

TOP FF TESTED - RUSSELL BROOKES - RENAULT R5TS

AUTOSPORT

Pete Lyons' review of the 1975 F1 season



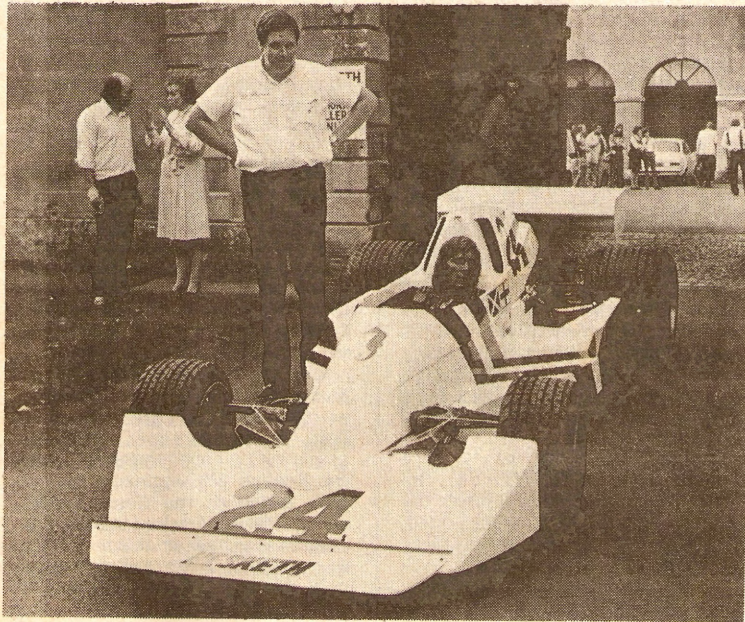
AUTOSPORT

BRITAIN'S MOTOR SPORTING WEEKLY

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Car and driver have found new homes this week — can they be as successful?



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 Published every Thursday by Autosport, Haymarket Publishing Ltd, Regent House, 54-62 Regent Street, London W1A 2YJ. Tel: 01-439 4242, 01-439 9133 (Editorial), 01-439 9339 (Advertising). **Telex:** 23918 Haymarket LDN. **Subscriptions and back numbers:** Craven House, 34 Foubert's Place, London W1. Tel..01-439 4242 (subscriptions); 01-437 3272 (back numbers).

Annual subscription: Home: £14.50; Overseas, surface mail: £14.50; Airmail, Europe: £24.00; Airmail, USA and Canada: £34.00. Other airmail rates on application. Text printed in England by QB Ltd, Sheepen Road, Colchester, Essex. Cover printed by B. R. Hubbard Ltd, Callywhite Lane, Dronfield, Sheffield. Registered at the PO as a newspaper.

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AUTOSPORT, DECEMBER 11, 1975

EDITORIAL

As Pete Lyons says in his superb review of the 1975 Formula 1 season in this week's issue, "It was a funny year".

Statistically there was a total of 17 races with 53 drivers of 16 nationalities using 20 different cars and four different makes of engine taking part. Except in the latter category all are slightly down on last year — but it is true to say it was quality rather than quantity in 1975.

But it is under this facade that the picture takes on a strange hue. During the year we experienced such things as, the entrants' boycott of a race, a threatened drivers' strike, a threatened mechanics' strike, a fight between a team manager and an official, the reigning world champion refusing to race, three Grands Prix being shortened through bad weather, and half points being awarded at two races. The governing body abdicated, chicanes were demanded at three circuits, new regulations were announced and rejected, to be replaced by another set drawn up by the constructors themselves and seemingly of little substance as far as radical changes are concerned.

It was, indeed, a funny year.

The 1974 season produced perhaps the highest standard of straight competition that had been witnessed in the premier form of motor sport for many years — the 1975 season, which began just three short months after the end of the previous one had really little to offer in terms of real motor racing.

Surely it is good racing that the public want to see — not remonstrations by greedy constructors, under- (over?) paid drivers and over-worked mechanics. The politics, which although providing excellent press copy, do nothing for the image of the sport — they should really be kept behind closed doors.

As we have said before, and will continue to do so until a positive move is made, it all boils down to the fact that there is no strength in the governing body of motor sport. It was suspected a long time ago as weak contradictory decision followed weak contradictory decision. But in Grand Prix racing, at Barcelona in particular, the organisation reached a new low. Their refusal to make any sort of decision regarding the safety of that circuit was criminal. It was really that weekend when it started to go wrong for Grand Prix racing. The CSI having involuntarily abdicated, the Constructors Association, the most professional body of men in motor sport, assumed command, which although an unpopular move in many quarters must, in the long run, be for the betterment of the sport.

The CSI retaliated with a radical set of regulations for F1 to take effect at the beginning of 1976 — this was rejected entirely by the FICA who then drew up their own regulations, which basically do not go one inch in the direction required. What the CSI were trying to achieve was a reduction in cornering speeds so that circuit owners would not have to spend more millions of pounds in accommodating the ever increasingly fast F1 cars. The motive was right, indeed it was supported, albeit very weakly, by the drivers themselves, but the method was very wrong.

Instead of trying to reform and be constructive after so many political defeats during the year the CSI became stropky and obstinate — to ensure some Grand Prix racing next year and their own future the FICA compromised on the prize funds — the battle surely is not over yet.

Meanwhile the Grand Prix circuit owners are being asked to spend still more money on their circuits before F1 cars will race there — it is possible that next week we shall have details of one circuit having to spend £250,000 by the middle of next year in order to have its GP. This will only be justified if, when the meeting takes place, we get some straight motor racing, unhindered by any political manoeuvring.

All the signs point to a good year: there will be plenty of old faces in new teams, and for the first time in a number of years refreshingly new technical ideas being tried.

If it is as good as it looks, it will be very good.

our cover picture

Our cover this week is part of a Sportprint painting by Lawrence Klonaris depicting Niki Lauda's world championship winning Ferrari at Nurburgring.

Frank's F1 plans

Frank Williams could well have his best ever Grand Prix season next year, especially if his recent announcement is anything to go by. A telephone call last week from the 33-year-old effervescent Formula 1 entrant confirmed that he'd acquired the Hesketh 308C Grand Prix project and the car's designer Dr Harvey Postlethwaite as well. If that was not enough, Williams also confirmed a three year agreement with wealthy Austrian businessman Walter Wolf to finance his team and also hoped to finalise plans with Jacky Ickx to head his Grand Prix attack along with Italian F3 driver Renzo Zorzi.

The news that Wolf has officially become the principal backer for the Williams Grand Prix team could well have been the prime factor in Frank persuading Postlethwaite to join.



Frank Williams - bounces back

Wolf, 36, has been involved with Frank on a back room level so far this year, having been introduced via Gianpaulo Dallara, the Italian designer who built the F1 de Tomaso which Frank ran back in 1970. Wolf, who is of Austrian/Yugoslavian descent, has large interests in the oil industry maintenance business, servicing rigs and providing construction facilities among other things.

Postlethwaite needs little introduction to regular racegoers, having been one of the driving forces behind Hesketh Racing for the last two and a half years. Prior to that he'd worked at March Engineering where he started his successful relationship with James Hunt in the works F3 team. Harvey then moved on to develop the F2 car in which Jean-

Pierre Jarier romped home to win the 1973 European F2 Championship before leaving for Hesketh where he modified their existing March 731. From there the Postlethwaite pen produced the 308 series, the latest C-type looking destined to have an indifferent future following the Hesketh Racing closure until Williams snapped it up. From now onwards, however, the cars will be known as Williams and be painted blue and laced with gold.

Postlethwaite's new employment as chief development engineer means that Frank now has an extremely talented design staff, having already acquired the services of former Lola designer Patrick Head, the man responsible for the Scott F2 car in 1973.

As we closed for press, Frank said that he still had to complete the deal with Ickx, the John Player Team Lotus driver (who's contract expires at the end of the month) having a clashing commitment on the day of the Swedish Grand Prix when he's supposed to be racing for Porsche at Le Mans. Ickx has driven for Frank once before, at the American GP in 1973 where he brought the Williams home in seventh place.



Renzo Zorzi - time will tell

Renzo Zorzi, a 26-year-old Italian miner's son, has also previously driven for Frank, having made quite an impressive F1 debut at this year's Italian Grand Prix. Zorzi's claim to fame this year was winning the Monaco F3 race in his Lancia-powered GRD. He is also a Pirelli test driver. Commenting on his inclusion in the team Frank said: "In about six months or so, he'll do something that will benefit Formula 1 greatly."

Brabham-Alfa continues tests

Further tests were carried out by the Martini-Brabham team at Ricard last week where regular team driver Carlos Pace put Gordon Murray's striking Alfa-Romeo-powered Brabham BT45 through its paces for the second time at the French track. Although Belgian F3 star Patrick Neve was on hand, it is understood that he never actually drove the car.

Running on the hard Goodyear tyres and still using the same Alfa flat-12 engine since they started testing the car, Pace was able to improve on his earlier Ricard time by stopping the watches at 1m 12.0s, an improvement of 0.4s. On face value, this is a little disappointing although it must be remembered the car is still being sorted at this stage.

As to the reliability of the Alfa flat-12, the team has apparently had no dramas throughout the 1000 miles tests. The engine's fuel consumption looks like being reduced, thanks to a new injection system from Alfa which replaces the current Lucas system.

Although the Alfa engine is claimed to have extremely high power figures, it apparently lacks a lot of middle range torque which is becoming a worrying factor. Pace proved the top end potential by recording terminal speeds of around 180 mph (282 kph) on Ricard's long back straight and it is hoped the combination should be capable of topping the 190 mph mark (300 kph) by the time the French GP is held.

So near and yet so far

Yesterday (Wednesday) an official announcement was made regarding the future of James Hunt. For the past couple of weeks, ever since the departure of Emerson Fittipaldi from McLaren Cars, there has been speculation that Hunt would replace Fittipaldi and partner Jochen Mass in the McLaren Grand Prix team

James Hunt - yes or no?



next year.

Last week we carried a story referring to a proposed "swap" deal between Hunt and Ronnie Peterson at John Player Team Lotus. That deal has come very close although the relevant parties aren't prepared to discuss it in any great detail.

Although our publishing date is

today (Thursday), we haven't even been given an embargo on the story so as we went to press on Tuesday afternoon, we still weren't convinced by the perpetual news broadcasts that "James Hunt had signed for McLaren". Why, if all the national daily papers had run stories proclaiming Hunt's inclusion in the

Ronnie Peterson - too expensive?



