastest lap:** Raine, 1m 20.4s, 73.43mph (record).

Modified Sports Cars race (15 laps). Overall: 1, Jon Fletcher (1.8 Elan), 15m 38.8s, 94.33mph; 2, Nicky Ellis (1.8 Elan), 15m 39.8s; 3, John Pugsley (1.1 Davrian), 16m 01.0s; 4, Ian Higgins (1.5 Ginetta), 16m 34.5s. **Over 2000cc:** 1, Tony Delahunty (3.0 TVR), 73.19mph. No other finishers. **Fastest lap:** Delahunty, 1m 19.0s, 74.73mph. **1500-2000cc:** 1, Fletcher; 2, Ellis; 3, I. Higgins. **Fastest lap:** Fletcher, 1m 00.8s, 97.10mph (record). **1151-1500cc:** 1, Garry Wilson (1.4 Midget), 85.41mph; 2, Bill Higgins (1.4 Ginetta); 3, John Read (1.3 Sprite). **Fastest lap:** Wilson, 1m 07.0s, 88.11mph. **Up to 1150cc:** 1, Pugsley, 92.15mph; 2, Jim Adamson (1.1 Davrian); 3, Barry Fearnly (0.8 Honda). **Fastest lap:** Pugsley, 1m 02.6s (record).

Special Saloon race (15 laps). Overall and Over 1300cc: 1, Jimmy Robertson (3.4 Skoda GA), 15m 10.0s, 97.31mph; 2, Richard Simms (2.0 Skoda FVC), 15m 15.8s; 3, Derek Walker (2.0 Skoda BDG), 15m 17.5s. **Fastest lap:** Robertson and Walker, 59.4s, 99.39mph. (Over 2500cc record for Robertson). **1001-1300cc:** 1, Geoff Thompson (1.3 Escort BDA), 88.85mph. No other finishers. **Fastest lap:** Thompson, 1m 05.1s, 90.69mph. **Up to 1000cc:** 1, Malcolm Bell (1.0 Imp), 85.93mph; 2, Peter Jurgens (1.0 A40). **Fastest lap:** Jurgens, 1m 05.6s, 90.00mph (record).

Formule Libre race (20 laps): 1, Paul Gardener (2.0 March 782), 19m 03.4s, 103.27mph; 2, Andy Smith (1.6 Mallock Mk20), 19m 37.9s; 3, John Holroyd (1.6 GRD), 19 laps; 4, John Travis (1.6 Brabham), 19 laps; 5, Peter Kay (1.6 Royale), 19 laps; 6, D. Carroll (Janus), 18 laps. **Fastest lap:** Gardener, 55.3s, 106.76mph.



Leading Irish triallists Wilbert Todd (at the wheel) and his father, Nelson.

Friendly trial in Ireland

After last year's success when two cars went over to Northern Ireland for a Sporting Trial the word got around and this year five cars made the trip. The accent was on quality, the cars of Jack Pearce, Mike Velasco and Robin Jager among those to go.

The trial was near Downpatrick, where six sections had been laid out on very grippy ground, these being tackled four times each. Although the scores were low, the club did not make the mistake of tightening up the sections too much so that it became dangerous. Indeed the Trial was voted one of the best of the year.

Behind the first two, Jack Pearce and Velasco's co-driver Ian Wright, there was a tie for third between Wilbert Todd, Robin Jager and Clive Gracey

which was decided on the usual basis. It was interesting to see ex-racer Tommy Reid out in his relatively new Concorde; it cannot be long before he is well up among the front runners.

The B class, for five-year-old cars, was won by Brian Edgar in his ex-Laurie Brown Aberties, but it was not so good for several drivers who had transmission failures in the grippy stuff. Brian Emerson, Mike Velasco and Keith Minster all had to call it a day before the end.

PAUL SHELDON

1, Jack Pearce/Brenda Pearce (Kincraft), 9pts; 2, Ian Wright/Mike Martin (Concorde), 11; 3, Clive Gracey/Alan Bigger (Concorde), 14; 4, Robin Jager/Janet Jager (Facksimile), 14; 5, Wilbert Todd/Nelson Todd (Concorde), 14; 6, Mervyn Glover/Tommy Lynd (Concorde), 28.

First autocross to Jackman

The British Autocross Championship started last Sunday at the East of England showground near Peterborough when the local club attracted 67 entries. On the new site which the Peterborough club hope to use again later in the year there was some pretty close racing and the BTD award only went to Phil Jackman of Kings Lynn by dint of his second run time after he had been equal with Norman Bradshaw.

Jackman, in his large engined Mini, and Bradshaw in his 3½-litre Rover engined Brabilt, tied on 102.9s but when the second runs times were taken into account Jackman had the edge by 1.5sec, both drivers collecting a bollard in their efforts to win.

In the first class, for small engined Minis, Steve Weaver put it across Phil Manser by 0.4sec in a class of 10 but Ian Watson had a near 2sec advantage in the up to 1-litre class over Albert James. Trevor Lawson blew off everyone in the up to 1650 Mini class where Dimi Mavropolous turned up with a Mini instead of his usual full house Escort. He was second but 3secs off the pace.

In the poorly-supported front engined rwd class to 1300cc Alan Davies beat Dave Vadies by 4secs, both in Escorts but in the over 1300cc class, which attracted 15 starters. N. Collett beat Tom Easton, both in Escorts, by 1.7sec. Best of the 10 contenders for the road and rally car class to 1650cc was the

Dolomite-engined Spitfire of S. Nicholls who walked away from the opposition by 6secs but there was a great scrap for the places in the over 1650cc class where the Porsche 2.7 of Mike Evans just pipped Brian Betteridge's VW by 0.2 sec with John Clarkson (Escort), third nearly a second behind Betteridge.

BTD: Phil Jackman (Mini), 102.9s. **Class winners:** Steve Weaver (Mini), 107.7s; Ian Watson (Mini), 109.4s; Trevor Lawson (Mini), 105.0s; Alan Davies (Escort), 106.3s; N Collett (Escort), 107.2s; S Nicholas (Spitfire), 105.0s; Mike Evans (Porsche), 103.1s.

● Mike Hinde scored another outright victory last Sunday with another new car. The North Wales garage owner, who has scored victories in at least two other marques, made it look all too easy on the Coventry & Warwickshire event in the pleasing pastures surrounding Compton Wynates in Warwickshire. His Panther Lima came home on 29 marks at the end of 36 sections, his index of 44.48 per cent easily leaving the rest of the 57 strong entry well behind. Hinde did not have the day's lowest score, this falling to Steve Courts (Skoda) who beat Mike Stephens (Opel Kadett) by two marks.

Overall: Mike Hinde (Panther Lima), 29 marks lost.

Class winners: Barry Parker (Morris 1300), 90 marks; Richard Acres (Cooper), 61 marks; Steve Courts (Skoda), 24 marks; Jim Loveday (Midget), 51 marks; John Ludford (Imp), 39 marks.



The Fabergé Ladies Ford Fiesta teams had a trip to Belgium last weekend for a non-championship race at Zolder, (an "extra-curricular activity", to quote Ford's Andy Anderson!). Fiona Butterfield, in the Peacocks of Balham car, just pipped Guenda Eadie by 0.01sec to take pole position in 2m 22.98s, although in the race. Lyn Jensen swept into the lead from a lowly grid position and looked set to win. In the closing laps, however, when under pressure from Guenda Eadie, she spun down to third place at the first chicane. Eadie therefore ran out the winner by less than a second from Linda Cowcill. Fiona Butterfield had a couple of spins in the race and finished sixth behind Edna Eagleton (pictured leading) and Sarah Cohen.

Better Combe for '79

A warm sunny day and an excellent Bank Holiday crowd greeted the start of a new season at Castle Combe on Easter Monday. The BRSCC's hardworking South-Western centre have put in a lot of hard work over the winter, further improving the circuit's facilities, and their efforts were rewarded by a fine day's racing, run with all the centres usual calm efficiency and enthusiasm, the last race finishing comfortably ahead of time.

Debenhams Escorts opened the proceedings, Billy Burke leading away a bunch of five cars that disputed the race. He was passed a couple of times by John Bishop but each time was quick to retake the lead, which he held to the flag. On the penultimate lap, Robert Edgar slipped past Bishop going down Dean to take second, just ahead of Bishop, while Stuart Cole took fourth, only 0.2sec further back, having put a wheel on the grass a couple of laps

earlier.

A bunch of three cars, lead by Tim Flynn, fought for the lead of the Formula Vee event, with first Mark Briggs and then Mike McDermott in, and he tucked right in behind Flynn just looking for a gap. Flynn needed all his experience to hold off his challenger, but succeeded taking the flag just 0.1sec ahead while Briggs fell back to a distant third.

Following the demise in practise of Vince Woodman's Cologne Capri with gearbox troubles and Geoff Janes's Firenza (dropped valve), Steve Minton was left completely un-challenged in the special saloon event, and his amazing Anglia romped home to a convincing victory, at least 30secs ahead of John Morgan's venerable Mk 1 Jaguar. In the closing stages, Brian Cutting's Mini

results

Debenhams Ford Escort Sport Challenge Race (10 laps): 1, Billy Burke, 14m 09.5s, 77.97mph; 2, Robert Edgar, 14m 09.9s; 3, John Bishop, 14m 10.4s; 4, Stuart Cole, 14m 10.6s; 5, Martin Sims, 14m 11.7s; 6, Christopher Knight, 14m 12.8s. **Fastest Lap:** Bishop, 1m 22.8s, 80.00mph.

National Formula Vee Championship Race (10 laps): 1, Tim Flynn (Scarab-Flynn), 12m 37.9s, 87.30mph; 2, Mike McDermott (Austro-Rolt 74B), 12m 38.0s; 3, Mark Briggs (Project-VW 73B), 12m 47.6s; 4, John Anderson (Link Vee-VW), 13m 16.7s; 5, Harvey Jones (McNamara-VW), 13m 37.8s; 6, Douglas Copeland (Hawke-VW), 13m 38.6s. **Fastest lap:** McDermott, 1m 14.0s, 89.51mph.

Gold Top Trophy Race for Special Saloons (10 laps): Overall: 1, Steve Minton (1.8 Ford Anglia), 12m 03.3s, 91.58mph; 2, John Morgan (3.8 Jaguar Mk 1) 12m 36.9s; 3, Brian Cutting (1.0 Hillman Imp), 12m 37.9s; 4, Chris Moyle (1.3 Spring Mini), 12m 39.1s. **Class A:** 1, Morgan, 87.50mph; No other finishers. **Fastest lap:** Morgan, 1m 13.7s, 89.88mph. **Class B:** 1, Minton; 2, Andrew Grover (2.0 Ford Escort); 3, Chris Sims (2.2 Vauxhall Firenza). **Fastest lap:** Minton, 1m 10.6s, 93.82mph. **Class C:** 1, Moyle, 87.26mph; 2, Norman Hinds (1.3 Mini Cooper S); 3, Dave Hancock (1.3 Max Mini). **Fastest lap:** Moyle, 1m 14.9s, 88.56mph. **Class D:** 1, Cutting, 87.39mph; 2, Viv Wallace (1.0 Maguire Mini); 3, Douglas Fairbairn (1.0 Chrysler Imp). **Fastest lap:** Cutting, 1m 13.4s, 90.25mph. **Class E:** 1, Tony Crudgington (850 BMC Mini), 83.63mph; 2, Duncan Patterson (850 BMC Mini); 3, Barry Reece (850 Chosen Mini Maguire). **Fastest lap:** Crudgington, 1m 17.0s, 86.03mph.

Gunk Renault 5 Elf Challenge Race (10 laps): 1, Dave Loudoun, 14m 47.6s, 74.62mph; 2, Richard Austin, 14m 52.2s; 3, Colin Wild, 14m 56.7s; 4, Jim Edwards, 14m 58.5s 58.5s; 5, John Bell, 15m 02.1s; 6, David Henry, 15m 04.3s. **Fastest lap:** Austin, 1m 26.6s, 76.48mph.