McLaren team, did the parties involved (especially the sponsors) want to keep quiet about it? What impact would it now carry at this stage? Unless it was something totally different. For some reason, we just haven't been totally convinced that everything regarding Hunt's future was so straight cut.

Changes at Renault

A surprise move by Renault to employ Gerard Larrousse as their Competitions Manager as from January 1 was confirmed by a press release from the French company last week. This effectively means that Larrousse will curtail his racing and rallying activities and concentrate on running the competition's division, taking over from Jacques Terramorsi.

Larrousse said: "It was a very difficult decision but I made the choice." Referring to his new job, the 35 year old race and rally ace added, "I took the opportunity, it was one or the other."

Larrousse's successes which span his varied career are too numerous to mention, except the more notable achievements both in racing and rallying. In the latter he's won the Tour de Corse, Tour de France, Nieve et Glace and Criterium Cevennes events while on the race tracks, he's proved a very accomplished driver scoring long distance sports car wins at Le Mans (twice) the Nurburgring, Hockenheim, Osterreicherung and Sebring. Last year he made his F1 debut in the privately run Scuderia Finotto team driving an ex-works Brabham BT42 and until he moved into single-seaters this year, his formula racing experience had been very limited.

Partnering fellow Frenchman Jean-Pierre Jabouille in the Elf Switzerland F2 team, he scored a win at Hockenheim earlier this year (his only single-seater success) following this up with good placings elsewhere, enough to rank him high among the F2 championship contenders.

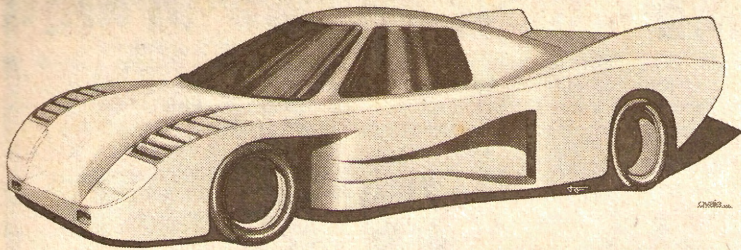
Larrousse's retirement from racing leaves the Elf Switzerland team with a vacant seat alongside Jabouille for next year. It is expected that the team will continue, "although it depends on our Swiss cheese sponsor" but at the moment the mechanics, headed by team manager Jean Sage (Larrousse's former rally navigator) and chief mechanic Jean-Claude Guenard, are busy preparing two new chassis to accept the Renault V6 engine. A comparison test with the German BMW unit will be undertaken in January.

Larrousse had an interest in the team "which I am selling" and it looks as if his replacement will be Michel Leclere with Patrick Tambay and Rene Arnoux handling the pair of works Martini-Renaults, all of them sponsored by Elf of course. More details in *Special Stage*.

- The Vel's Parnelli USAC team have had quite a few inquiries regarding sales of their DFX engine, the turbocharged version of the Cosworth Ford DFV. However, Vel's Parnelli aren't interested in selling.

- The annual Martini & Rossi awards, a nomination by American journalists for their driver of the year has gone to AJ Foyt.

- Only Bobby Allison and Mario Andretti can overtake AJ Foyt for the IROC title when the final of this American Camaro series climaxes at Daytona early next year. To beat Foyt, even if the Texan finishes last, Allison must be at least third while Andretti has to take second, and then he has to be at least three places clear of Allison.



Vic Elford's new Inaltera-DFV sports prototype destined for Le Mans.

Vic Elford's Le Mans GT

Former rally and race ace Vic Elford, now resident in France, has turned racing car constructor as we stated in last week's issue. Along with Jean Roudeau, who won the BL Trophy last year, they are involved in a project to build a pair of sports GT cars for next year's Le Mans 24 Hour sports car race.

Elford has obtained sponsorship for the team from Inaltera, a large wallpaper manufacturing company based in Lyon, having final-

ised this new publicity medium with Inaltera's managing director Charles L. James. A competitions department has been formed with Roudeau employed as Technical Director and Elford as Sporting Director.

The cars, known as Inalteras, will be powered by Ford Cosworth DFV engines and will only run at Le Mans. The drivers have yet to be chosen although it is envisaged that there will be two team's of three drivers.

Second Ligier-Matra?

"More than likely it will be Jacques Laffite" said Ligier-Matra team manager Gerard Ducarouge when we spoke to him earlier this week. We were, of course, referring as to who would drive the new all-French Ligier-Matra Grand Prix car in the forthcoming Argentinian Grand Prix, bearing in mind that the original driver Jean-Pierre Beltoise can't race there because of legal problems.

Ducarouge said that the team would be continuing their test programme down at the Paul Ricard circuit this week where Laffite "and perhaps Beltoise" would conduct the driving. Although several of the other teams testing at Ricard the other week reckoned Laffite had posted a 1m 10.0s, Ducarouge said they had in fact got down "to 1m 9.8s", admittedly on soft Goodyear tyres.

Ducarouge wouldn't make any comment on the internal politics that have been going on as to who should drive the car. He did say that whoever decision was made, "it would be a joint effort between our sponsors Gitanes and Guy Ligier."

A Gitanes spokesman wouldn't comment officially although he inferred that Laffite would drive it in Argentina.

There is also talk of the team running a second car, possibly starting from the beginning of the European season. It would naturally depend very much on finances for as Ducarouge explained, being non-F1CA members, it was costing them a small fortune just to attend the opening three races in the southern hemisphere.

Gerard Ducarouge - "A 1m 9.8s"



"We have only one chassis at the moment" said Ducarouge but a second JS5 is well on the way. Gitanes also agreed with the Ligier team manager that there was a distinct chance of them running a second car, and this could be in order to honour Beltoise's contract and perhaps to save face. Excuses have been made as to why Laffite has been so much quicker, although it must be remembered that Jean-Pierre has done very little racing this year.

We inquired as to whether the team had tried running the JS5 without the huge airbox, thought to be an essential part of the car's performance. By removing it, as will become mandatory in April, it may be akin to cutting of Samson's hair. "No, we have kept it on always" said Ducarouge, "and we will continue to do so until we have to take it off." However they are working on a replacement cold air collector to conform when the new regulations come into force.

Depailler's quick laps

The Elf Tyrrell team spent another four days down at Ricard last week where Patrick Depailler undertook further tests with the Project 34 six-wheeler. Depailler's best lap was an encouraging 1m 10.5s.

Much work has been done on the 007 series suspension as this is the area where the team think they've been lacking this season.

If the team went ahead and built a pukka six-wheel F1 car, it's doubtful whether it would be ready until May.

● There is still no decision regarding the future of W.D & H.O. Wills in motor racing following the death of Graham Hill and his team ten days ago. A statement is expected following a meeting which was scheduled to take place later this week.

Myson are back

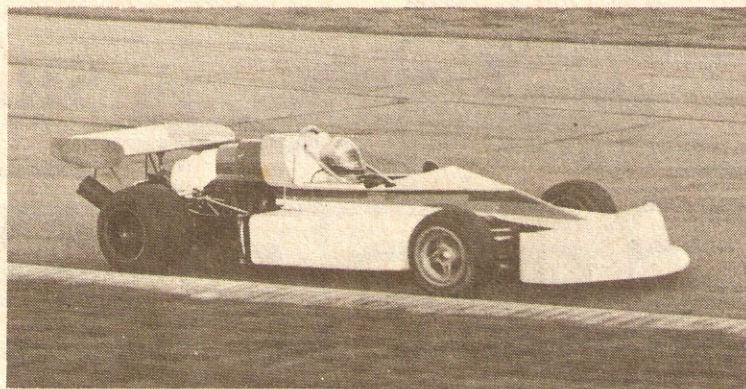
Myson, the international heating and air venting specialists who sponsored Richard Roberts in Formula 3 back in 1973 with a March, are returning to motor racing once again. They will continue their association with Roberts, only this time in Formula 2 where they intend to contest the European F2 Championship.

Roberts, who was supposed to have made his F2 debut at Vallelunga in a Stuart Chubb-entered March before the deal fell through, has purchased the ex-Brian Henton March 752, the original prototype, and the car will be painted in Myson's distinctive light blue, black and white colour scheme. Roberts will use Ford BDG engines, prepared by Geoff Richardson, and the team will be based at Althorne near Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex.

Roberts rose to international fame when, after tying for the Lombank F3 Championship, he was drafted into the works Brabham Grand Prix at the start of 1974. He only competed in a few races before losing his drive due to internal wrangles and he has concentrated on sports car racing ever since.

Emerson gets the OK

Although we weren't able to get in touch with McLaren boss Teddy Mayer at the time, we gather from the Copersucar-Fittipaldi Grand Prix that Emerson Fittipaldi, who shocked the motor racing world a fortnight ago by switching teams, will be allowed to test the team's brand new car at Interlagos before his contract officially runs out at the end of this year.



Eddie Cheever at the wheel of the Ron Dennis F2 March at Goodwood last week.

Eddie Cheever's F2 test

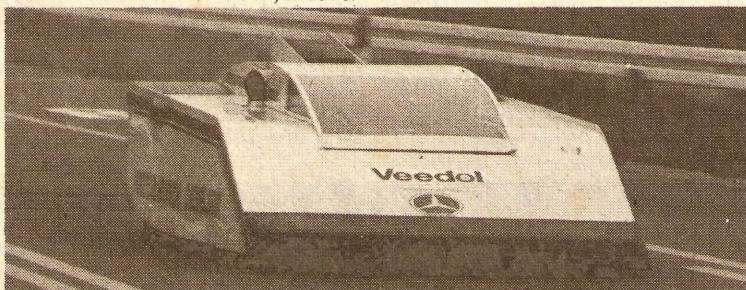
Prior to returning to Italy for the next couple of months, 18-year-old American Formula 3 comingman Eddie Cheever had his first taste of Formula 2 power at Goodwood last week driving one of the Ron Dennis March-BMW 752s.

Cheever, who has been run in recent F3 races by Dennis, was given the chance of trying out the March at Ron's request. The car used was the Schnitzer BMW-powered 752 usually driven by Italian Sandro Cinotti. The car was given a few shake down laps by Tim Schenken before Cheever was sent out with

instructions not to exceed a specified rev limit. Testing at this time of year, because of the cold weather conditions, isn't terribly significant but suffice it is to say that Eddie, after a brief pit stop, was able to get down to 1m 11.8s in little over a dozen laps. This compares with Schenken's best, under similar conditions last year, of 1m 11.0s.

Cheever is anxious to move up into F2 next year and Dennis would dearly like to run him. However, it is totally dependent on finance, which, if not forthcoming, will mean more F3.

This is a turbocharged 5-cylinder Mercedes-Benz 220D Diesel-powered special which has been breaking a few world records recently. It's not Mercedes' G5 silhouette car for 1976!



Sports car unity in '76?

A meeting was held at a London hotel last Saturday to form a new association to represent manufacturers, teams and drivers actively involved in Group 6 Sports Car racing at international level. Aptly named Sports Car International, the meeting was very well attended and elected onto SCI as a joint secretariat "by a unanimous decision" were Paul Watson, formerly a director of Motor Race Consultants, and Tony Birchenhough from Dorset Racing Associates.

Among a number of points discussed were race distances of G6 Championship races next year. The Association deplored any attempt to reduce such established long distance races beyond a maximum of 250 kms against the established 1,000 km format in previous years, and agreed to recommend the CSI to confirm all 1976 World Championship races as (a) a minimum 4 hours maximum 6 hours duration or (b) a 750 kms minimum and 1,000 kms maximum.

Derek Ongaro, who attended the meeting on behalf of Lola Cars, said that in the latest CSI bulletin, received last week, Germany and Austria had put forward proposals for 275 and 250 kms events; Canada and America 320 and 650 kms respectively, while France, Italy, Belgium and the Le Mans organisers have all expressed a wish for events of 800 kms and over.

The Association were unanimous in their belief that any radical reduction in G6 race distances could only harm the categories' image and consequently be unattractive to spectators and competitors alike. The recent collapse of the European 2-litre Championship was a case in point.

Paul Watson said that he estimated that there would be no more than 20 2-litre and six 3-litre cars available for the G6 series next year. Chuck Graemiger, constructor of the Cheeta sports car in Lausanne, drew the Association's attention to a much healthier situation on the continent, notably in Germany, Switzerland and Italy. Apart from himself, both Jorg Obermoser in Germany and Osella in Italy would account for at least 25 new cars in 1976. Commenting on the current state of G6 and InterSerie, Graemiger said he believed the continental situation was much stronger than the British realised.

In answer to that Lola Cars confirmed that they had received no orders for G6 cars to European customers while March Engineering, who were represented at the meeting by Sandro Angeleri, were only expecting to support a single works car for the second year running; and Chevron Cars, who were not represented at the meeting, were thought also to be without European orders as yet, although we understand Dave Wilson has been in Europe confirming just such orders. Gordon Horn, formally of KVG Racing, said that as far as he understood, there would be two new 2-litre cars run from this country but declined to comment any further.

With the Porsche Carreras now classified to run in G5 for 1976, anxiety both before and during the matter was shown as to the number of cars available to support the series. Ongaro suggested that the Association might consider approaching the CSI to combine G5 and G6 for 1976 so as to produce the best and most representative field in all events. A vote was taken by all present on this point, the unanimous decision being that Sports Cars International should approach the CSI within the next six days with their support for this recommendation.

While the Association felt that the recently announced RAC 2-litre Championship was a definite move in the right direction, dismay was shown on the selection of some dates by MCD, the BARC and Silverstone in view of the fact that most of the more interesting World Championship G6 races were being organised during the period when the majority of the RAC events also took place (April-June). It was hoped to persuade Silverstone to transfer their Easter date to the *Daily Express* BRDC meeting on May 9 as this comes two weeks after Monza and a fortnight before any other major race. This would allow just one RAC round (at Snetterton) over Easter.

The next meeting of SCI would be held at the Nurburgring on April 3 in the Sport Hotel outside the paddock. Membership to the Association was fixed at £75 for a full voting member and £40 for an associate non-voting member. Further information on SCI can be addressed to Tony Birchenhough at Little Cheam, Higher Kingston, Stinsford, Dorchester, Dorset. Tel: 0305 2892.

Unser starts a USAC landslide

Bobby Unser's departure from Dan Gurney's All American Racers team, reported in last week's issue, has started one of the biggest shake-ups in American USAC history. Unser's split with Gurney has been confirmed although the expected arrival of Wally Dallenbach at AAR, who also quit the Patrick Racing team, doesn't look on either, according to Gurney's press man Pete Biro.

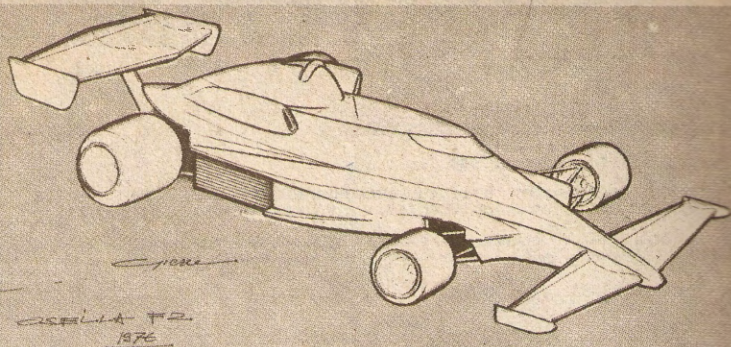
Unser's move across to the Cobre Racing team also looks doubtful as they've lost team patron Bob Fletcher who's left the team and taken his USAC Eagles with him. Cobre have ordered a pair of brand new McLarens, but the Colnbrook concern will apparently have to "okay" the drivers, presumably so

works driver Johnny Rutherford doesn't get "blown off". That's what could veto the Unser move. Therefore it is expected that Pancho Carter will remain with the team.

Carter's team-mate Billy Vukovich has switched across and joined the Morales Brothers who have run the late Jimmy Caruthers this year in his Alex Foods Eagle. Finally with Dallenbach's departure, there's a second seat lying vacant alongside Gordon Johncock in a Simms Wildcat.

● The AVS Shadow team could be smelling quite sweetly soon.

● Young Italian F3 driver Giancarlo Brancatelli is one of the favourites to land a ride in the works F3 March team next year.



An artist's impression of the new F2 Osella from the Italian magazine Autosprint.

Binder goes to Osella

Hans Binder, the young Austrian driver who's been competing in Formula 2 this season, intends to remain faithful to the category next year.

Binder, who is a protege of Dr Helmut Marko, the former Le Mans sports car winner and BRM Grand Prix driver, has driven a Schnitzer-BMW powered March 752 this year prior to switching over to a works loaned Chevron-BMW B29 for the latter half of the season. Before that, Binder had done a season's racing in F3 having graduated from Formula Ford via the Jim Russell

School.

Binder's choice of chassis in F2 next year is a little surprising for he is about to try out his third F2 car in less than a year. Running a BMW powered works car for him next year will be the Italian Osella marque who this year have run a works car for promising young Italian Giorgio Francia.

As for Marko, he too has changed his allegiance, moving across from running the Ford Austria set-up to organising the Austrian Renault series.

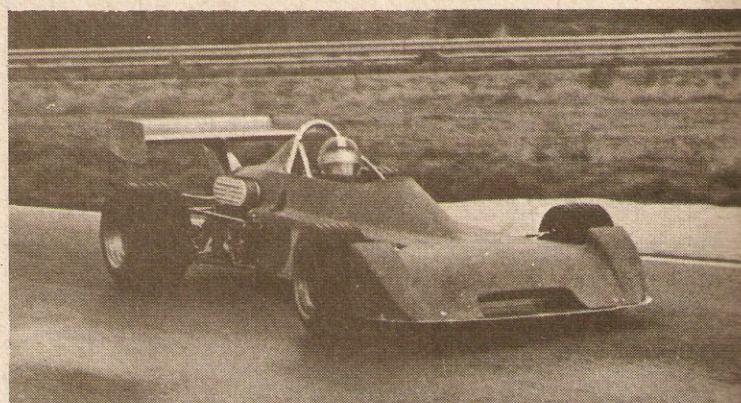
Donington — not quite

A final answer on the long and drawn out planning proposals for the resumption of racing at Donington Park should be available any day now.

The Donington Park Association, the strong band of local supporters

for Tom Wheatcroft's plans wrote to the Government recently asking why the appeal had taken over ten months. His reply intimated that a decision would be made before Christmas.

Here's hoping it's the right one.



Almost looking unchanged, there's more than meets the eye with the new Chevron B34 tested by Derek Bennett at Oulton last week.

New Chevron B34 tests

Derek Bennett, the Chevron designer, gave his new Formula Atlantic B34 car its first test run at a wet Oulton Park early last week. The car, running a Brian Hart-prepared Ford BDA, was fitted with a one-piece prototype body panel while production moulds are being finalised.

Derek did about 50 laps without calling at the pits. His comments afterwards were: "The car felt so good I just kept going faster and faster. In 50 laps I could find no reason to call in for adjustments, and anyway it's so long since I have

driven in the wet I needed the practice." Bennett's best lap was 65.4s.

Testing has continued and will continue to do so at various circuits over the country for the next two weeks.

Production of the B34 is well under way and the first car will be shipped to South Africa on December 12 for Durban driver Tony Martin to drive in the SA Formula Atlantic Championship next year. Martin won the F2 section of this year's SA series in his ex-Gunston Chevron B25.

Avon Motor Tour blow

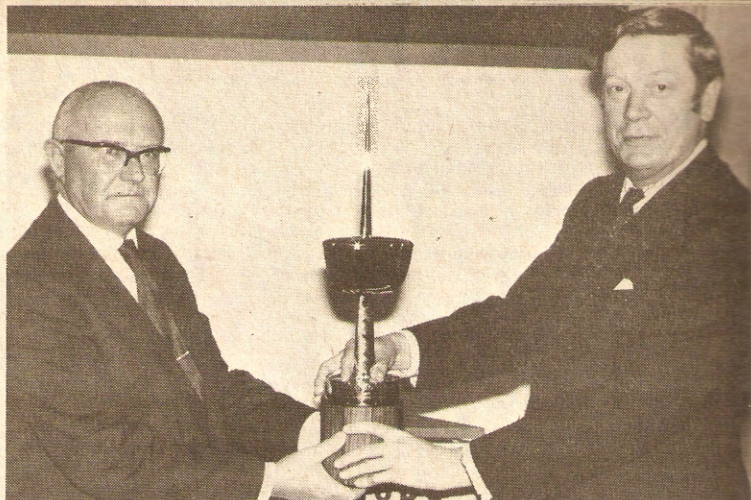
Both Avon Tyres and *Motor* magazine announced their withdrawal of financial support for the Tour of Britain last week. First *Motor* decided to pull out on economic grounds, and when Avon couldn't find any co-sponsors, they felt that "although the event has proved a great success, we have to take into account increased costs due to inflation, and our need to make the most effective use of our limited promotional funds".