Ross & Haines FF1600 Championship Race (10 laps): 1, Richard Mallock (Mallock-Nelson U2FF), 11m 55.9s, 92.52mph; 2, David Llewellyn (Royale-Harris RP26), 12m 01.4s; 3, Cliff Webb (Image-GOS FF4) 12m 01.6s; 4, Gareth Lloyd (Van Diemen-Scholar RF79), 12m 01.8s; 5, Geoffrey Davies (Crosslé-Auriga 32F), 12m 03.8s; 6, Bob Vicker (Royale-Scholar RP26), 12m 03.9s. **Fastest lap:** Mallock and Vicker 1m 10.4s, 94.09mph.

Hartwells of Bath Trophy Race for Minis up to 1000cc (10 laps): Overall and 1000cc: 1, Charles Hill, 13m 36.6s, 79.17mph; 2, Keith Padmore, 13m 57.8s; 3, John Heathcock, 14m 16.4s; 4, Tim Lester, 14m 20.3s. **Fastest lap:** Hill, 1m 20.8s, 81.98mph. **850cc:** 1, Lester, 76.99mph; 2, Graham Hobbs, 14m 22.7s; 3, Dave Facer, 14m 23.4s. **Fastest lap:** Lester, 1m 24.1s, 78.76mph.

Volkswagen Silver Cup Formula Super Vee Championship Race (10 laps): 1, Olly Hollamby (March-Engine Development), 10m 37.3s, 103.93mph; 2, Dave Greenwood (Reynard-Brabham), 10m 59.0s; 3, Bill Burley (Lola-Brabham T328), 11m 43.1s; 4, Nigel Rees (Royale-Heidegger RP9), 9 laps; 5, Anthony Bernasconi (Crosslé-Heidegger 24F), 8 laps; 6, David Cooper (Royale-VW RP9-6), 7 laps. **Fastest lap:** Hollamby, 1m 02.0s, 108.24mph (record).

MGCC Midget Championship Race (10 laps): Overall and Race Prepared Cars: 1, Keith Ashby, 12m 28.2s, 88.53mph; 2, Steve Everitt, 12m 32.9s; 3, Dave Shephard, 12m 43.8s; 4, Robert Buckingham, 12m 47.8s. **Fastest lap:** Ashby 1m 13.0s, 90.74mph. **Road Going Cars:** 1, Steve Dowler, 74.93mph, 9 laps; 2, Tim Cairns; 3, Steve Groves. **Fastest lap:** Cairns, 1m 25.8s, 77.20mph.

Abrahams Trophy Formule Libre Race (10 laps): 1, John Bowtell (March-BDX 77P), 10m 07.8s, 108.98mph; 2, Roger Orgee (March-Cosworth 772), 10m 38.3s; 3, Dave Greenwood (Reynard-Brabham), 11m 00.8s; 4, Willie Pascoe (Crossle-Triumph 22F), 11m 04.4s; 5, Terry Mills (Royale-Ford RP11), 9 laps; 6, Phil Truman (CTG-Nelson) SF77, 9 laps. **Fastest lap:** Bowtell, 59.5s, 111.32mph (record).

Formula Ford 1600 Consolation Race (7 laps): 1, Malcolm McKillop (Royale-Nelson RP21), 8m 43.1s, 88.64mph; 2, Charles Tilley (Van Diemen-Nelson), 8m 48.9s; 3, E. Timpany (Royale-Scholar RP24), 8m 49.1s; 4, Michael Vanstone (Image-Minister FF 2B/3), 8m 49.6s; 5, Michael O'Neill (Royale-Scholar RP21), 8m 19.2s; 6, David Carson (Hawke-Auriga DL15/19), 9m 20.8s. **Fastest lap:** McKillop, 1m 12.9s, 90.86mph.



Roy Cook was in the English team which travelled to Tilburg in Holland and Kaldenkirchen in Germany to contest the European Hot Rod Challenge over Easter weekend. Despite strong competition from the German, Dutch and Belgian opposition the team — Cook, Ted Allan and Paul Knight — defeated the rest. Full report next week.

closed up on Morgan, having fought his way up from eighth on the first lap, but couldn't quite catch up. He led home a gaggle of cars including class winners Chris Moyle (Mini) and the very low Escort of Andrew Groves. The smallest class winner, Tony Crudgington was back in ninth in yet another Mini.

A mix-up as the cars left the grid for the Renault 5 race allowed Dave Loudoun and Colin Wild to establish an unusually large lead in the opening laps. They were joined by Richard Austin on the fourth lap who drove neatly around the outside of Wild at Camp to take fourth, and they finished in the order Loudoun, Austin and Wild. Jim Edwards put in the drive of the race to take fourth having been relegated to last after the grid mix up.

The front-engined U2 Mallock might just be the harbinger of a new trend in Formula Ford, for Richard Mallock took the car to a convincing victory in the Ross and Haines event. Cliff Webb (Image FF4) and Mark Goddard (Palliser WDF 3) swapped second regularly until Goddard spun off at Quarry letting in David Llewellyn's Royale RP26, Llewellyn having fought his way back from eighth after a poor start from pole. He took Webb at Old Paddock on the very last lap, and the unlucky Webb couldn't quite get it back, the cars finishing just half a car's length apart.

Minis are always exciting, and the cars in the Graham Hill event were on their usual form. Charles Hill and Keith Padmore, both in 1000 models, swapped the lead on each of the first five laps and, though Hill briefly opened up a small lead, Padmore retook the position at Tower on the ninth lap, only to see Hill's slightly more powerful car reclaim a winning lead going into Quarry for the last time. John Heathcock had great difficulty getting away from Tim Lester's class winning 850, before eventually claiming third and a three car battle for fifth went the way of Graham Hobb's 850 version.

Only eight cars made the grid for the Volkswagen super Vee Silver Cup 10-lapper, and only three of those were ever in with a chance. Dave Greenwood's smart new Brabham-tuned Reynard led initially from Bruce Venn's Lola T720 and the black March of Olly Hollamby but, on the third lap, Hollamby made his move taking Venn at Old Paddock and driving inside Greenwood at Camp. He then thundered away to an impressive, though none too difficult win and a new lap record. Behind him, it took Venn several attempts to get by Greenwood, only to have his engine blow, leaving Greenwood a very lonely second. Over 1min behind Hollamby, Bill Burley finished an even lonelier third.

The MGCC Midgets soon became very strung out, Keith Ashby's race-prepared car taking the honours from Steve Dowler in a lowly seventh.

Sadly missing from the *Formule Libre* grid was the newly rebuilt Formula 5000 Trojan Chevrolet of Jim Moore which unluckily blew a rocker cover in practise. The Marches of John Bowtell and Roger Orgee shared the front row of the grid, but Orgee stalled on the line and the car was slow to fire up, relegating him to last. Orgee fought his way valiantly back to second but could make no impression on the flying Bowtell's lead, John's 77P winning easily and taking a new lap record in the process.

Malcolm McKillop was no doubt very glad that he joined the FF1600 consolation race for, having started from the very back of the grid, he was up to fourth by the end of lap 1, and drove his Royale RP21 inside Michael Vanstone's Image at Camp on the second lap to claim a lead he was not to lose. Vanstone finished an eventual fourth behind Charles Tilley's Van Diemen and the Royale of E. Timpany following a big change-round at Camp on the final lap.

Painton new Kent champion

On a fast dry circuit where power was at a premium, Escorts took most of the honours at the TEAC rallycross at Lydden Hill on Easter Sunday. The meeting was the final of the 1978/79 Winter International Championship, and the second of the 1979 RAC series. With around £1100 of prize money at stake — thanks to sponsorship from the 'Kent Weekly Adscene' — Quaife Power Transmissions and Car Colours — the event had attracted an excellent entry of 86.

Practice resulted in a few significant retirements, including John Brundle (Toyota), Brian Peacock (Mini) and Mike Harrison's Saab 99 went out with a broken gearbox. Transmission problems were to prove common, as drivers found ample traction on the somewhat dusty circuit. The Escorts seemed immune to this in general, and two of them were destined to share the top places. Bruce Rushton took the Team Castrol, Dave Tate-engined version to BTD and first overall in the RAC finals, and Dutch champion Kees Hendricks took his Terry Hoyle-powered one to overall victory in the Lydden finals. But Richard Painton took his ultra-lightweight eight-port 1300 Triple C Ripspeed, Castrol Mini to a well-deserved and popular championship title to succeed Trevor Reeves.

With two championships involved TEAC decided to run two sets of finals, there being two timed qualifying runs for them. Best time of the two was used for the RAC, and an aggregate of points scored on both for the Lydden series. A set of consolation runs were provided for non qualifiers and, on top of all of this, two 10-lap races for senior and junior motocross riders were fitted in to a very busy afternoon.

The dust situation at the end of practice was bad enough to make the promoters decide to apply water to Paddock bend and Chessons. It was at Chessons that the fun was to start. As the first group of cars went on to the chalk they found it dry to start with — then half way round it suddenly went wet and slippery — slippery as only Lydden chalk can be. Leader Dave Wallis struggled through, but those behind were in trouble. The next run saw Chris Scutt retire on the spot. John Butterfield went clean over the bank on to the race circuit in the Jonspeed Mini, and David Waterhouse was also in trouble with his Mini. The message soon got through to those in the Paddock, and this coupled with a drying wind prevented any more serious problems.

It was getting quite quick by the time Nick Oatway brought the immaculate TTM Escort out, to much so that, as Nick came off Chessons, he drifted a little too wide, hit the bank, spun and rolled. The run was stopped, and Mick was stated to have suffered suspected cracked ribs. With the circuit now drying rapidly, times came down at an equal pace, and at the end of the first runs Trevor Hopkins was fastest on 3m 02.7s. Dimi Mavropolous continued his good form, to put the Escort second on 3:03.5. Next up, and driving better than for some time, was Ron Douglas, proving the competitiveness of the Car Colours 16-valve Chevette, on 3:03.8. John Welch was next in the Wessex-powered Escort (3:04.0) with Richard Painton leading the Mini challenge on 3:04.1. Kees Hendricks was close to Richard (in more ways than one!) on 3:04.1. The final race was a 10-lap

New Croft record — at last



Bruce Rushton took BTD in the RAC finals.

Graham and Barry seventh and ninth fastest on 3:07.6 and 3:11.5. They were split by a happy John Button, in the Bose/Central Tyre/Autoconti Golf who recorded 3:08.9. The Bose team were out in full force for the first time and Dick Griffiths, having his first ever VW drive was just outside the top ten on 3:14.8. Completing those ten places, was Mick Bird with the V8 TR7 on 3:14.0. Alas Mick's on-form spell was not to last, as an argument with the bank on the Dover Slope in the second runs was to put the Car Colours machine out.

There were several incidents during the generally faster second runs. Will Gollop got the Saab all sideways in the Elbow, and was collected by David Potter's Mini. Will was later to retire with transmission failure. He feels that the power is coming in too quickly from the turbo, and they are working to try and make it more progressive. A terrific scrap took place between Ron Douglas (Chevette) and John Welch (Escort). As they came through Paddock, they touched and the Chevette was out, Welch going on to victory and a time that would have put him in the top eight. But it didn't, as he was disqualified, a decision that several onlookers thought rather harsh.

Bruce Rushton emerged from it all with BTD — 2:59.0, the only other driver to get below three minutes being Hendricks on 2:59.4. Graham Hathaway, Painton and Butler all improved to hold the next three places, ahead of Hopkins, Mavropoulos and Douglas who had to content themselves with first run times, as did Welch who along with Tony Drummond (running the Hepolite rally machine) just made the top ten. Before the two sets of three finals, the consolation runs saw a win for Dave Wallis in the Willhire Escort.

The RAC finals came first, run over 4½ laps. The 'C' final saw two non-starters Bill Mawle and Gollop. John Clark (Porsche) made another superb start from the third row, and this time he kept it all together to lead throughout, with Graham Strugnell (Blazespeed 1600 Mini) doing likewise in second place. Ian Hall (Escort) was having a good day and held third until the last lap when he was pushed down by Malcolm Jarvis in the ex-Chapman Escort. David Baskerville's similar car was fifth after Griffiths retired the pole position-winning Golf with minor problems on lap 2.

Drummond non started the B final, when the Escort refused to fire up and Welch led this one from flag to flag, with Barry Hathaway second until a driveshaft gave way on lap 4. This let Paul Springett (Mini), Colin Page, Trevor Reeves and Graham Standage all move up one place. Reeves down here? Yes — and until lap 4 he had been trailing the field in the 16-valve Mini, which now has additional back from Favre-Leuba Swiss Watches. The reason was a very slow

start, the Mini lacking first and second gears.

So to the 'A' final to decide top RAC placings. Could 'Hoppy' make it two in a row? He was on the second row with Button beside him, so had no front row advantage: that contained Rushton (on pole) and Painton. It was Rushton who sped off into the lead, Painton retiring to the Paddock on the first lap, the FWD cars of Hopkins and Button holding second and third spots. Dimi was fourth, moving up well from the back of the grid to lead Graham Hathaway, Douglas and Ian Smith (Escort) and that how it stayed until the end, giving Hopkins a clear RAC points lead.

After some Motocross came the Lydden finals, over a distance of 5½ laps. Only five cars made it to the line for the 'C' final, Gollop again absent, as was Bird and Ian Ward, the Ozonair Dolomite having suffered clutch failure. Colin Page, from what was in theory the pole — the front row was missing! — went into the lead from John Clark, and Mawle who had made it this time. The Swindon farmer was really pushing the Spedeworth man, until the Dover slope on lap 5, when the Porsche went very sideways and the Escort was through. Derek Scarrow came in fourth, while an unhappy Strugnell cruised round to finish some two laps down in fifth.

Barry Hathaway was back for the 'B' final which provided that Painton made it into the 'A' final — he had to win to stand any chance of outright championship honours. This he failed to do, finishing fifth behind Springett. Welch had another convincing win, but the fight for second was a sight to behold. It was the war of the roses all over again as Bolton's Ian Smith did all he knew to get by 'Drumbo', but the Yorkshireman was having none of it, and retained his second place. Graham Standage was a strong sixth in the Dave Rowe 1650 TC Escort, while Griffiths was again victim of silly shakedown troubles, and David Potter's clutch had given up the ghost.

When Painton came to the line for the 'A', he had already made sure of the Lydden title, but it seemed that outright victory on the day was more important to him. He tried, oh how he tried! For four laps he held off a tremendous challenge from Hendricks, then on lap 5 the Dutchman was through and pulled away quickly, as Richard showed and stopped with a puncture. The same problem had put Hopkins out on lap 2, while Button's Golf dropped from fourth on lap 2 to seventh on lap 4 with failing brakes before he retired with driveshaft failure. Dimi and Rushton battled throughout, the Cypriot leading until lap 4, when Rushton got by and stayed ahead. Graham Hathaway was second (again!) and Reeves brought up the rear once again in the 'two speed' Mini.

ARTHUR DEBENHAM

The second BRSCC Northern Centre race meeting of the Easter weekend took place at Croft on Monday. As was to be expected during a weekend when most drivers were entered for at least two meetings, Croft suffered somewhat from non-starters. The racing, however, tended to be of the normal high standard, only the Special Saloons having a really poor grid. The FF1600 race at last saw Peter Harrington's 1973 lap record equalled by Stu Lawson in his PRS.

With practice in the morning for a change, there was a decent lunch break which saw a large crowd ready and waiting for the first race, a round of the club's own FF1600 championship. Stu Lawson took an immediate lead from which he was in complete command for the 20 laps, with Dave Manners similar car in close company but unable to get past. Manners was chased by Rick Whyman (Royale), and Keith Lawrence (Van Diemen), the latter managing to get into, and hold, third place fairly early on. David Duffield (Crosslé) and Tim Knight (Van Diemen) held fifth and sixth places respectively for the complete distance while, behind them, a gaggle of cars comprising Alan Stringer (Crosslé), Phil Tingle (Hawke), Walter Warwick (Van Diemen), Tom Brown (Van Diemen) and Dave Abam (Royale) provided much entertainment.

Another good entry of modsports cars was assembled to contest not only the local championship but the National BRSCC series as well. Jon Fletcher (Elan) led in the opening laps from the similar car of Paul Berman who led on the road for the rest of the race: sadly he missed the Chicane fourth time round and could not quite make up the 10secs penalty incurred. After being second on the first lap, the Davrian of John Pugsley took third overall, from the Elan of Joe Lanny who was locked in battle for a while with the Porsche of Barry Robinson; the Porsche gradually faded after five laps, finally retiring in an expensive pall of smoke on lap 9. The 1151-1500cc class went to Garry Wilson (Midget) from Steven Roberts (Marcos) after some quick lappery had given Wilson a new class record. A novel feature of this race was the inclusion, for some reason, of Robert Bailly's Lotus which is in fact a FF1600 type 61! He finished tenth.

The poor Special Saloon entry was perhaps a consequence of the crowded Easter calendar but was most unusual for Croft. Jimmy Robertson took his 3.4-litre Skoda to a predictable win, Richard Simms looking a secure second despite a loose exhaust until his 2-litre Skoda threw a big-end cap out of the side of the engine as he passed the pits on lap 9. Brian Morris (6.1 Camaro) took second after he had moved ahead of the 4.7 Escort of Keith Bowmaker on lap 6. Being the only 1300cc entry in the race Gerald Clark took his new 1.3 Mini Ford to a class win and fastest lap while



Andy Smith retreats from his burning Mallock in the handicap race.

Malcolm Bell did the same with his 1-litre Imp: after suffering a puncture coming off the Straight, resulting in about six spins Malcolm limped through the Chicane and waited until Robertson took the flag six laps later, which explains the slowest race speed of the day, 49.91mph.

Three Chevron-Hart B42s contested the lead for much of the *Libre* race with an assortment of Atlantic and F2 cars in close pursuit. Originally Warren Booth led but was demoted by Brian Robinson on lap 2 and pushed hard by Bernard Hunter's Atlantic Ralt and then by Tony Dean, who moved into second place on lap 6. Robinson and Dean then pulled away to finish only 0.5sec apart after the 20 laps. Booth was then harried unmercifully by Hunter who, in turn, was under pressure from Andy Barton (Atlantic March) who passed the Ralt on lap 16. Hunter finally dropping to sixth behind Iain McLaren (2.0 March) when a misfire set in.

After his impromptu handicap event of the first Croft meeting, Clerk of the Course Frank Wright had timetable a similar event to complete the day, catering for FF1600, Special Saloon and ModSports cars. John Mackie took his Mallock to eventual victory, although the similar car of Andy Smith, which should have figured in the results, did not even make the finish as it caught fire at the Chicane on lap 4. Smith exited the cockpit very smartly and escaped injury while the fire was quickly extinguished leaving a nasty mess of powder all over the engine but very little other damage; no cause was immediately apparent. Joe Lanny took second place in his Elan well ahead of the FF1600 cars of Wally Warwick (Van Diemen), Chris Stockton (Lotus) and Robert Bailly (Lotus).

PAUL BOOTHROYD

results

FF1600 race (20 laps): 1. Stuart Lawson (PRS-Scholar), 24m 52.1s, 84.44mph; 2. Dave Manners (PRS-Auriga), 24m 57.0s; 3. Keith Lawrence (Van Diemen-Auriga RF79), 25m 01.0s; 4. Rick Whyman (Royale-Titan RP26), 25m 05.5s; 5. David Duffield (Crosslé-Minister 32F), 25m 16.5s; 6. Tim Knight (Van Diemen-Scholar RF78), 25m 19.0s. **Fastest lap:** Lawson, 1m 12.8s, 86.54mph. (Equals record)

Modified Sports Car race (15 laps) Overall: 1. Jon Fletcher (1.8 Elan), 18m 14.0s, 86.38mph; 2. Paul Berman (1.8 Elan), 18m 18.3s; 3. John Pugsley (1.1 Davrian), 18m 55.1s; 4. Joe Lanny (1.8 Elan), 18m 56.2s. **Over 2000cc:** 1. Paul Howarth (2.2 TR2), 63.03mph. No other finishers. **Fastest lap:** Barry Robinson (3.0 Porsche), 1m 15.9s, 83.66mph. **1500-2000cc:** 1. Fletcher; 2. Berman; 3. Lanny. **Fastest lap:** Berman, 1m 10.5s, 89.36mph. **1151-1500cc:** 1. Garry Wilson (1.4 Midget), 80.15mph; 2. Steven Roberts (1.4 Marcos); 3. Ron Harper (1.2 Spitfire). **Fastest lap:** Wilson, 1m 16.8s, 82.03mph (record). **Up to 1150cc:** 1. Pugsley, 83.25mph; 2. Brian Stevenson (1.1 Davrian), 14 laps. No other finishers. **Fastest lap:** Pugsley, 1m 14.4s, 84.56mph.

Special Saloon race (15 laps) Overall and over 1300cc: 1. Jimmy Robertson (3.4 Skoda GA), 18m 28.1s, 85.28mph; 2. Brian Morris (6.1 Camaro), 18m 55.0s; 3. Keith Bowmaker (4.7 Escort), 19m 13.6s. **Fastest lap:** Robertson, 1m 10.6s, 89.24mph. **1001-1300cc:** 1. Gerald Clark (1.3 Mini Ford), 82.53mph. No other finishers. **Fastest lap:** Clark, 1m 19.6s, 79.15mph. **Up to 1000cc:** 1. Malcolm Bell (1.0 Imp), 49.91mph. No other finishers. **Fastest lap:** Bell, 1m 20.4s, 78.36mph.

Formule Libre Race (20 laps): 1. Brian Robinson (2.0 Chevron Hart B42), 21m 01.8s; 2. Tony Dean (2.0 Chevron Hart B42), 21m 02.3s; 3. Warren Booth (2.0 Chevron Hart B42), 21m 27.1s; 4. Andy Barton (1.6 March 772), 21m 27.8s; 5. Iain McLaren (2.0 March 762), 21m 31.2s; 6. Bernard Hunter (1.6 Ralt RT1), 21m 31.6s. **Fastest lap:** Dean, 1m 01.3s, 102.77mph.

Special Handicap Race (15 laps): 1. John Mackie (1.6 Mallock), 19m 18.0s, 88.48mph; 2. Lanny, 19m 30.7s; 3. Walter Warwick (1.6 Van Diemen-Minister RF74), 19m 48.8s; 4. Chris Stockton (1.6 Lotus-Scholar 61), 19m 56.3s; 5. Robert Bailly (1.6 Lotus 61), 19m 57.4s; 6. Harper, 20m 07.5s. **Fastest lap:** Mackie, 1m 09.6s, 90.52mph.

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DLT gets faster at Santa Pod

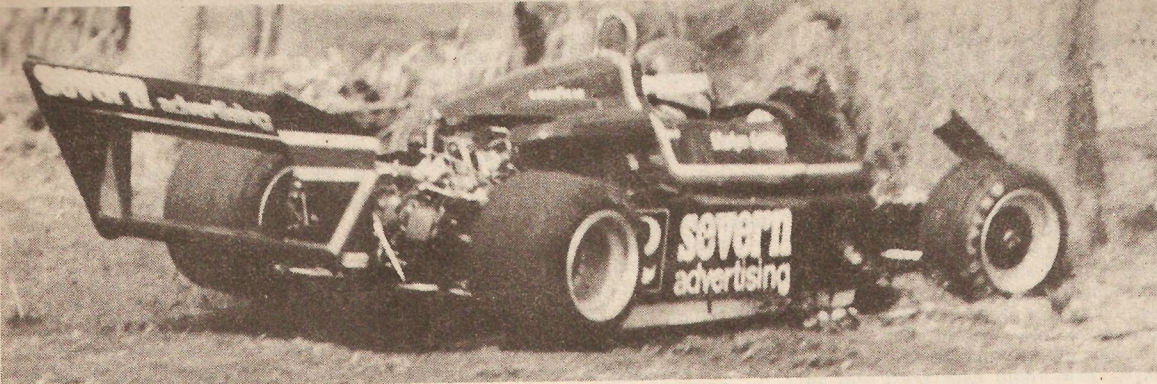
Santa Pod Raceway was the venue for the first round of the European Pro Comp Championship Easter weekend, with 16 top names entered: from England, Dave Page (Panic Altered), Reg Hazleton in his superb Topolino bodied Thunderbird, Gerry Andrews in the Chevy-powered Hemi Hunter Dragster, and Pat Cuss, Graham Hawes, John Rietmeister and Liz Burn. Representing Sweden were Steiner Stolen, Tony Donges, and Bjorn Ardin (Bifrost Funny Car).