Now the BRSCC are left with the event and no sponsors. Peter Browning of the club said this week that, even though the withdrawal had only been announced in one motoring magazine (*Motor*), the response from competitors had been tremendous, and urged him on even more to find a sponsor. In its three years, the event has obviously attracted enormous support.

The situation now is that the

BRSCC must find a sponsor for the event by January 1, or possibly postpone it. The Tour is scheduled to take place on July 9-11, but if no sponsor is found by the end of the year, Browning will postpone the event until a September date which will give him two or three more months of discussion with potential sponsors.

Browning said that in fact the September date had many other advantages. Works teams may be more interested in using the Tour as a shakedown test prior to participation in the G1 class of the RAC Rally, and the proximity to the Motor Show may also have some bearing on manufacturers' participation. Furthermore, the circuit owners and also the important forestry commission see September as being a better date, so that with time on his side, Browning could come up with a better Tour of Britain than ever.



Jack Emmott (left), Chairman of AP Ltd., receives the Ferodo Trophy, awarded annually in appreciation of an outstanding contribution to the sport, from Brian Hill, Chairman of Ferodo Ltd. in London last week.

It's better than ever

Christmas is coming and it's whatever-shall-I-give-him? time again. Judging by the number of phone calls we get each year asking for details or back numbers of major sporting events from the previous season, the best gift for any student of motor sport is an annual. The first and most comprehensive *Autocourse*, is published this week by Hazleton Securities Ltd at £7.95.

Under its new management *Autocourse* has, in its 24th edition, set a new standard not only in feature material but in quality of presentation.

Once again the whole thing has been masterminded by Mike Kettlewell, whose fanatical attention to detail has produced more statistics and race data between two covers than could ever be imagined.

In addition to this *Autocourse* includes a superb analysis of the 1975 F1 season by our own Pete Lyons as well as adaptations of his Grand Prix reports that have appeared within these pages during the season.

Jackie Stewart has contributed an exclusive tribute to the late Graham Hill (and it is proof of the enthusiasm of the new publishers that they

should be able to add a late, but sadly necessary page to the book after it had been printed to record Graham's death).

Other features include a profile of the World Champion Niki Lauda, Formula One politics, Hesketh Racing and the changing face of motor racing by Raymond Mays.

Also reviewed are F2, sports car, F3, F5000, American and South African racing.

The photography as ever is superb especially the colour, which is twice the amount in last year's book.

Autocourse will be on sale on December 15 well in time for the festive season and will keep enthusiastic man or boy quiet for days on end.

● The Germans have formed a Formula 3 Association which they set up last week. Already there are 55 members of which the President is Herr Laux. He will be supported by Karl Heinz-Tibor, the German Goodyear tyre agent, while Ernst Maring and Bertram Schafer will represent the drivers.

● Shadow Grand Prix driver Tom Pryce is up to something. Turn to SPECIAL STAGE to find out.

BRDC dance

The annual BRDC dinner dance went off as successfully as ever last Friday at London's Dorchester Hotel. Award winners were James Hunt (Gold star, Johnny Wakefield Trophy, fastest lap on GP circuit) and Richard Seaman Trophy (points winner for British drivers in foreign races); Jim Walsh (Chris Bristow Trophy, for the most promising driver on the Club circuit); John Jordan (Chris Bristow Trophy for fastest lap on club circuit); Lord Hesketh (Nigel Moores Trophy for the most meritorious private entrant); Alan Jones (Bruce McLaren Trophy for the most meritorious Commonwealth driver); Brian Redman (ERA Club Trophy for most successful British driver in a British car outside the UK); Derek Bell (Woolf Barnato Trophy, highest placed British car/driver combination at Le Mans).

A specially engraved silver tray was to have been presented to Graham Hill in appreciation of his outstanding career, and this will be presented to Bette Hill at a later date.

The John Cobb Trophy — awarded to a British driver in a British car for success or successes of outstanding character — was to have been presented to Tony Brise; the Trophy was accepted by Teddy Savory of Modus Cars.

Trivellato to switch cars

Trivellato Racing of Vicenza, Italy, well-known Formula 2 entrants and racing car importers, have signed a 3 year contract to import, sell and service Chevron Cars in Italy.

Trivellato Racing will run a new Formula 2 B35 with a works BMW engine in the European F2 Championship and a new Toyota-Novamator powered Formula 3 B34 chassis in the new European F3 Championship.

Although sponsorship for these cars has been finalised, the announcement is being held up pending the signing of the drivers who are understood to be "Italy's fastest and most promising."

Team patron Bino Trivellato has, up until now, run March cars both in Formula 2 and Formula 3.

This weekend . . .

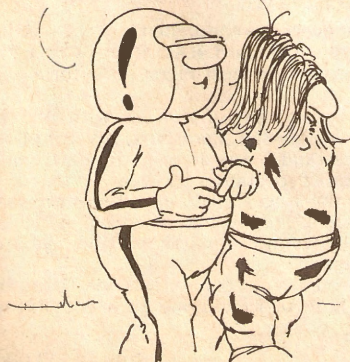
BRANDS HATCH

The Rochester MC's race meeting which was cancelled a fortnight ago, due to bad weather, is on again this week at Brands Hatch. The meeting will be run in conjunction with MRS races and there are something like 12 races on the day, the first being at 9 am.

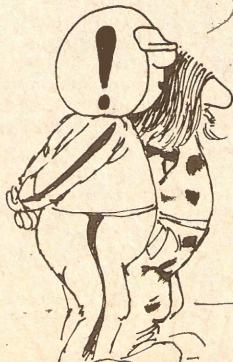
CATCHPOLE

By Barry Foley

... THEN THERE IS THE BRSCC. DINNER AND DANCE, THEN THERE'S THE BARC DINNER DANCE, THEN THE BRDC DINNER, THEN...



... THEN MARSHALS ONE, THEN TEAC'S DO AND THE 750 CLUBS DINNER, THE CLUBMANS THRASH. THE LOCAL CLUBS DINNER AND THE...



... DRIVERS DINNER DANCE, THE MECHANICS DINNER DANCE ... CHRIST! I SHALL BE GLAD WHEN THE RACING STARTS AGAIN AND WE CAN RELAX.



Tributes to Graham Hill

For me the most exciting thing to happen during this year's Formula One season, was the introduction of Tony Brise as a regular Grand Prix driver under the supreme guidance of Graham Hill. Being a keen supporter of both of these drivers and having followed Tony Brise's early career in the lower echelons of motor sport, it came as an extremely sad blow to hear of the tragic accident which befell the team on November 29. There surely cannot be another Grand Prix outfit around that offered such tremendous potential as that of Graham Hill's team.

We all will miss them and to their relatives and families may I, through your columns, offer my most sincere condolences.

SKIPTON, YORKS

P. O. SIMPSON

It has been a sad weekend for all who love racing, one of motor racing's greatest names, and one of its brightest hopes are now dead.

I have been a motor racing fanatic for only three years, but prior to that I, like millions of other uninitiated people, thought of Graham Hill as motor racing, and through his great love of the sport and his personality he brought motor racing to people who had never seen it before.

To add to this tragedy is the loss of such young talent as Tony Brise. British drivers of his calibre are too few on the ground. Many younger fans associated with him as we have watched him grow through the formulae, and saw in him a new British World Champion.

We also lost a growing and promising British racing team, who like its personage had no time to prove itself.

All who love racing I am sure send their condolences to the family and friends of those who died in the crash. And, may we all help them in the future.

SHEFFIELD

JOHN BUTTERWORTH

I should like to pay tribute to Graham Hill — surely motor sports' best ever ambassador and personality. Graham always had time for everyone regardless of whom they were, and it was all due to him that I, and many others, became a keen supporter and follower of motor sport. His death is a great blow to motor sport, and he'll always be remembered. It's tragic that almost all the whole team were killed including Tony Brise — surely Britain's brightest hope for the future.

Without Graham Hill motor racing will never be quite the same.

BATTLE, SUSSEX

A. J. MAYNARD

November 29 will be remembered by everyone connected with motor racing as a tragic day for three reasons.

Number one, the death of Graham Hill, not only one of the greatest racing drivers of the past 20 years, but also the finest ambassador the sport has ever known. He had done more than any other single person for motor racing.

Number two, the death of Tony Brise, an immensely talented young driver with a brilliant future in racing.

Number three, the deaths of Andy Smallman, Ray Brimble, Terry Richards and Tony Allcock, of the Embassy-Hill racing team, the unsung heroes without whom motor racing would not be possible.

All these men will be sadly missed by everyone with any connection with motor racing.

It is too early to think what will happen to the Embassy-Hill racing team, but wouldn't it be a fitting tribute to these men if it could continue and fulfill the promise it had begun to show in 1975.

May I, through your publication, express my deepest sympathy to all the relatives of these fine men.

CHINGFORD, ESSEX

M. SNOW

The death of a racing driver is something everyone involved in the sport lives with all the time. But to participate for 20 years at the highest level, and then to be tragically lost in an air crash is just too much to bear.

I admit to being totally biased when referring to Graham Hill. For me he has always been the best. Maybe he didn't have the raw talent of Jim Clark or Jackie Stewart but I just couldn't help being totally pro-Hill.

If he didn't win, I felt as if the whole Grand Prix was a waste of time.

I was happy to see his retirement and looked forward to the 1976 season with anticipation of a lot of points for the Embassy-Hill. Everything seemed to be coming good, and after a couple of years in the middle order, 1976 promised many things.

Hesketh Racing have been forced to pull out, and now we have lost nearly a whole team in one moment. Suddenly 1976 just doesn't bear thinking about.

I find it difficult to express anything else at this moment, but I'm sure millions of motor racing enthusiasts all over the world will be feeling the same way.

Graham Hill did so much for motor racing and road safety that he is probably irreplaceable. We will always remember his dry wit and his many achievements.

My sincere condolences to all.

GLYN WHITING

I write, as a lifelong enthusiast of motor sport to register my feeling of despair at the loss of the world of Graham Hill. Fate really can be cruel when it wants to be.