After the first round, those drivers who qualified for the Quarter Finals were Dave Page, Tony Donges, Martin Hopp, Pat Cuss, Gerry Andrews, Jim Read, Bjorn Ardin and Steiner Stolen. While the pairings were being drawn up, the Qualifying rounds of Top Fuel and Funny Car took place, and Alan Herridge, who normally drives the Gladiator Funny Car took the wheel of the brand new Asphalt Alleygator, this car a complete replica of the one that crashed at over 150mph some time ago. On his first run, Herridge made a fantastic 6.71/217.

Dave Lee Travis drove his Chrysler-powered Top Fueler to a hard charging pass at 7.08/199, so close to and yet so far from that elusive 200mph, and Roz Prior in her Cords Piston Ring-sponsored Dragster made a good run at 7.74/185.

In the Funny car finals, Ronnie Picardo met Owen Hayward in the SLD Oldings-sponsored Houndog car and won with a 7.09/190mph run to a losing 8.71/205.7. Alan Herridge made a solo run for the Pro Fuel final as DLT had blown his engine in the previous round and could not run. Alan's time for the quarter was 6.72/203.6. It was an all English Final for Pro Comp, Dave Page, winning with a time of 7.18/189.3 against Gerry Andrews's 7.35/190.4. In Supercomp, Russ Carpenter (Glacier Grenade Daimler dragster) snatched the win from Sue Coles with a 9.17/151 against 10.17/137.

ROBERT SHORT



Martyn Griffiths meets the landscape.

Franklin on form again

The Bradburn and Wedge Trophy meeting run by the Hagley and Dist LCC was graced with good weather and a large appreciative crowd. After an incident-packed Top Ten run off, David Franklin (Wendy Wools March 782) took the honours just 0.17 sec ahead of Chris Cramer (March 79B) after the Stroud driver had pulled out all the stops for an improvement of 0.6 sec on his first run.

Roy Lane's six-wheeled March 771-240, after being fastest in practice (53.10) and getting down to 52.57 for third in the class times, lost the first Top Ten run with gearbox problems and, after an almost bionic strip, and rebuild got to the start lights only to repeat the earlier disaster.

Peter Kaye in the North Yorkshire Managements entered Pilbeam MP 31 had similar problems, missed the first run, rebuilt his gearbox, jumped straight into the car just in time for the second, and recorded a very creditable 52.13 to secure third place. Fourth man Alister Douglas Osborn in the Waring and Gillow Pilbeam MP31 (52.74), had watched Chris Cramer take his previous outright Hill record. After a ten minute break following an assault on the tree at Triangle by Martyn Griffiths (Pilbeam MP 40), David Franklin set everyone thinking with an incredible new outright record of 51.76. That record only stood until the second class run when Franklin took another tenth off with the fastest time of the day 51.66. Alister now leads the Championship from David by two points.

Fifth was Ted Williams (Redland Motor House March 772/82) who eventually got down to 53.18 almost 2 secs better than his best practice run. Next up was Michael MacDowell in the Coombs of Guildford Coogar RT1, just

¼ sec faster than Rob Turnbull's B and W March 762.

Scottish National Hill Climb Champion Jim Campbell (Modus M4) — "I hope to get an eighth place" — did exactly that and, with Roy Lane not recording a time, Allan Humphries first-ever Top Ten Run-off saw his Allwood Cars March 762 get him two championship points in ninth position.

The British Haynes Leaders Hill Climb Championship saw close competitive times recorded throughout and, on this showing, is undoubtedly able to look forward to an excellent season. Take the special saloons up to 1300 cc; eight entries, with Richard Ames (Chrysler Imp) just 0.32sec quicker on the first run. He improved to win by just 1sec from John Meredith's Mini Chrysler.

In the over 1300 saloons Dave Parr (Escort BDA) improved on a slow first run by over 10secs to take the honours and, in the GT and modsports up to 1300, Tim King's Midget edged out first run fastest Kim Johnson in a similar car by 0.53sec. The 1301 to 1600 cc class went to Simon Westwood (Lotus Elan S2) after Neil Harvey (Morgan 4/4) had been unable to improve on his first run time. Ten cars contested the larger modsports class, the lead after the first run going to the E-type of Oliver Walker 1sec quicker than Roland Jones in the Lawrences Furniture Centre MGB GT V8. In the second run, the position reversed, Jones improving by 2.5secs to take the class.

Richard Mallock's record in the up to 1600 cc Clubmans of 56.40 went and sports racing car class with Martin Bolsover recording 56.24 in his Mallock U2 MK18BWS. Second in his MK18 was Tony Southall, ahead of Mark Williams (Mallock U2 MK11) who was

unable to take a second run and had to rely on his first recorded time. The bigger Clubmans and Sports racing class went to Norman Hutchins (Phoenix) with Hedley of the same name second and sharing the car.

The Motus of Graeme Inglis encountered all sorts of problems and, after getting down to 69.92 in practice, was destined to return to the paddock after two clutchless attempts at the start, leaving Colin Myles's Cooper Norton 500 to opposite lock his way to the class win in true Formula Junior style. Racing Cars of up to 1100 cc saw yet another good entry, 13 cars coming to the line and Paul Squires came through in the second run, 10secs faster than his first to take the honours from Russ Ward's Chevron B9/15 by just 0.12sec.

Greg Hart (Hart JG79) took the Racing Car up to 1600 cc class from John Hart sharing the same car, with Paul Williams third in his Chevron B17/35. In the over 1600 cc class, with all eyes on the Top Ten Men off, there were no less than 23 entries and only four Non-starters. David Franklin broke Chris Cramer's hill record set only two cars previously after the former had wrested the honour from Alister Douglas Osborn who set the outright hill record in June 1977. Franklin then went on to break his own in the second run by a further 0.1sec. Franklin came almost 2secs behind Chris Cramer with Roy Lane third, 0.1sec adrift.

TONY DELAHUNTY

BTD: David Franklin (2.0 March-BMW 782), 51.66s.

Class winners: John Meredith (1.0 BL Mini Chrysler), 61.91s; Dave Parr (2.1 Ford Escort), 65.1365.15s; Kim Johnson (1.3 MG Midget), 61.22s; Simon Westwood (1.6 Lotus Elan S2), 72.68s; Roland Jones (3.5 MGB GT V8), 65.06s; Tony Southall (1.6 Mallock U2 Mk18BWS), 56.63s; Hedley Hutchins (1.8 Phoenix), 61.21s; Colin Myles (500 Cooper Norton Mk9), 63.77s; Paul Squires (1.1 Brabham Bt28), 57.65s; Greg Hart (1.6 Hart JG79), 56.99s; Roy Lane (3.0 March 771-240), 52.57s.

Fack and Pearce tie

The Harrison Trial, organised by the Sheffield & HMC spearheaded by Peter Beardshaw, Roger Mount and Geoff Baird, took place at Edensfield near Sheffield on Sunday. Ten hills had been laid out in the leaf mould and silver birch-infested hillside and these were tackled four times each.

Once again Lol Hurt drove magnificently to hold a lead on each of these circuits but, on the last, he had a tragic 17 and was overtaken by Julian Fack and Jack Pearce. It needed recourse to a count of the number of ones after a tie on score and cleans had occurred. These three were well clear of John Ward (Kincraft).

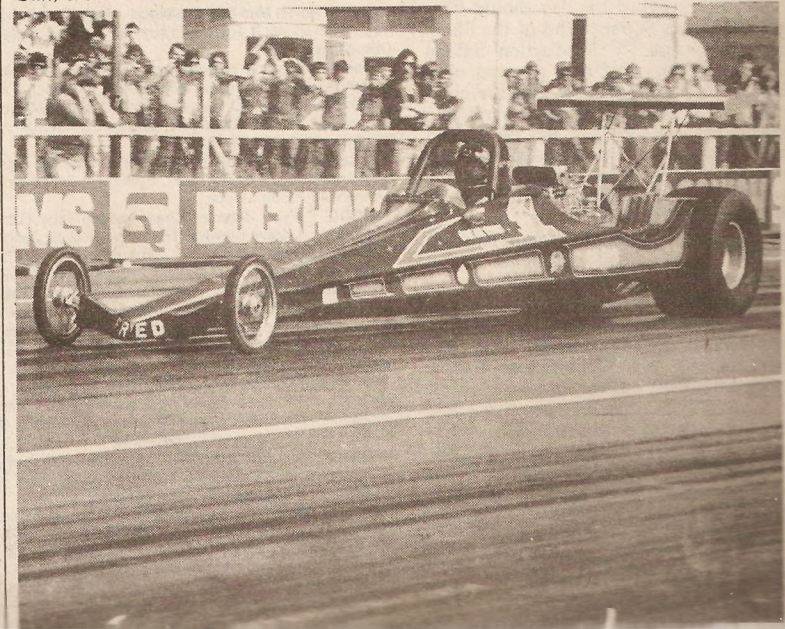
Ralph Needham had a stunning day to get right up into fifth spot. Brian Wall was another to hit the groove after being beaten in the Gunnar Nilsson Trial by his passenger — the ever cheerful Steve Blackham. He only lost seventh place on a late lap with Tom Stevenson and

these two were only a point behind the long-distance mud-plugger — Cornishman Roger Bricknell.

Keith Butterfield was the only one of the family to go well and was 10th in front of Kim Warwick and an excellent John Hollman, who looks much safer in his new(er) car. Tony Butterfield spent much of the day running over Ralph Needham's foot and breaking an A frame mounting. It looks as if suspension by means of a rope, mole wrenches, chain and prayers will be *de rigueur* in future! Both Tony and Stuart were beaten by Dave Morris who was going well with his odd-sounding new engine.

1. Julian Fack/Meg Marrison (Impunity), 28pts; 2. Jack Pearce/Brenda Pearce (Kincraft), 28; 3. Lol Hurt/Lou Lait (Imp Special), 31; 4. John Ward/Oonagh Ward (Kincraft), 59; 5. Ralph Needham/Graham Hoyle (Cannon), 65; 6. Roger Bricknell/Mrs Bricknell (Cannon), 72.

Sun, crowds — and Dave Lee Travis — at Santa Pod.



Midlands oval racing

Easter Monday at Mallory; and a complex nine-race meeting divided between the much-publicised new 'oval' and the conventional 1.35-mile circuit. Excellent organisation on the part of the super-efficient Midlands BRSCC, as well as the circuit staff, ensured that the changeovers — in practice and racing — went extremely smoothly.

Drivers, generally, seemed a little unenthusiastic about the revised 'speed-bowl' layout and times were little better than in the pre-banked short-circuit days. But perhaps 850cc Minis and a rather mediocre Special Saloon turnout are not the best races upon which to judge the new venture. At present, only 13 cars can start on the 'oval', which meant the 850 entry was split into two heats and a 15-lap final. All three events provided superb sport.