Words fail me completely, but should a worthwhile memorial fund be launched I shall be grateful to hear of it.

AYLESBURY, BUCKS

DAVID RYDER RICHARDSON

It was a great shock to hear that Graham Hill had been killed in a plane crash.

As an ex-driver and BRSCC flag marshal, I find it very hard to put into words what this one man has given to motor racing and all the people who ever had the privilege of meeting or listening to him.

I was one of the lucky people who saw him drive in both the 1962 German Grand Prix and the 1965 Monte Carlo, and what truly brilliant driving it was. At Nurburgring a collision with a cine-camera during practice, then at Monte Carlo having to push the car backwards to join the race and winning both races, and then after winning at Monte Carlo, to say in true Graham fashion that Surtees was unlucky not to have been second (John having run out of fuel on the last lap).

What can you say about such a man except "Thank you for the standards of sportsmanship you have set for others to follow."

PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

BRIAN MILTON

Although I never met him, Graham Hill was to me not only a friend, but someone whose whole way of life was one which I, if I only could, would try to emulate.

We'll never forget him and hopefully we can build on the example he has set us all.

HAYWARDS HEATH, SUSSEX

ANDREW MELVILLE

I have been a keen fan of motor racing for the last two months of this year. I can already feel what lots of other people in motor racing feel. That feeling is the pains of tragedy, when someone has been in the sport before some people were born and driven cars to the very limit. The man motor racing could not kill, who dived with death for 20 years and then retired from driving to the managerial side, suddenly gets killed in his own plane is a great tragedy. And for 23 year-old Tony Brise who was a potential World Champion to lose his life. And Andy Smallman, Ray Brimble, Terry Richards, and Tony Allcock. To Mrs Hill and Mrs Brise I send my greatest condolences and to the relatives of the other people that died. At 16 I thought that this sort of tragedy didn't happen, but it has.

BESSELSLEIGH SCHOOL, OXON

LANCE GORDON

Different ways of winning

It would appear to me, on reading my old mate Dave Orrick's article (AUTOSPORT Nov 29) that he inadvertently picked up a dictionary while reaching for his well-thumbed blue-book, and found a new word — professionalism. On the face of it, his conclusions on "professionalism" in rallying seem very just and reasonable. Reasonable that is, until one scratches the surface and delves into the murky waters beneath.

Dave propounds the theory that a navigators' attitude must be the same, whether competing on the Thousand Lakes, or a local co-promote Well, of course it should! But only up to a point. On both type of events, a navigator should look for loop-holes in the regs. That is rallymanship — not "professionalism." The difference has got to lie in the fact that whereas a works co-driver might capitalise on a situation to protect his employers investment. A responsible "restricted" navigator would not push on beyond the limits of sportsmanship, and then he would accept any decision the organisers make, in the interests of the future of rallying.

You see, "club" rallying is not a fight between competitors and their expensive cars on one hand, and the organisers on the other. It is a competition against the clock in a competition set by the organisers. The many hundreds of marshals who line the route are also there because they enjoy it. But all of these people are gathered together because it is their sport, it's in their blood.

A navigator who deliberately pretends that he is the course car, or who collects passage controls from a selective before going to the start, is not a professional, he is not a rallyman, he is an out-and-out cheat. And he is known as such by his more sporting compatriots.

So when a navigator is aggrieved by an organiser (a not infrequent happening these days) he should definitely think twice before trying to whip up support among other crews and then letting the fivers fly.

A protest and the ensuing bad feeling, can only serve to discourage organisers and competitors alike, after all, we're all only human.

So I ask Dave to reconsider the difference between plain, sporting rallymanship and win-by-any-means "professionalism." A navigator is judged by the number of times he wins a rally fairly and without controversy. Not by the number of times he attends an RAC tribunal.

PORTSMOUTH, HANTS.

ROGER LINTOTT

Not infallable

Having read your November 23 Brands Hatch race report and *Sports Extra* I must beg to disagree with you on one point. I too, watched the Special Saloon race with some enthusiasm and feel you have done the driver of the Mini involved in Nick Whiting's accident a great injustice. You must remember that he also had a right to be on that track and in my opinion, at the time of the incident, he was setting himself up for Kidney with a view to letting Marshall etc. through on the inside of the bend. He didn't vary from that line at all allowing Marshall through safely. Could it not be that perhaps Nick Whiting was preoccupied with the thought of passing Gerry on the inside of Clearways that he failed to see the Mini until it was too late? After all nobody is infallable.

ILFORD, ESSEX.

DAVE FACER

RAC thanks

I believe that everyone concerned is of the opinion that this year's Lombard RAC Rally was a fine event and one of the most memorable for a long time.

I had the opportunity of viewing, with Dr John Gilbert the Minister of Transport, several of the special stages and I was amazed at the tremendous turn-out of spectators this year.

Going to the stages made me even more than usually aware of the invaluable work done by the thousands of volunteer marshals from clubs all over the country.

May I, through your columns, thank them, the Clubs and the RAC for staging an event that we are proud to sponsor.

CROYDON

RONALD J. BARNES

(Director, Lombard North Central Ltd)

Room at the top for Russell?

By JOHN DAVENPORT

The recent RAC Rally was a very reassuring one for British drivers, for many of them showed that you no longer have to be born in Scandinavia to do fast stage times or indeed finish in the first five. Of course, our man from Narborough, Roger Clark, has been doing this for some time, but somehow that doesn't really count, especially when countries like Finland seem to throw their Vatanens and Airikkalas into the fray and they immediately go very fast indeed. Stuart Turner realised some years ago that Britain needed more than just one rally driver, and so he started the Ford Mexico championship, which relied heavily on road rallies, to throw up the new young drivers. Winners of this championship include Will Sparrow, Russell Brookes, Nigel Rockey and Andy Dawson and all four were out on the RAC, in various machinery, proving their worth. Only two finished and those were driving respectively a Vauxhall and a Datsun, but the two Ford-mounted men went extremely quickly indeed and were vying with Tony Fowkes, Tony Pond and Roger Clark for top British driver. The man who kept the pressure up the longest and was lying third overall when mechanical trouble sidelined him on the last night was Russell Brookes, a man who started in Minis, went to Mexicos, performed brilliantly in a Group 1 RS 2000 and now this season has confirmed his promise with some excellent drives in a Group 2 Escort.

Would you say that this last RAC Rally was a big disappointment to you?

No. Rather the reverse, though of course retiring when we were doing so well and at such a late stage was a disappointment, but overall I am very pleased with the event due to the times that we put up on the special stages. I was a bit dissatisfied with my performance on the first two days of the rally because I didn't really get to grips with things and we had a couple of minor spins and a silly little off, all of which cost us time.

Did you do any special preparation for the RAC Rally?

This year has been the first time that I have had a mechanic preparing the car on a full-time basis, for normally I used to do all that work myself. This meant that I had far more free time before the event and I was able to take a holiday two weekends before the rally when I went up to the Lake District and took a lot of exercise plus relaxation. This I think was very beneficial. How did you get on with the A2 Dunlop racers that came your way when John Taylor retired?

Interesting! In fact, we didn't use the A2 tyres a great deal, for the ones we got from John were a demon tyre of his own which are not available at all, though I suppose you could say that they are at least more similar to the A2 than to a Weathermaster. We used them mainly on the rear and found that they gave fantastic traction, especially on hard surfaces. Their grip was perhaps not quite as good as the A2 and they were not so good in mud, but their overall performance was better and they lasted a long time. We went onto A2s for the last few stages before Llandrindod Wells when it was foggy and wet and I don't think that that was a fair test of the tyres. The next time that we used A2s all round — until then we had

just been using them on the front — was for Laurieston and Glengap where we set fastest time on one and second fastest on the other behind Waldegaard, as well as taking a fair bit of time off the other Fords. That was the first time that I had a chance to run on A2s all round in conditions where I could assess their performance and frankly they were incredible.

Can you see them being used more generally in the future?

Undoubtedly. I think some development will have to be done to make their performance in mud a little better for at the moment the transition from driving on a hard surface to mud is rather pronounced. Also I think that driving techniques will have to change considerably if these tyres are going to be used more widely for they are very different to drive on than what we have been used

"Frankly, I don't think that on the hard forest stages I was anywhere close to exploring the limits of this tyre's adhesion."

to. You have to drive as if you are on a tarmac road rather than in the forest. However, perhaps the best thing about them is that not only do they adhere better to the roads but they last so much longer. It is really phenomenal. This is a big advantage where you may have long stages or groups together and no chance for service, for a MS type tyre may wear down after 20 to 25 miles and you start to lose grip. With these A2 tyres,



Russell Brookes — able to keep the pressure on.

they seem to be able to go up to 70 or 80 miles on the back.

I remember seeing you changing your MS tyres between Dovey One and Dovey Two, the fronts to the back and vice versa. Do you find that when the MS gets a little worn that the grip on a loose surface deteriorates rapidly?

Yes, considerably. They have this snow blade round the tread block and as soon as that gets cut about, the grip decreases. It was very noticeable that when you saw us changing tyres, there were four other cars doing the same thing. Even Tony Fowkes who was on Goodyears, which are of a different construction, was taking two new ones out of the boot and fitting them to the rear so as to have the best possible grip for the second stage. Looking back, perhaps we should have done the same but changing front to back does help greatly. How would you classify your driving technique? You were saying that with the A2s you drive very much as you would on tarmac. Does that mean you have to adopt an understeering technique rather than one where you put the car sideways a lot?

When you are on the A2s, you definitely do not drive anywhere near as much sideways. This has the advantage that you get fewer punctures for though the A2 is more prone to puncture by virtue of its racing construction, it doesn't get so much hammering on the sidewall.

What happens then if you get caught out by a bend that tightens more than you expected or indeed if you suddenly come across a bend that you weren't expecting at all?

That has not yet happened or perhaps I wouldn't have lasted so long on the RAC Rally as I did. What we found most of the time was that the adhesion was so good, that if a corner tightened, one merely applied more lock and the car went round rather than understeering as it would on

Russell's Escort 2 resplendent in the yellow and blue Andrews Heat/Birmingham Post livery keeps a tight line on "A2" type tyres during this year's RAC.



another tyre. Frankly, I don't think that on the hard forest stages I was anywhere close to exploring the limits of this tyre's adhesion.

Do you drive sideways quite a lot when you are on MS tyres?