Chris Tyrell led throughout Heat 1, ahead of a race-long scrap for second involving local man Ben Dutton, Jim McDougall and Gary Hall — younger brother of last year's champion Steve. Heat 2 was even closer. Patrick Watts took off from pole to head series leader Graham Waskett for two laps before the latter got by at Gerards, seconds before Watts's wheel came adrift and sidelined him on Stebbe Straight! Waskett was then hounded by Steve Taylor for the remaining eight laps until, at the line, only 0.1sec separated them.

Only six cars came under orders for the 15-lap Special Saloon thrash, but the result was never in doubt. Doug Niven's hairy F5000 'Beetle' was 7secs up after only one lap. At the flag almost 15seconds and two complete laps separated him from his nearest rival. The Scotsman also established the first 'outright' record for the oval at 102.56mph.

Before the 1.35-mile circuit was reinstated, however, ten more superb laps of oval racing were contributed by the 850 finalists. Dutton made an appalling start but four cars nevertheless battled alongside for a first-lap lead along Stebbe. Pole man Tyrell just managed to keep ahead of Hall with McDougall, Waskett and later Dutton all clamouring for supremacy. Tyrell finally led Waskett by a mere four-tenths, while only 0.2sec separated McDougall and Dutton.

Without apparent guidance, marshals re-mustered as if rehearsed for weeks. In next to no time the full-circuit was completely operational and ready to welcome a picturesque collection of "T" Type MGs. Close racing for the lead ensued, with Dave Clewley taking station immediately behind race-long leader, Ron Gammons.

Feature event of the day should have been a 75-lap Super-round of the Shell-sport Derwent TV Production Saloon Championship. But the absence of a leader board at Mallory, and the commentator's decision to discuss rallying during the early part of the race, must have left some of the crowd slightly bemused! Missing from practice were the two Opel Commodores of Tom Dodd-Noble and Hamish Irvine. And yet another, the SOS Talisman/Kimbell Jewellers entry had problems which forced Paul Everett to practice with the Fabergé Females.

Then there were two; but the big class was further decimated when poor Pete Hall in the ICS Commodore had a comprehensive engine blow-up, after making second row of the grid. Sole Opel survivor after practice was, therefore, the *Mayfair* example of Tony Lanfranchi, who established himself firmly on pole. Sharing the front row with Lanfranchi were the Ford Capris of Martin Carroll and Graham Scarborough.

In the race, Scarborough made a demon start and headed Lanfranchi and Carroll into Gerards. But 'Big Tone'

pitted after one lap with a broken throttle cable, which elevated Buxtorf's BMW to third spot behind Scarborough and Carroll. Five laps into the race and Scarborough became another victim of the gremlins. Then Buxtorf went in front, leaving a fine scrap to develop between Carroll and the Archway Motors Magnum of Richard Johnson — the only really close dice of the race. Meanwhile, Lanfranchi had rejoined after almost two laps absence and set off after the BMW. Few would have given him an Army caterer's chance at the Savoy, but Tony nevertheless unlapped himself just after half-distance and revived flagging interest in a fairly processional race.

The gap closed inexorably, at the rate of almost 2secs a lap and excitement increased dramatically when the Opel powered past the Carroll/Johnson scrap to retake second place. It was still on the cards that Lanfranchi would win when, with only seven laps to go, the balloon burst. Tony suddenly coasted to a half on Stebbe Straight with a gearbox full of neutrals, after experiencing difficulty with his gears for several laps. Interest went completely out of the race as Buxtorf coasted in an easy victor. In the

dying seconds, the unfortunate Carroll, who had gamely held off Johnson for most of the race, threw a rear tread allowing the Magnum into second and a fortunate Adam MacMillan through to third in yet another BMW. Neil McGrath's remarkable little Renault 5 Gordini was fifth overall, and a worthy 'C' class winner while Brian McCowsland, in a Buxtorf-entered Alfasud Ti, took the smallest class.

Cheshire coach driver, Lesley Cowcill, whose name and occupation give lie to her undoubted femininity, won the Fabergé Ladies Fiesta race narrowly after WPC Lynn Jensen "copped" a broken half-shaft while leading comfortably. A remarkable performance from the Midlands policewoman, who was contesting her first race, but had nevertheless established pole position.

Anyone who left early missed the race of the day. The Mini 1000 Challenge was fantastic, with four cars side-by-side for much of the 10-lap event and no fewer than four race leaders. Chris Dobson emerged victorious from a melee that had to be seen, since it defied description. Remarkably though, it was good clean fun and little elbowing seemed to take place. Phil Spurling, in second spot was a mere 0.1sec behind Dobson who only inherited the lead — from fourth spot — on the final lap.

GEOFF JOHNSON

Chris Dobson leads the remarkable Mini 1000 race in the Pearce Signs car.



results

Austin Morris Mini 850 Challenge — heat 1 (10 laps): 1, Chris Tyrell, 7m 15.6s, 82.65mph; 2, Ben Dutton, 7m 17.0s; 3, Jim McDougall, 7m 17.3s; 4, Gary Hall, 7m 20.3s. **Fastest lap:** Tyrell and Dutton, and McDougall, 42m 7s, 84.31mph.

Austin Morris Mini 850 Challenge — heat 2 (10 laps): 1, Graham Waskett, 7m 21.3s, 81.37mph; 2, Steve Taylor, 7m 21.4s; 3, Russell Grady, 7m 24.1s; 4, Nigel Gaymer, 7m 24.3s. **Fastest lap:** Patrick Watts, 42m 06s, 84.51mph.

Special saloon car race (15 laps): overall: 1, Doug Niven (VW Beetle Chevrolet), 8m 58.5s, 100.27mph; 2, John Goulder (Sunbeam Bevan Imp), 13 laps; 3, Chris Griffiths (BL Cooper S), 13 laps; 4, Trevor Gibbs (Vauxhall Firenza), 13 laps. **Class A:** 1, Niven; 2, Gibbs; 3, Paul Rowley (BL Cooper S). **Fastest lap:** Niven, 35.1s, 102.56mph. **Class B:** 1, Goulder, 84.56mph; 2, Griffiths; 3, Colin Bennet (BL (Mini)). **Fastest lap:** Griffiths, 40.7s, 88.45mph.

Austin Morris Mini 850 Challenge — final (10 laps): 1, Tyrell, 7m 14.6s, 82.83mph; 2, Waskett, 7m 15.0s; 3, McDougall, 7m 16.3s; 4, Dutton; 7m 16.5s; 5, Hall, 7m 20.7s; 6, Taylor, 7m 20.9s. **Fastest lap:** Dutton, 42.3s, 85.11mph.

MGCC T Type Register Championship race (10 laps): Overall: Ron Gammons (TC), 10m 13.1s, 79.26mph; 2, Dave Clewley (TB), 10m 13.3s; 3, John Clark (TF), 10m 26.4s; 4, Stuart Dean (TA), 9 laps. **Class A:** 1, Dean, 70.87mph; 2, Brian Sayers (TC), 3, Frank Vautier (YA). **Fastest lap:** Dean, 1m 07.3s, 72.21mph. **Class B:** 1, Gammons; 2, Clewley; 3, Clark. **Fastest lap:** Clewley, 59.5s 81.68mph.

ShellSport Derwent TV Production Saloon Car Race (75 laps): Overall: 1, Peter Buxtorf (BMW 3.0Si), 1h 15m 28.4s, 80.45mph; 2, Richard Johnson (Vauxhall Magnum), 74 laps; 3, Adam MacMillan (BMW 3.0Si), 73 laps; 4, Martin Carroll (Ford Capri), 73 laps. **Class A:** 1, Buxtorf; 2, MacMillan; 3, Carroll. **Fastest lap:** Tony Lanfranchi (Opel Commodore GS/E), 58.2s, 83.51mph. **Class B:** 1, Johnson, 78.86mph; 2, David Yates; 3, John Rice. **Fastest lap:** Johnson, 1m 00.6s, 80.20mph. **Class C:** (Triumph Dolomite Sprint); 3, John Rice (Triumph Dolomite Sprint). **Fastest lap:** Johnson, 1m 00.6s, 80.20mph. **Class C:** 1, Neil McGrath, 73 laps; 2, David Stott (Colt Lancer); no other finishers. **Fastest lap:** McGrath, 1m 01.4s, 79.15mph. **Class D:** 1, Brian McCausland (Alfasud ti), 75.34mph; 2, Michola Vaughan (Alfasud ti); 3, Andrew Thorpe (Alfasud ti). **Fastest lap:** McCausland, 1m 03.3s, 76.78mph.

Austin Morris Mini 1000 Challenge consolation race (10 laps): 1, Tony Edmonds, 10m 11.8s, 79.44mph; 2, John Mitchell, 10m 14.5s; 3, Paul Rowland, 10m 14.9s; 4, Chris Hampshire, 10m 45.0s. **Fastest lap:** Edmonds and Rowland, 59.3s, 81.92mph.

Fabergé Ladies Fiesta Championship Race (10 laps): 1, Lesley Cowcill, 11m 16.5s, 71.84mph; 2, Jayne Neate, 11m 17.5s; 3, Fiona Butterfield, 11m 18.1s; 4, Vivien Ayres, 11m 19.1s; 5, Edna Eagleton, 11m 22.8s; 6, Saran Cohen, 11m 23.3s. **Fastest lap:** Cowcill, 1m 05.7s, 73.98mph.

Austin Morris Mini 1000 Challenge Race (10 laps): 1, Chris Dobson, 9m 45.2s, 83.05mph; 2, Phil Spurling, 9m 45.3s; 3, Mike Fry, 9m 45.7s; 4, Martin Guidery, 9m 46.6s; 5, David Abbott, 9m 46.9s; 6, Rick Cutting, 9m 47.7s. **Fastest lap:** Dobson, 56.6s, 85.87mph.

Great Easter at Snetterton

A holiday atmosphere, a fair measure of close racing but above all an unexpectedly warm sunny day for the BRSCC's Easter Sunday offering at Snetterton resulted in a great success.

To decide which of the large Formula Ford 1600 entry should do battle for championship points, the organisers ran two heats and, with three races for the popular single-seaters on the programme, the BRSCC were virtually ensured a good helping of cut and thrust dicing. Predictably there was a multi-car shunt at the first corner in the first heat: the front runners went through intact but many of the tail-enders were eliminated or badly delayed. David McClelland (Hawke) completed the first lap ahead of Jonathan Palmer (Van Diemen), James Weaver (Tiga), Rick Morris (PRS) and John Village (Royale) and already these had broken away from the remainder of the field. With the early demise of Morris, the PRS's body-work breaking up, the race at the front developed into two dicing pairs. Weaver and Palmer swapped the lead back and forth (often twice a lap!) while just behind, McClelland and Village were equally adamant about third spot. At the flag Palmer held station behind Weaver, and Village just ousted McClelland. Brazilian Bolivar de Sorde, an ex formula Vee driver from Sao Paulo, headed the rest all the way to claim fifth.

The second heat appeared to be a straight duel between the works Van Diemens of Terry Gray and another Brazilian, Carlos Abdala, until at half distance both were caught out by an oil slick that had been laid neatly on the racing line through the Essex complex. Gray continued well down the field, while his team-mate retired on the spot. Marc Smith (Royale) inherited the lead which he maintained to finish 1 sec ahead of a hectic international seven car train. John Davis (Sark) regained second spot on the last lap from Irishman Tommy Byrne. Fourth, after an excellent showing, was Gary Coward (Crosslé) ahead of the Swiss Philippe Lambert (Crosslé), another Irishman David Griffin, Howard Drake and Frenchman Herve Didion, all five covered by less than 1 sec.

The final was in many ways a repeat of the first heat, a first corner tangle again taking its toll from among the backmarkers while, at the front, five cars quickly detached themselves from the pack with Palmer and Weaver passing and re-passing continuously for the lead, marginally ahead of Smith, Davis and Village. Weaver led Palmer onto the last lap with two backmarkers ahead. At the end of the long Revett straight Palmer eased ahead and looked to be secure. Around Coram the first backmarker was dispatched but as they went down to Russell, they were still behind the other tailender and Palmer was forced to life momentarily in the bend before exiting tight inside the offender Weaver had a flier, exiting Russell faster than Palmer and, amazingly, found a gap between his rival and the pit lane armco. his extra momentum taking him ahead to win by a length. Palmer was a disappointed second. Marc Smith took third 2 secs behind, holding off John Village who had struggled against over heating and subsequent lack of straight-line speed. John Davis, still learning, finished fifth, having climbed to third at one stage, and set fastest lap.

In the Austin Morris 1275 Challenge race Steve Soper made it three wins out of three rounds held so far this season. He led throughout and concluded his

very convincing display winning by over 10secs. Graham Wenham (the 850 Mini exponent trying something else this year) looked equally secure in second until fuel surge allowed John Hopwood, Rob Lodge and Chris Lewis to catpaj up in the closing stages, the four bundling into the last lap in close formation. Ex-rallycross man Hopwood succeeded in taking the runner up slot from Lewis, Lodge and the struggling Wenham.

Sadly only six special saloons contested the MCD round, the 1275s having rejected an attempt to run the two events together. Bill McGovern appeared in a playful mood before asserting his superiority over the other Imp variants of David Enderby and 850cc class winner Chris Roberts.

Front row men Terry Nightingale and Charlie Kirby were penalised 10 secs for jumped starts, as a result of creeping on the grid, and Vernon Davies made an excellent start from the third row to lead into Riches on the first lap — but it did not matter for long. Very soon the 14-car

field for MCD Sports 1700 race was reduced to just a handful of runners, Chris Hill (Mallock) being chased hard by Chris Greville-Smith for the premier position well clear of anyone else. Unfortunately, Greville-Smith, having just set fastest lap, crashed very heavily at Russell when something broke at the rear of his Phantom — amazingly he jumped unhurt from the comprehensively wrecked vehicle. Hill finished over 30 secs ahead of the nearest of the other three finishers.

A large and varied field assembled for the first round of the CAV Production Sports Car Championship. Rob Wells, deputising for Charles Morgan in the latter's Morgan Plus 8, was an unchallenged winner, although Colin Blower tried very hard in the open TVR to keep him in sight. In a processional race the class winners were Chris Meek (2.0 TR7) who was briefly led by Alison Davis (Ginetta) and Terry Stone's Sprite.

ANDY LEEDER

results

Townsend Thoresen Formula Ford 1600 — heat one (10 laps): 1, James Weaver (Tiga-Scholar), 12m 25s, 92.63mph; 2, Jonathan Palmer (Van Diemen-Scholar 79), 12m 25.1s; 3, John Village (Royale-Minister RP26), 12m 27.3s; 4, David McClelland (Van Diemen-Scholar RF79), 12m 27.4s; 5, Bolivar de Sordi (Van Diemen-Scholar), 12m 34.1s; 6, Martin Longmore (Crossle-Auriga 32), 12m 40.4s. **Fastest lap:** Weaver, 1m 13.2, 94.28mph.

Austin Morris Mini 1275 Challenge race (10 laps): 1, Steve Soper, 14m 16.5s, 80.57mph; 2, John Hopwood, 14m 27.7s; 3, Chris Lewis, 14m 28.1s; 4, Rob Lodge, 14m 28.4s; 5, Graham Wenham, 14m 34.8s; 6, Antony Pownall, 14m 53.1s. **Fastest lap:** Hopwood, 1m 24.7s, 81.48mph.

Townsend Thoresen Formula Ford 1600 — heat two (10 laps): 1, Marc Smith (Royale-Titan RP26), 12m 45.3s, 90.18mph; 2, John Davis, (Sark-Ford 1), 12m 46.5s; 3, Tommy Byrne (PRS-Minister RH01), 12m 46.5s; 4, Gray Coward (Crossle-Scholar 32e), 12m 48s; 5, Philippe Lambert (Crossle-Minister 32F), 12m 48.2s; 6, David Griffin (Van Diemen-Scholar RF79), 12m 48.4s. **Fastest lap:** Carlos Abdala (Van Diemen-Scholar RF79), 1m 13.5s, 93.89mph.

MCD Special Saloon Car Championship Race (8 laps), Overall: 1, Bill McGovern (Bevan Imp), 10m 46.9s, 85.34mph; 2, David Enderby (Sunbeam Chrysler Stiletto), 10m 52.1s; 3, Chris Roberts (Chrade Greetham Imp), 11m 16.6s. **851-1000cc:** 1, McGovern; 2, Enderby; 3, Terry Pryce (Hillman Imp). **Fastest lap:** McGovern, 1m 17.8s, 88.70mph. Up to 850cc: 1, Roberts, 81.60mph; 2, Ernie Test (Mini). **Fastest lap:** Roberts, 1m 22.1s, 84.06mph.

Townsend Thoresen Formula Ford 1600 Championship Race — Final (15 laps): 1, Weaver, 18m 32s, 93.09mph; 2, Palmer, 18m 32.1s; 3, Smith, 18m 34.2s; 4, Village, 18 34.7s; 5, John Davis, 18m 36.7s; 6, Griffin, 18m 42.1s. **Fastest lap:** Davis, 1m 12.9s, 94.67mph.

MCD Sports Racing 1700 Championship Race (Southern League), (15 laps): 1, Chris Hill (Mallock Miles Cosworth U2 Mk20), 17m 10.2s, 100.48mph; 2, Mike Lane (Mallock Davron Mk20B), 17m 45.2s; 3, Tony Norton (Norton Longman Ford), 18m 18.5s; 4, Dave Orbel (U2 Orbell Mk 16), 17m 15s. No other finishers. **Fastest lap:** Chris Greville-Smith (Phantom Swindow/RE), 1m 6.5s, 103.78mph.

CAV Production Sports Car Championship Race (10 laps) : Overall and Class A: 1, Rob Wells (3.5 Morgan Rover), 13m 49.1s, 83.24mph; 2, Colin Blower (3.0 TVR 4), 13m 53.1s; 3, John Kent (3.0 TVG Vegantune 300M), 14m 02.7s; 4, Pat Thomas (4.2 Jaguar E Type) 14m 13.7s. **Fastest lap:** Wells, 1m 21.2s, 84.99mph. **Class B:** 1, Chris Meek (2.0 TVR), 15m 01.4s, 76.56mph; 2, Dick Adams (2.0 TR7); 3, Nick Ramus (2.0 TR7). **Fastest lap:** Meek, 1m 28.7s, 77.80mph. **Class C:** 1, Terry Stone (1.3 A/Healey Sprite IVBMC), 14m 15.2s, 72.63mph; 2, John Brigden, (1.3 MG Midget 3BMC); 3, Martin Hart (MG Midget 3). **Fastest lap:** Stone, 1m 33.3s, 73.97mph.

BRANDS HATCH

Supporting programme at ETC

Supporting events for the gsi European Touring Car championship meeting at Brands Hatch over the weekend include rounds of the Hitachi F Atlantic series, the second round of the BRSCC Dunlop "Star of Tomorrow" championship and another BMW County Challenge. As has become the norm at the Kent circuit, the FF1600 race takes place on Saturday (practice day for the ETCC competitors — see separate preview) but so large is the entry that a seven lap consolation race has been laid on for those unfortunate enough not to qualify for the 10-lap main event.

Leading contenders include Guy Dormehl (Scorpion Van Diemen) and Martin Holman (Royale) who dived superbly for the lead at the opening round a fortnight ago are back, as are Kevin Gillen, Russell Edmunds, Tristan Batch, Allan Revell, Graham Fuller and Tim Lyons. The Atlantic entry includes Emilio de Villota (Lyncar), Rick Gorne (Argo), Paul Smith (March), Ray Mallock (Ralt) and Phil Dowsett (March) who will race over 25 laps of the full Grand Prix circuit. The BMW 323 series qualifier stars Derek Bell (Sussex), Dieter Quester (Norfolk), Eddy Joosen (Suffolk), Umberto Grano (Gloucestershire), Stuart Graham (Berkshire), Brian Muir (Kent) and John Bright (Lancashire). Events start at 10.15am on Saturday with Sunday racing starting at noon.

SNETTERTON

The Chequered Flag Sports Car Festival is the title given to Sunday's seven race

meeting at Snetterton, organised by the BRSCC (EA). A 35-lap 'superround' of the Chequered Flag Sports 2000 Championship is the feature race with Ian Taylor, Richard Morgan, Nick Adams and Neil Crang heading the Tiga drivers who face Lola opposition in the shape of Desiré Wilson, Janet Brise, Pancho Webb and John Brindley.

Charlie Kirby, Chris Hill and Chris Greville-Smith lead the MCD clubmans race while Gerry Brown and Ron Gammons have quick MGs in their T-type event and the Porsches of Tony Wingrove and Dudley Wood should be quick in the modsports race. Peter Chowne, Rod Longton and Alan White are just three of 19 MGB drivers in the MGCC MGB championship race while James Goff's Allan Mk5, Shaun Loveday's WEV and Chris Kite's ERM U2 lead the Excel F1300 drivers. A prodsports race stars the TVRs of Colin Blower and John Kent. Practice starts at 9am with racing from 2pm.

SILVERSTONE

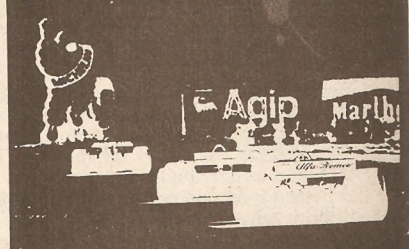
The BRSCC organise Sunday's meeting at Silverstone, the major event on the programme being a round of the Townsend Thoresen FF1600 series. The usual huge entry has been received, necessitating a qualification race to sort out the final few starters in the main race. Also on the programme are rounds of the BRSCC National Formule Libre, BRSCC Debenhams Escort and BRSCC Gunk Renault 5 Championships.

LYDDEN

Another round of the popular Marchant & Cox FF1600 championship tops the bill at the BARC's Lydden meeting on Sunday. Two heats and a final have been laid on for the FF brigade led by Wil Arif (DPL Crossle 35F), David Stuart (Van Diemen) and Graham P Fuller (ESAB Crossle 32F). Special saloons, modsports, clubmans and production saloons complete the day's sport which starts at 12.30pm with practice, racing commencing at 2.30pm.

International events

Date	Venue	Event
Apr 26/28	Italy	Elba Rally — European Rally Championship
Apr 28/29	Brands Hatch, England	gsi European Touring Car Championship Race, F Atlantic, BMW County Championship, Spanish Grand Prix — World Championship of Drivers (F1) round 5
Apr 29	Jarama, Spain	European F2 Championship
Apr 29	Nürburgring, Germany	Trans-Europe Trophy (G1+)
Apr 29	Ring Knutsdorp, Sweden	IMSA Winston Cup GT Championship
Apr 29	Monterey, USA	



British events

Date	Venue	Event	Status	Club	Start	Details
April 28	Consolidated Pneumatic, Aberdeen	Rally	N	Aberdeen & DMC	08.01	C.P. Granite City Rally — Castrol/Autosport National Rally Championship, Scotsman British Airways Championship
Apr 28	Hamber Royal Hotel, Grimsby	Rally	R	Lincs & Louth MC	—	Crest Tour of Lincs
Apr 28/29	Wiscombe Park, Colyton, Devon (MR192/182941)	Hillclimb	N	Woolbridge MC	13.00	Guyson/BARC Hillclimb Championship
Apr 29	Silverstone, nr Worcester, Northants	Race Meeting	R	BRSCC (MC)	—	FF1600, F Libre, Debenhams Escorts, Renault 5, Mini 1275
Apr 29	Snetterton, nr Thetford, Norfolk	Race Meeting	R	BRSCC (EA)	14.00	The Chequered Flag Sports Car Festival — MGCC T Types, Modsports, Sports 2000, F1300 Prodsports, MGCC MGB, Sports Racing 1700
Apr 29	Lydden Hill, nr Canterbury, Kent	Race Meeting	R	BARC	14.30	Special Saloons, Modsports, Clubmans, Prodsaloons, FF1600
Apr 29	Mondello Park, Naas, Co Kildare	Race Meeting	—	I.M.R.C.	—	Championship Car Races
Apr 29	Curborough, nr Lichfield	Sprint	N/R	Midland AC	13.45	British Sprint Championship/ British Sprint Leaders Championship
Apr 29	Albemarle Barracks, Tynemouth	Sprint	R	Tynemouth & DMC	14.00	Albemarle Sprint



This is how the Ford Capri should have turned out . . .