No. I don't think that I am as sideways with the car as many other drivers, for my experience in Group 1 has taught me that to have the car sideways is a slower technique. If you do that with a Group 1 car, you have to get it going again and that costs you time. Of course, entering a corner with the car set up sideways either one way or the other is a very safe way of driving for with the car in that unstable position, one can accommodate a tightening bend or even a surprise one much easier than if you have the car committed to a line. Several of the Finns, especially the younger ones, now use left-foot braking in conventional cars like the Escort. What do you think about such techniques?

I have the suspicion that such techniques are more of an ego-boost for the person using them rather than conveying any real practical advantage. I used to use left-foot braking when I drove the Mini and I can see that the theory and practice for a front wheel drive car does actually work. For the last year that I rallied a Cooper Mini, I bought an Old Mini which I used on the road and drove it everywhere using left-foot-braking and making a

"Road rallies should survive because they give a great number of people cheaper fun than they can have on stage events, and also it is still a way to learn quickly if you are any good."

right mess of the gearbox. Consequently, by the time I came to do the RAC Rally of that year, I was pretty proficient at left-foot braking in a front wheel drive car, though that was to be the last time that I drove such a car in rallies.

What would you say was the most important factor in being able to drive a rally car fast?

There are many things. Take eyesight for example. If you can see better at night than someone else, you are at a great advantage. Reactions have to be good, but I feel that more important than super-quick reactions is the ability to anticipate — not only anticipate what the road will do, but also what trick of the weather may have mud or snow waiting in a clear patch out of the trees. If you can anticipate what a car may do in a corner, then you don't need super-quick reactions. But it still helps to have them, especially if something unexpected happens. Practice helps especially if you are going to start putting the car sideways near a lot of solid objects. I was at a Ford rally school not so long ago and it was immediately apparent that many of the pupils were not used to having the car in a slide and they were very scared of getting it out of line. Only practice would make them lose that fear and thus you need quite a bit of it before you can start going consistently fast.

How far do you think the driver's own impression

of his ability comes into this? Do you think a driver must be something of an egotist to succeed? It helps but more important is to know what you can do and what is possible. Everyone has so much ability and it is making the best of that which counts. The more you drive, the more you get to know what you can do and what you can't. **Would you say that it was helpful to you to have driven a Group 1 car before getting a Group 2 in that you were able to explore the limits of your own ability with less danger to the scenery?**

I'm not sure that it was at less risk to the scenery — or to the car. In pedalling a Group 1 car along very fast, one does tend to take risks and the car itself is not as inherently safe as a Group 2 car. Its suspension and brakes are virtually standard and I must say that I find that I can get out of awkward situations more easily with a Group 2 car than I could with either of the Group 1 cars that I drove. They had most of the brakes on the front so that just when you found you needed to brake, you tended to lock up the fronts and understeered off the road. One does find, though, that one can get into a larger number of awkward moments with the Group 2 car just because it goes that much quicker especially at the beginning where I was still taking Group 1 type risks. Driving any car is good experience and it is important to learn all the time.

How did you come to get started in rallying?

It was a long time ago. I had a Mini with which I was going to enter hill climbs and sprints, but I was persuaded to enter a rally with it. Unfortunately, my father had a road accident with it shortly before my debut and he then sportingly lent me his Austin Westminster in a fit of remorse. It would be nice to be able to say that we went on to win the rally but in fact we rolled it about half-way through and retired. After that incident, I did not do any more rallying — as a driver — for four years, but started co-driving instead. One of the local lads that I used to navigate for was Roger Platt which was a fairly hairy experience. I also used to do quite a bit of servicing on events for Richard Hudson-Evans at the time he was involved with Team 848 and it was really through him that I got into international rallying. I co-drove with Roger Platt on the Gulf International and we lasted a day and a half before retiring. He rolled it on a special stage and I rolled it on a road section while trying to drive, sleep and navigate all at the same time. That finally convinced me that I should drive in my own right and the first event that I entered was the 1968 RAC Rally, in my own 848cc Mini.

After that grand debut, I steadily went backwards for though I did three more internationals in 1969 and a couple in 1970, by 1971 I was doing restricted road events in the *Motoring News* Championship!

Having been a co-driver yourself, how important do you think the number two man really is on, say, British national events?

Surprisingly important. There is that old saying about the co-driver being no more than a sack of potatoes but I don't think that this is true at all. A good co-driver stamps the seal of professionalism on the whole team, and this is especially so when you work with him on all the events right through the year. His is a job of co-ordination to see that mechanics, tyres, petrol and all the other things

that one needs are in the right place at the right time. Then, and only then, can the driver concentrate 100 per cent on the job of driving the car.

How much do you depend on the co-driver to put you in the right frame of mind before a special stage?

Not at all for the driver's state of mind is largely under his own control. Of course, there is the negative side for a co-driver can certainly put you in the wrong frame of mind if he has just wrong-slotted you, but this comes back once again to having a good co-driver and not a sack of potatoes.

What does the future hold? Do you want to go abroad and do events there, or do you have your sights set on being British Champion?

Well, I should like to do both. At the moment I enjoy my rallying very much indeed and I hope that I tackle it in a professional way if for no other reason that to give satisfaction to the sponsors that have supported me. I wouldn't like to become too dependent on it for a living as I think that then the need for success would spoil some of the enjoyment that I now get out of it. People have often said how nice it would be if they could be a works driver and, of course, I too would like to drive for a factory team but not if it meant failing to enjoy my rallying.

"I feel that more important than super-quick reactions is the ability to anticipate . . . if you can anticipate what a car may do in a corner, then you don't need super-quick reactions."

How difficult is it to find a sponsor for foreign events?

Well, I have had very little success. I sent off a prospectus to many interested parties earlier in the year with a view to doing the European Rally Championship. I got a lot of replies, many of whom said they were very impressed with the prospectus, but not one of them was prepared to put up the sort of money needed to do a European season. Instead they were much more interested in putting up money for me to do a British season. Doing European events is bound to be more costly and though you can often count on starting money and prize money in more bountiful amounts than you could ever find in Britain, putting such imponderables on a business proposition is just not viable.

How does it feel to be virtually a private owner among the works teams?

It is rather a nice feeling and it is one reason that I enjoyed this RAC Rally so much when I could see that even a small set-up like us could get up and live with the works drivers; and we were not the only ones by any means.

Forgetting your early internationals, you really got started in rallying on road events. Do you think these have a future in Britain and would you like to go back and do some more?

Principally for nostalgic reasons, I would certainly like to go back and do some road rallies. I enjoy them very much indeed. I think that they are the nursery from which drivers can go on to participate in special stage events and internationals. When I did them, they were far more competitive than people higher up in the sport gave them credit for. You used to do six or seven hours of flat-out motoring and I reckon that I gained experience far quicker in them than I would ever have done any other way. I think that it was for this reason — that they got so competitive and fast — that something had to be done and I am pleased to see the situation today where road rallies have become less commercial with less hanging on a win than there has been in the past. I feel very strongly that road rallies should survive because they give a great number of people cheaper fun than they can have on stage events and also it is still a way to learn quickly if you are any good.

You are certainly a good ambassador for road events. To wind up, your plans for next year?

I shall drive a loaned Ford Escort once again. At the moment I think we have all the sponsorship to run the car. Unfortunately we have no single sponsor, although a major oil company, namely Castrol, have been extremely generous, but all the pieces of the jigsaw are there and it is really just a matter of fitting them together. We shall be doing the whole of the RAC Rally Championship and I hope to be able to squeeze a couple of foreign events in as well.

Where Russell gained much of his experience — driving group one Mexicos and RS2000s.



That all-conquering Royale

By CHRIS WITTY

It was one of those days when you would really prefer to stay indoors. The rain was teeming down and the wind had picked up. It was cold and murky and, on top of that, it was getting towards the end of November. However, we had a task to undertake, an invitation which we had to accept for no matter what the conditions, our curiosity was running wild.

The destination was Snetterton where Alan Curnock, managing director of Royale Racing Cars and his designer/development engineer, South African Rory Byrne, were awaiting our arrival. On hand was the most successful Formula Ford car in the country — Geoff Lees' triple championship winning Royale RP21. Here was a chance to at least drive the car that has made the quiet spoken Lees the most successful single-seater driver, in terms of outright victories, in the world this year.

Setting the scene

Snetterton, up in the wilds of Norfolk, isn't the most attractive setting for a race track and when the weather's mean, it's only the sado-masochistic that spend any time there.

The editorial Fiat splashed its way through the puddle-ridden paddock and up toward the scrutineer's bay where the hub of Royale Racing were huddled around the RP21 sheltering from the wind. Regular followers of Formula Ford this year will no doubt be aware that Lees has had, certainly towards the latter half of the season, the choice of two RP21 chassis, one of which was loaned to him by the works (and driven earlier in the year by airline pilot Peter White) while Geoff was chasing two of his three FF championships. The chassis sitting undercover was this works car, the one which has brought him 9 of his 32 wins this season.