Reliant Scimitar

Buying a used Scimitar GTE seems an attractive idea, with the advantages of a rust-free body and well-proven mechanics. MATTHEW CARTER is your guide.

Everyone likes an underdog. At around the time Ford produced the Capri — the car we always promised ourselves according to the adverts — a small British company produced the car the Capri should have been.

The Reliant Scimitar GTE was a logical extension of the company's Scimitar coupé, a Grand Tourer-cum-Estate designed by Tom Karen of Ogle. And it had Ford running gear. The slap on the cheek was taken manfully by Ford who replied to the challenge with the hatchback Capri II . . . who on earth would want to spend the sort of money Reliant were asking when Ford could provide exactly the same thing at a considerably reduced price?

The answer is simple. Thousands of people preferred the GTE simply because it did not have a Ford badge and a mass produced stigma. "Commission an Original", proclaims the advert for the current GTE and its handbuilt specialist image has helped it remain popular despite the obvious advantages of owning a Ford Capri 3.0.

In the beginning there was nothing quite like it. A real country gentleman's express, ideal for cutting a dash and yet with a practical hatchback ideal for the dogs or stowing a saddle or two. And the rear seats folded down individually so the odd load could be carried alongside a rear passenger, too. Such cunning, and from a small specialist manufacturer, must have impressed Ford's big boys. When the Capri II appeared it to featured a hatch and individually folding seats. Three cheers for the underdog showing the master a few tricks.

One obvious difference between the mass-produced job and the Reliant is its body. The Tamworth car has a GRP body shell that sits on a substantial ladder chassis. The advantages for Reliant are obvious — it is relatively cheap and quick to produce as opposed to the costs tooling up to produce a metal body. The advantages to the buyer are obvious, too. Plastic doesn't rust.

Under the bonnet is Ford's V6 3-litre engine coupled to a Ford gearbox —

automatic. Drive is to the rear wheels, where suspension is by trailing arms, and a Watts linkage while at the front double wishbones do the required work. Steering is rack and pinion and brakes are discs at the front and drums at the rear.

Changes in the Scimitar's history are comparatively few. Historians will record the three main examples — though a fourth, 2.8 V6 variant is inevitable. The first was designated the SE5 — nothing to do with the Great War's fighter planes — to be followed in 1971 by the SE5a with a new interior and other minor changes. Engine modifications came along in mid 1972 hand in hand with transmission mods, while 1976 saw the SE6, a Scimitar that was bigger, fatter and heavier. The current production car has middle-aged spread compared to the sprightly original.

The car began life in 1968 and a year or so later gained a rear wash/wipe system, three spoke steering wheel and an automatic option. In 1971 overdrive became standard, and a chrome side body strip was removed. The SE5a version also featured a revised, and rather plasticky, interior and revised lights marginally higher to comply with new laws, but you would be hard pressed to spot the difference.

The following year Ford's changes to the engine rubbed off on new Reliant owners. The new Granada engine had bigger ports, a rear sump well in place of a front one, different carbs and a change from Ford to Hepolite rings which have subsequently turned out to have a much longer life.

With the engine changes Ford also presented Reliant with another problem — gearboxes. The original engine was mated to the old Mk IV Zody 'box with overdrive. The new engines included a change to Capri gearboxes with no overdrive facility. Reliant pondered a while, introducing a standard non-overdrive option while the problems were worked out. In the end overdrive came via Ford's Transit overdrive box mated to the Capri bits, while the straight four-speed 'box

have also been offered though not until the SE6 cars did they really become popular, underlining the car's middle-aged attitude, perhaps. In the early days the automatic changes were performed by courtesy of Borg Warner's 35 'box, later to be performed by Ford's own Bordeaux built 'box.

On the surface buying a used GTE would seem to be an attractive proposition — a rust-free body, and mechanical bits in plentiful supply, what could be better? But are Scimitars reliable? To find out we went to the authority, the man who "Sharpens Scimitars." To Robin Rew the three R's are rebuilding, racing and writing about Reliants.

He believes that basically the GTE is a sound car, but one that needs a certain intelligence and understanding if the rewards of ownership are to be reaped.

He cites the bar-room bore who proclaims that GTEs are nothing but death-traps that burst into flames. The bore is partly right, his ammunition fuelled by real life dramas that have befallen GTE owners.

Yes, the cars can burst into flames. But there is a way of making sure it never will happen to your car — it involves a certain amount of common sense, and is applicable to drivers of any cars, not just glass fibre ones.

Under the small bonnet of the GTE, there is a large engine with very little room for cooling air to flow over the top. The radiator is a long thin affair that sits under the front bib and directs cooling air under the car, so the top of the engine can get a little warm. Now nestling neatly in the engine V is a carburettor. And carburettors drink petrol — the fuel line in this case is rubber which can perish after getting too warm too often. As a result the line splits, sprays petrol everywhere and the result can be an expensive fire.

The accelerator pump diaphragm can also leak and the result might be a similar inferno. The first thing when buying a GTE is check the state of the diaphragm and fuel lines, making sure the line is firmly connected to the brass carb feed pipe. If in doubt renew everything and permanently secure the rubber to the brass, a simple mod. Oh, and if you smell petrol after using the car, don't use it again until its source is discovered. If you do use the car don't moan should it go up in flames.

When checking out a possible purchase take care to look over the body carefully. You won't find any rust, that's for sure, but you might find cases of badly fitting doors or cracking and crazing of the GRP shell. Both are problems faced with glass fibre, for unlike metal GRP can shrink or change its shape slightly. It is likely to happen — if at all — fairly early in the car's life, so ill-fitting panels need not mean the car has been crashed.

Rust is possible on the chassis outriggers — it's worth taking a look — and on the fuel tank. Some cars, the majority, used combination steel and alloy wheels which do corrode and are expensive to replace. Tyre wear is usually good, though the fronts can wear on their inside edge due to steering geometry rather than anything else. Factory cars come fitted with Pirelli Cinturatos though Robin reckons a change to top Michelins is a worthwhile move.

If the car is sagging at the front, the likely cause is simply worn bushes. Robin also rates a change to harder springs and Koni dampers if the car is to reward press-on driving. The brakes provide few problems though a change to harder pads will help their performance and keep the discs cleaner. On the steering side, the steering column bottom UJ can become corroded and stiffen up — they are expensive to replace, and such a costly exercise can be avoided by attention with waterproof grease.

Underbonnet problems can arise, largely due to owner neglect. Unlike, say, a BMC 'B' series engine which

needs immediate treatment if something is wrong. It's the stitch in time theory.

On early motors timing gear can wear as can the oil pump drive 'pencil'. This pencil will not hard enough and after a while can wear so much that it provides no drive . . . result one blown engine. It is possible to change to a harder shaft with little difficulty. Following Ford's footsteps, a change to Hepolite rings will help prolong active life, too.

A reluctance to show oil pressure when cold could indicate a failure of the oil pump's O-ring and should owners be too eager to win the traffic lights Grand Prix with the engine still cold, the main bearings wear quickly. The GTE likes to be warmed up thoroughly before being abused.

Although the GTE has been around for some while, it should still be possible to find comparatively low mileage examples — it is often used as a second car. Robin believes in prevention rather than replacement and reckons that a rebuild at about 50,000 miles will not go amiss. Incidentally, in the course of his work with GTEs, the ones that have appeared cleaner and in generally better shape before the rebuild have been running on Castrol GTX. Coincidence? Robin thinks not. If doing your own rebuild, make sure surfaces to be joined are chemically cleaned and that you use Ford gaskets.

Rear axles can cause a few problems, mainly due to noise. Because of the rear suspension set up, the entire unit is bolted to the floor at many places effectively amplifying the noise. If there is oil on the back on the car, swept up by slipstream, it may have come from a broken pinion shaft oil seal. Change it immediately. Another cause of oil over the back end could be the overdrive leather seal giving up the ghost. Symptoms include an overdrive reluctant to stay in.

If the gearchange itself is sloppy the extra movement can cause a large bush to move and so cut off oil supply to crucial places. Get it seen to quickly. The early gearboxes also had an appetite for synchromesh cones.

Fairly early in the car's life, Reliant realised that many owners were using the GTE for towing and so fitted a heavier back axle — if yours has the lighter Salisbury axle, check that it hasn't done too much towing.

Exhausts go quite quickly — a stainless steel system will cost around £130. And talking about exhausts Robin has a tweak up his sleeve that can add an instant 8bhp. The original cast-iron manifolds are discarded and replaced by tubular steel ones. Power is up, noise is down and economy is better. "I don't know why Reliant haven't done it themselves," said Robin.

Finally, the problem that befalls every GRP car — electrics. Bad earthing causes more problems than almost any other in the GTE, and there are earthing straps everywhere. Once a year grovel underneath the car making sure there is no corrosion around these points and problems should be few. If you have an early car and radio suppression is poor, glue some kitchen foil around the bonnet lid and then earth it. Later cars have similar foil already in the lid — tap it and it rattles.

Basically the GTE is a fast and stylish performer — it's practical as well. Not fast enough for you? Robin Rew does a turbo conversion . . . but that, as they say, is another story.

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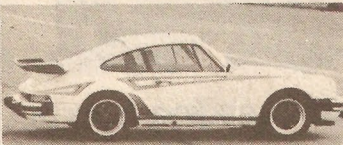
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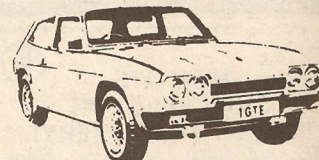
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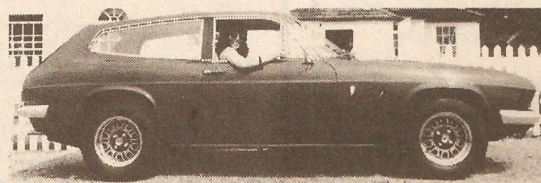
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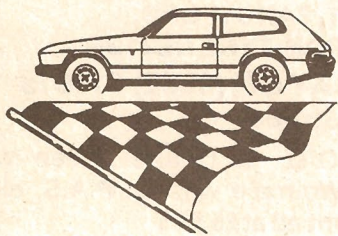


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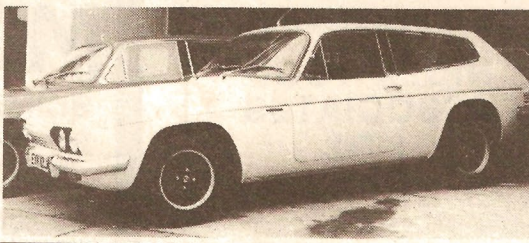
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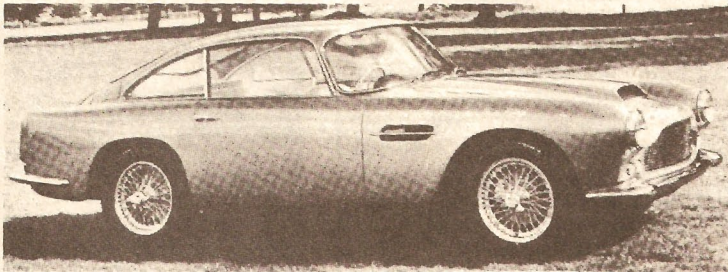
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COMPETITION PARTS for all models. A wide range, both new and used, including engines, engine parts, wheels, tyres, suspension items etc.

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THIS IS NOT A CLOSING DOWN SALE, and we are continuing to extend our facilities to enable us to offer a more comprehensive service. The parts offered for sale are a representative range of our normal stock. If this sale is successful we will hold them on a year basis.