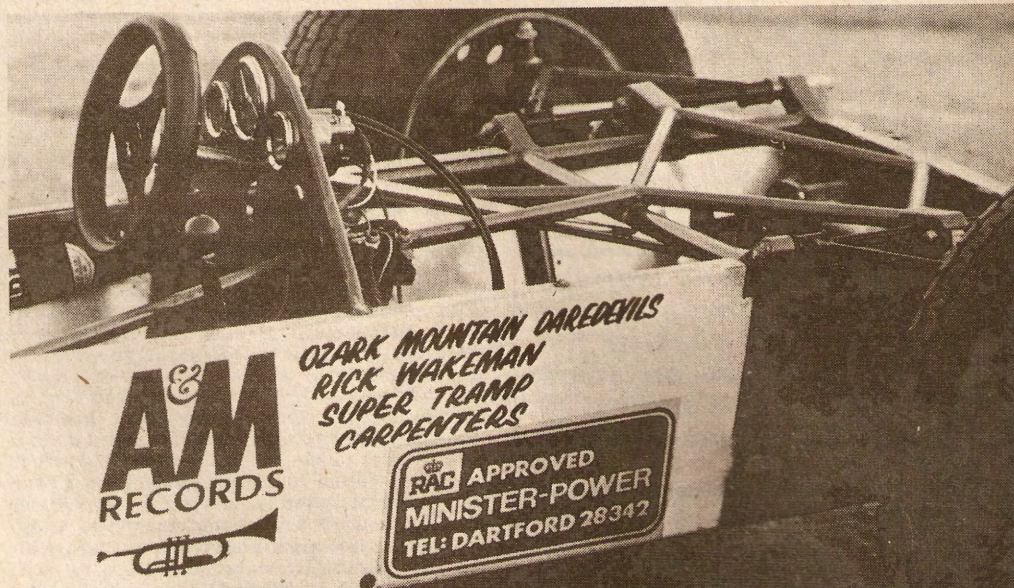
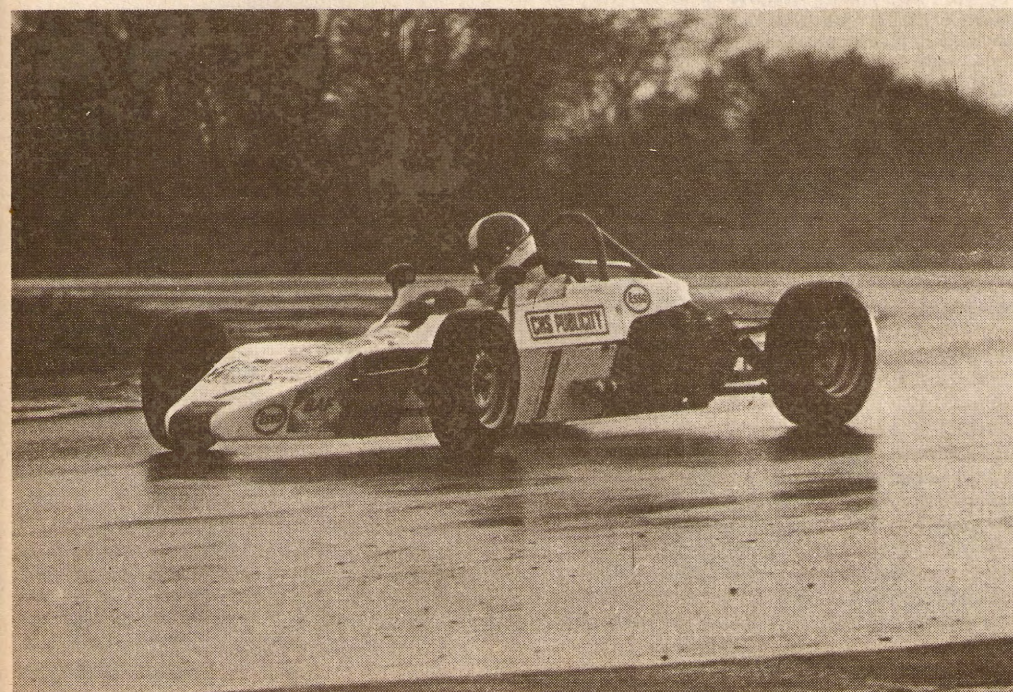
The Sports Editor discussed tactics with the Club Editor and it was agreed that valour was the better part of discretion and the former elected to sally forth onto a circuit where his last visit had ended rather spectacularly in the bank at Russell. The Royale personnel were informed of this feat afterwards.

While Alan Curnock took time in explaining the new workings of his firm to the Club Editor, the other half lowered his long frame into the car. Surprisingly, even with the seat still fitted, there was quite a lot of room although the disadvantages of a long torso still meant that one's head comfortably cleared the roll-over bar.

While the mechanics took off the nose and cockpit section of the bodywork, Rory Byrne started to adjust the pedals so that 'heeling and toeing' would be easier while the clutch and clutch rest were taken forward slightly. Meanwhile Curnock explained the problems manufacturers have in building production cars to suit anything from a Mike Blanchet to a Chris Wittly. However, it felt quite comfortable and once the bodywork was refitted, a quick chat with Rory cleared the runway for take off and it would then be down to us.

Before we go into graphic detail about how

It really wasn't a day to go testing: the Sports Editor gets a little tweaked up at Seat.



The denuded Royale — and some of the people who helped Geoff Lees to his triple crown.

slippery Snetterton is in the wet and how close the car came to spinning (it never did, honestly), a brief synopsis of the RP21 and Byrne's design concept in its construction may prove relevant at this point.

Exposing the champion

A little earlier this year, regular readers may have been aware of an eye-catching advertisement from Royale depicting "the man who's been inside for 12 months." A brief biography was attached to this moody shot of Byrne. Therefore to briefly recap, Rory was born in Pretoria, South Africa, in 1944. He was educated at Queens High School, Johannesburg before entering Witwatersrand University, graduating in 1964 with a BSc degree in industrial chemistry. He designed free-flight

model gliders in his spare time and won himself no less than three World Championships.

Upon leaving University in 1965, he joined Colchem as their chief chemist and dabbled in production race car preparation in his spare time, eventually ending up by preparing Roy Klomfass' Ford Escort.

Byrne left Colchem in 1969 and joined forces with Ronnie and Doug Bennett at Auto Drag and Speed Den, specialists in speed equipment. The following year he concentrated his interests on Formula Ford engine and chassis development designing the Fulman FF for Klomfass in 1971. "But it was too complicated to work. It had inboard brakes, side radiators, etc," recalls Rory.

At the end of that year he suffered injuries in a road accident and was out of action for two months, although he returned to prepare

Klomfass' Lotus 69 which was just beaten for the SA FF series by Richard Sterne's Titan Mk5. Byrne sold his shares in Auto Drag and emigrated across to Europe with Klomfass at the beginning of 1973 where the pair of them ran a works assisted Royale RP16 from the Huntingdon based factory. When Klomfass ran out of money and subsequently joined the BAF FF team, Byrne was approached by Curnock, who'd just taken over the business at the end of that year from the ailing Bob King, to join forces and he became the firm's design and development engineer.

At the beginning of last year, Byrne joined Royale and embarked on "a new generation of cars," producing the monocoque RP19 Super Vee and the space frame RP21 Formula Ford.

Rory recalls how they spent several months last year perfecting the RP21 on Avon road tyres with patient testing utilising the services of Tony Trimmer and Peter White. "Then the powers that be changed the regulations over the Dunlop racers" and they had to start all over again. It may sound a simple matter of just swopping over tyres but Byrne took time to explain that this is not so. We'll come to that in a moment.

The RP21 was designed with the following aspects in mind. Royale wanted to market the car in kit form as well so the chassis had to be simple to build and easy to set-up and maintain. Byrne admits that he designed it very much with cost in mind — cost of construction and making the running costs as little as possible.

For example, Triumph Vitesse hubs and uprights are employed at the front while VW Beetle drive shafts and constant velocity joints are fitted at the rear. These are just two items which help keep initial costs down.

The entire suspension assembly is symmetrical with no right or left angles anywhere. This means that everything is interchangeable. However, one of the biggest factors was making the RP21 fully adjustable so that it would remain competitive on all types of tyres.

"In South Africa they race on 25in diameter radials" explained Rory, "while in the States they use between 20in and 22in cantilever wide racing tyres. This means you can have up to 4in variation in tyre diameter which means that you have to allow for the suspension mounting points to be fully adjustable to cater for such changes."

Rory then went on to explain that he's "achieved this at the front of the chassis by using different length mounting pins on the Vitesse

upright while at the rear, I've used a different length lower wishbone mounting bracket to suit each type of tyre together with various top link mounting bushes in the actual frame."

During the RP21's initial testing, they tried five types of tyre — both the radial and cross-ply Avons, the Firestone Torinos, the Dunlop racers and the American Goodyear cantilever tyres. "The characteristic of the car can be altered completely by switching tyres. We found the Avon gave us a lot of oversteer while the US tyres produced strong understeer. It isn't theoretically correct and it doesn't work out in practice either."

From March of this year, they've concentrated solely on the Dunlop racer and have suitably refined their '76 model from the RP21's season long development by lowering the polar movement of inertia of the front suspension and also by pruning off 30 lbs in weight. "This year's car weighed about 912 lbs whereas next year's model is within 2 lbs of the 882 lb weight limit" outlined Byrne. Lees' car on the day was reckoned to be around 890 lbs, without fuel but with oil and water.

A testing time

Taking care not to hit too many puddles and splatter mud everywhere, Geoff's "spare" machine was eased out onto the track, it's David Minister prepared 1600cc "RAC approved" Ford engine ticking over in a very un-racing car fashion. Looking down at the tachometer, it was noticed that a line marked at 6800 rpm meant "no more" although Rory reckoned the maximum power would be found lower down somewhere around 5200 rpm. Current FF engines are reckoned to produce over 100 bhp but depending on the sales talk, how much over the "ton" is a matter for debate.

The Minister engine installed was a works unit, one of the three engines which Lees has used this year. Although it wasn't the engine that took him to the recent Snetterton FF festival success, Rory reckoned Geoff had used it between May and September of this year. The gearbox was a customary 4-speed VW-derived Hewland Mk 9 of course and the tyres were Dunlops. An interesting comparison would be drawn here.

By mid-afternoon the rain had stopped but the track was still extremely wet and where the circuit had been resurfaced, it was like sheet ice; grip was non-existent. The entry into Riches is usually on the extreme left and here there was a surface change. The Royale twitched nervously all through the corner and the messages quickly got through to the driver. Fortunately exiting the corner was a little easier. Sear, the one onto the straight, was also slippery as were the Esses while Coram and Russell, although on the older more absorbant surface, were puddle ridden. Really nice!

After about five laps, vision through the Griffin GP all-enveloping helmet had deteriorated and even a quick spray of anti-mist failed to alleviate the problem. An all-enveloping Bell Star, with a flatter frontal area, was substituted and proved a lot better, the water clearing from the visor at a greater rate thereby lending assistance to the task in hand.

The RP21's attitude in the corners seemed very "loose" and the transition from strong understeer (on entry) and violent oversteer (on exit) required much sawing of the wheel. Such a "loose" tendency had been noticed as Lees strove to hold off Tiff Needell's sure-footed Crosslê at the televised Thruxton race several weeks ago. Lees looked to be working really hard but as the Royale actually left the corner, its superior traction simply left the Crosslê spinning wheels. This superb traction was re-enacted for AUTOSPORT and no matter how crossed up you were exiting a corner, once pointing the right way the rear-end seemed to really get the power down which, with the Dunlops, is no mean feat.

The Dunlop racers, being of a much more durable compound than the previous Torino "roadsters" take longer to warm-up. They have also almost half the tread depth of a new Torino (5mm to 9mm), consequently they don't disperse the water quite as effectively.