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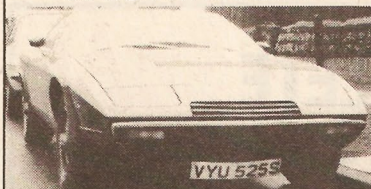
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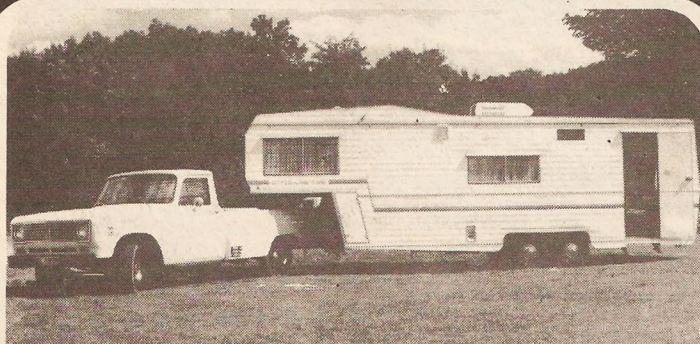


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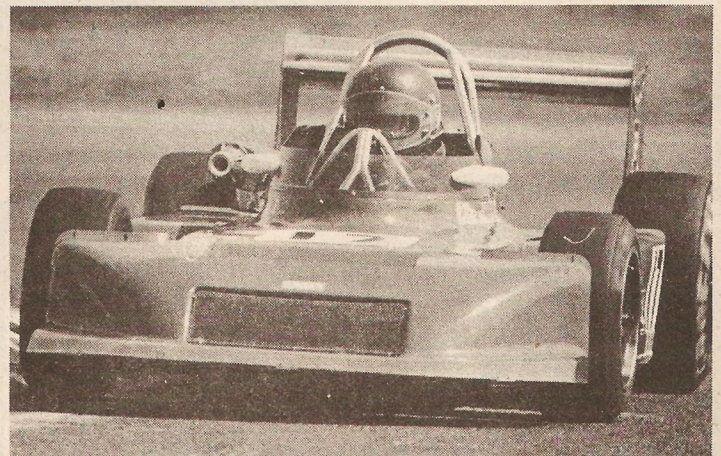
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2 races since rebuild, **£350.**
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Mk11B Onwards, preferably complete car less engine, but anything considered. **CASH** waiting. **Distance no problem**

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RACING CARS

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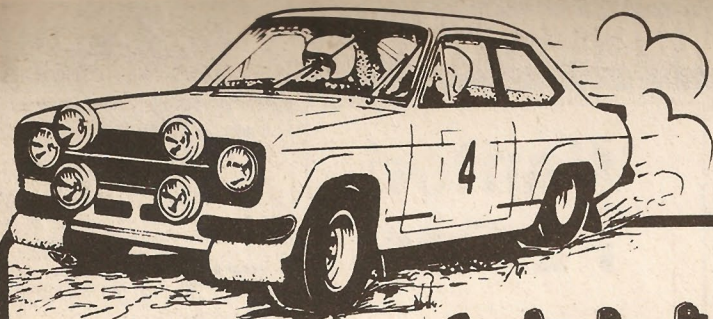
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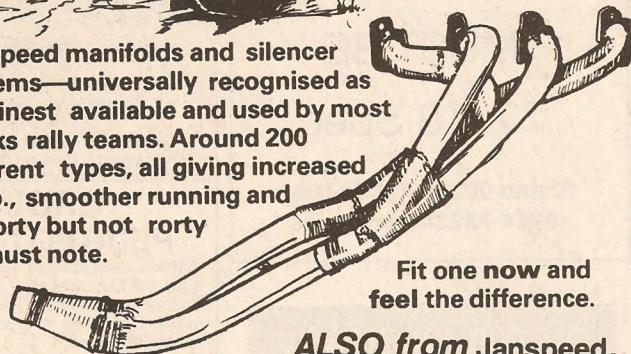
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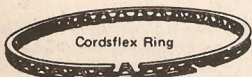
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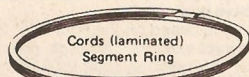
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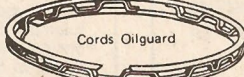
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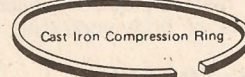
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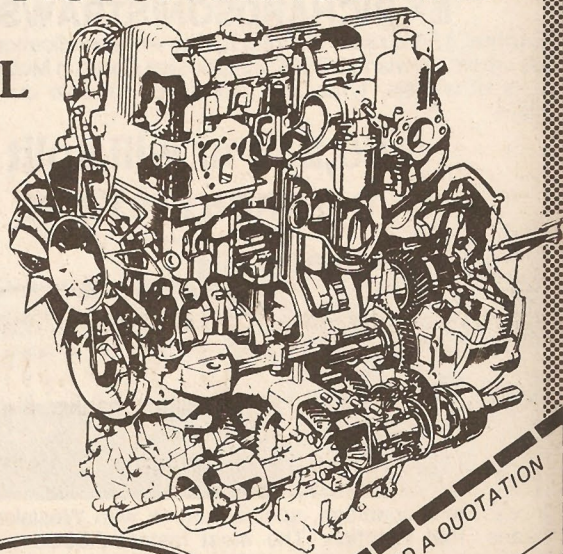
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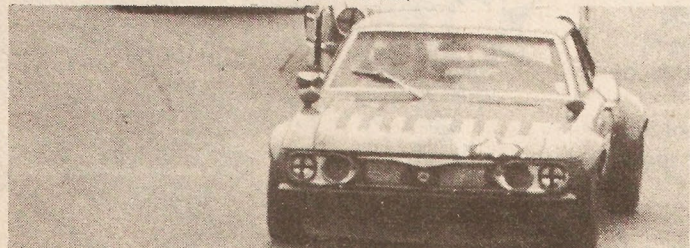
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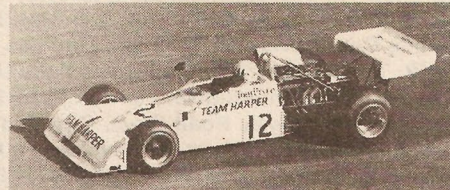
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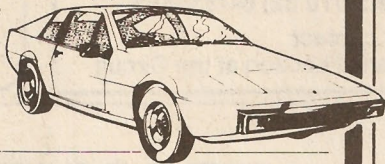
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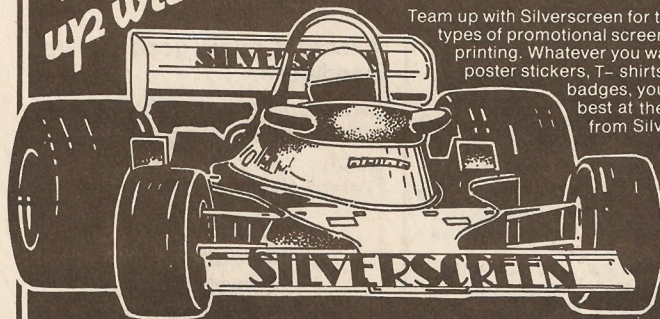


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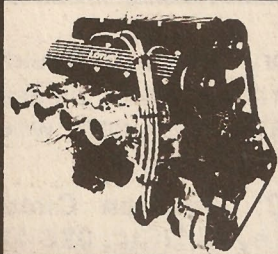
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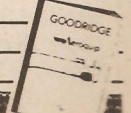
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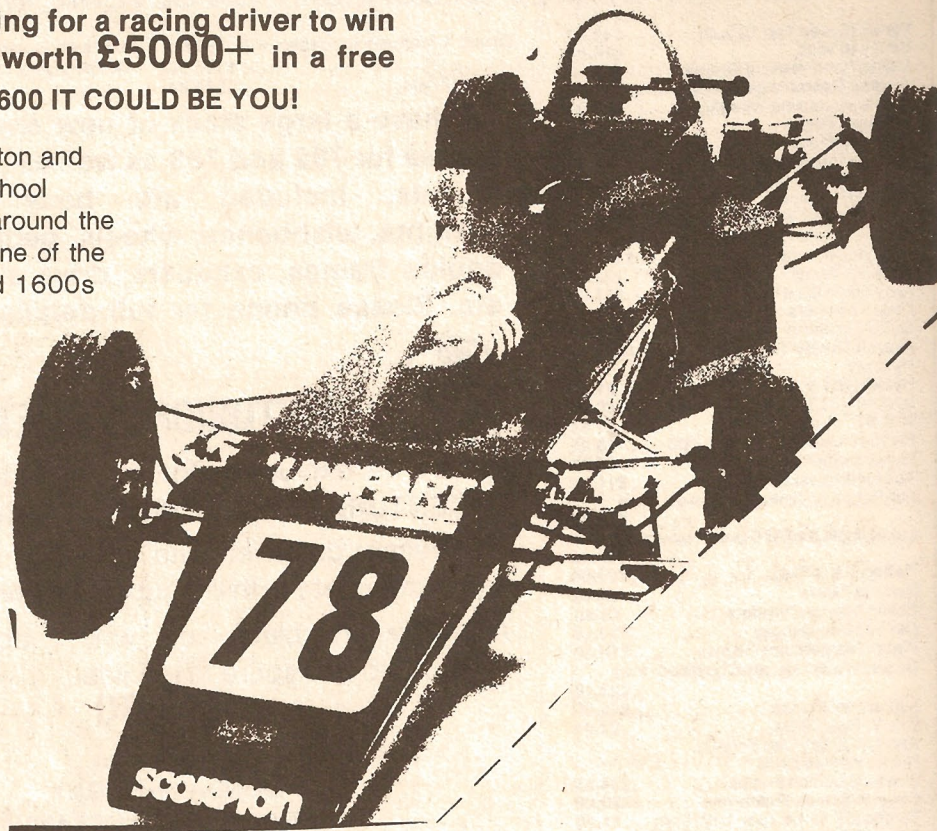


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Royale Racing Ltd., Unit 70, The Airfield, Little Staughton, Beds.—Colmworth 506 & 509
Rushen Green Racing, Browick Road, Wymondham, Norfolk, —0953-604818 (Days) or Norwich (0603) 54069 (Eves)

S
Sabre Automotive Ltd., (Racing Fabrication and Sheet-Metalwork) 20-22 St. Johns Street, Bicester, Oxon, OX6 7SP.—Bicester (STD 08692) 42615
Safety Devices, 176 Exning Road, Newmarket, Suffolk CB8 0AF—(06 38) 61421 4
Sark Racing Ltd., Unit H, Houndswood, Harper Lane, Radlett, WD7 7HU—Radlett 3041 or 01-499 5370
Saracen Engineering Ltd., Tower Garage, Wrotham Hill, Wrotham, Kent. TN15 7NS—Fairsseat (STD 0732) 823548 Swanley 63516 evenings
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750 Motor Club, General Secretary, Dave Bradley, 16 Woodstock Road, Witney, Oxon, 8X0 6T—Witney 2285
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Sportspares Ltd., 143 Rochdale Road, Bury, Lancs—(061-761) 2006
Suron Racing (Racing Wheels Tyres), The Coach House, Church Road, Burstow, Horley, Surrey—Smallfield 2869
Suspension Services, Ongar Road, Writtle, Chelmsford, Essex—(0245) 421929
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Van Diemen International Racing Services Ltd., Chalk Road, Snetterton, Norwich—Quidenham (095387) 270
Volkswagen Motor Sport Parts and Preparation— See GTI Engineering.

W
Weber Carburettors (U.K.) Concessionaires, Dolphin Rd., Sunbury-on-Thames, Middlesex—Sunbury-on-Thames (09327) 88805
Will Sparrow Ltd., Kinwarton Farm Road, Kinwarton, Alcester, Warwickshire, 49 6EH—Alcester 3656
Willans Safety Harness, Stockbridge Racing, Goscester Garage, Stockbridge, Hampshire—Stockbridge 712

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