One reason why the Royale excels in the wet is down to a lot of wet weather testing undertaken by the works and Peter White earlier this year. Byrne reckoned they were prepared to sacrifice some handling and easier driving characteristics, especially out of slow corners, in order to obtain maximum traction. "We made a lot of changes" said Rory. What? He smiled, "they're trade secrets."



"Well, it's pretty laid back!" — Witty tells Alan Curnock (left) and Rory Byrne (right) what it's like at a sodden Snetterton.

The characteristics of the car on different tyres intrigued us so Rory explained the situation, admittedly as he understood it, a little deeper. The end result left us with the impression that the Dunlop performed better on shorter tracks like Brands because they were superior under braking than the Torino and their roadholding was almost as good. However, a set of "buffed" Torinos were probably easier to drive on. On a fast circuit like Silverstone, the Dunlop lost out by around 1.5s, "perhaps of a greater rolling resistance" although they are only marginally bigger than an unscrubbed Torino. The other difference between Torinos and Dunlops is the latter produce a tyre which is a scrutineer's delight, hardly varying in compound irregularities, while the outlawed Torino could transform a car by simply swapping over to a different set. All very interesting and suddenly FF life becomes a little clearer.

Apart from a little too much braking on the front, which Rory reckoned needed a single turn on the brake balance bar toward the rear bias in order to cure it, the session passed without incident as we cautiously eased our way around. The gear change seemed a little awkward but a

shorter knob would overcome that problem. Apart from locking up a couple of times at Sear, once which necessitated returning to the circuit via a standing start (and we were impressed that the rear wheels refused to spin above 5000 rpm, so impressive was the traction), the Minister engine just momentarily burped as the lurid slide around Sear straightened itself onto the straight and the boot went hard down. Experiencing a single-seater in the wet for the first time perhaps allows for the caution we exercised. Still Royale got their machine back in time to allow Rory to have a whirl himself and despite advice that Sear was slippery, we laughed when we heard the engine note die; Mr Byrne eventually returning to the pits as darkness descended explaining how he'd spun!

Driving both chassis, Lees has chalked up 32 wins this year, 23 in his yellow car and nine in the white works machine "although they're both identical" says Geoff. Much of Geoff's success can go down to Byrne's expertise, Curnock's winning produce and Robin MacGregor-Greeves guidance at Rob Roy Racing, Lees' entrant.

A right Royale motor car and now we know why it's a champion three times over.

Rebirth of Royale

Royale's and Geoff Lees' feat of achieving their remarkable treble in Formula Ford this year has not been without a considerable amount of hard work on both their parts. While Geoff Lees has provided the talent from the driving seat, Royale have given him the best back-up that one could possibly expect. It's been an almost Formula One type of situation, testing extensively, trying new ideas all the time and giving as much support as possible to the customers. It's been a concentrated effort by both designer Rory Byrne, and the man who rescued Royale two years ago, Alan Curnock. At that time, Bob King was unwell and wanted to sell Royales and have nothing further to do with motor racing. Curnock quickly set up a factory, imported Byrne, and in the middle of last year, set to work on Byrne's first ever production racing car. The result was the RP21, and no doubt the end result will be a lot of RP21s on the tracks next year.

Alan Curnock first met Bob King way back in 1963. Alan was fed up with working for Ford, and Bob King wanted a boy to drive the van and make the tea at his preparation firm in a railway arch in Wembley. Curnock got the job, and quickly began to get into the running of the company. Royales

really came about when Racing Preparations worked on an Alexis for Bill Tooth, and when they moved to Park Royal in 1969, they became racing car constructors. The early cars were raced by Ray Allen and John Stevens and a couple of years later, the factory moved out to Huntingdon.

At that time, King was more involved with designing so that Curnock took on the actual running of the works. Over the next couple of years, King was much more interested in the export market than the home market, and tended to concentrate his efforts on selling cars to South Africa, the States etc. This is reflected, for instance, in the number of RP21s in this country: three, out of a total production run of 30.

It was during 1973 that Bob King became ill, and late on in the year, had a nervous breakdown. Naturally, it was time to cut back, and the first thing to go would be Royale. King wanted to put it up for sale, but Curnock stepped in and took it over towards the end of the year. King wanted to keep the factory itself, so Curnock went looking for premises and found some at the Little Staughton Airfield in Bedfordshire where they still reside. These days it's becoming quite a little haven of motoring people with Race Engine

GM stars at MG meeting

Following the success of the "Nick and Gerry Show" the MGCC and Brands Hatch proudly presented last Sunday the "Colin and Gerry Show". The stars of an entertaining meeting were again the Special Saloons with Gerry Marshall starting on pole with "Baby Bertha" and Colin Hawker starting right at the back with his DFVW. Not to worry though for Marshall, shall we say, made a slow start, Hawker ploughed through the field and it was time for the commentator to get all excited.

As befits a MGCC meeting half the six races were for the Abingdon marque with a sort of Octagonal Modsports race starting the afternoon. As, Bs, Cs and Spridgets, they were all in it. Andy Bailey's "Frog eyes" should have been on pole, but blew a piston in practice leaving Keith Ashby to take an early lead from the Midgets of Malcolm Beer and Geoff Weeks. As Ashby sailed off to an easy win Beer and Weeks dived, swopping places on a couple of occasions before Weeks' MG started to boil up and he was forced to stop, leaving Beer in a lonely second place.

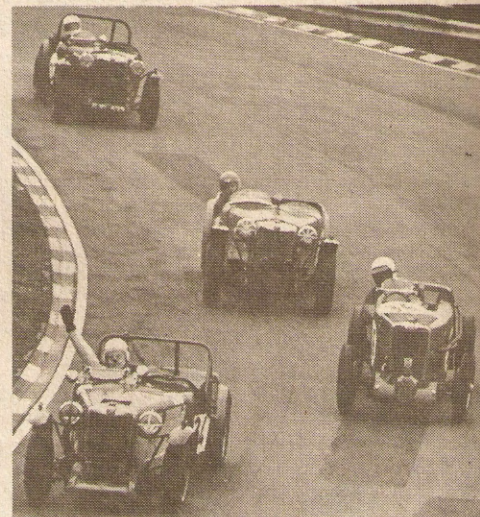
The second was for pre-1955 MGs with the results decided on handicap. For the record Peter Faulks' MGTB took the handicap award by almost 8s. All the interest though revolved round what was happening on the road. Nick Taylor's pole winning MGTB got no further than Pilgrim's Rise before pulling off with no drive and leaving the race to be dominated by the TCs of Dave Clewley and Gerry Brown. As the pair pulled miles away from the rest of the field Brown tried hard to get on terms with Clewley but even though the gap varied as they became embroiled with backmarkers he just couldn't do it. Just to underline his pace Clewleys set a new lap record.

So to the big entertainment. On pole position we have that star of screen, track and magazine Gerry Marshall with his mighty Repco V8 powered Firenza. The flag lowers on Act One and Marshall is immediately overpowered by a hoard of Minis, not to mention an Anglia and an Imp. Act Two and as they storm into Paddock John Davies (Mini), Fred Hall (Imp) and Mike Scott (Anglia) are still ahead of our hero. This state of affairs cannot continue and quickly Marshall is into the lead. For a couple of laps things remain static but then there appears on the stage, having come through from the back of the grid, Colin Hawker's DFVW. As the dynamic duo leave the rest of the field about half a minute behind the lead changes hand time after time. By lap nine it's beginning to look as if Marshall has decided that the playing must stop but, no, Hawker hangs on and the pair finish fractions of a second apart. Meanwhile Paul Taft (Mini) has got passed Davies, Hall and Scott and taken the 1300cc class, Hall proving a worthy winner of the 1000cc class.

After that came the peace and quiet of the standard MGs with John Targett's MGB comfortably leading from flag to flag. The Midgets of Robert Melzack and Larry Quinn looked equally comfortable in second and third places but as the race grew to a close Quinn began to catch up, just taking second place in what was almost a photo finish.

The Modsports are supposed to look like the cars in the previous race but the effect is very

different. Rob Haig claimed pole position, his MGA complete with "new" differential and half shafts. The old diff had lasted two years, this one didn't last the warming up lap before a pinion shaft sheared into it. Geoff Weeks didn't get any further either before his Midget boiled over completely this time. Seemingly determined on revenge Malcolm Beer ploughed passed the front row and set off into the lead with Keith Ashby in pursuit. Ashby tried hard to get past very nearly succeeding a number of times towards the end but to no avail. As they came up to Clearways for the last time a back marker was in the way and Ashby couldn't get past.



Nick Taylor retires his "TB" as Andy McLennan bears down in his "J."

The *Formule Libre* race had everything from an F5000 to one of the Shellsport Celebrity Escorts. Damien Magee was fussing over Jim Kelly and his Trojan T101 while Stephen South was quietly looking on as John Stokes took pole in the F3 March 753 he usually enters for South. However on the centre of the front row was that man, Marshall a little worried that he didn't know the capability of the opposition! For almost the first time he gave the Firenza everything it had off the line in an attempt to get ahead of the other front row man, Philip Guerola (Brabham BT30). He need not have worried for the ex-John Watson car wasn't half as quick off the line while poor Stokes, after his third signature, crawled to halt, unable to get into gear. This time Marshall showed his skill, really enjoying himself as within two laps he had left everybody a long way behind. Guerola was a comfortable second while for most of the race Kelly held on to third. The Trojan began to drop oil all over the track which made life very difficult. Marshall was using half revs on the straight while Jeremy Hunt, braking for Druids, found it hard to slow down! With two laps to go Kelly was out and hillclimber Hunt into third place with his Mallock U2 a lap down.

IAN WAGSTAFF

Modified MGAs, MGBs, MGCs, MG Midgets and AH Sprites (10 laps): Overall: and **Midget and Sprite class:** 1, Keith Ashby (1.3 MG Midget), 9m 26.2s, 78.84 mph; 2, Malcolm Beer (1.3 MG Midget), 9m 31.4s; 3, David Mercer (1.3 MG Midget), 9m 39.4s; 4, John Wilmschurst (1.3 MG Midget), 9m 54.0s. **Fastest lap:** Ashby and Wilmschurst, 55.4s, 80.58 mph. **MGA class:** 1, Mick Walker (1.6 MGA), 9 laps, 70.83 mph; 2, Vic Ellis (1.6 MGA), 9 laps; 3, Neil Cawthorn (1.6 MGA), 9 laps. **Fastest lap:** Walker, 1m 1.2s, 72.94 mph. **MGB and MGC class:** 1, Derek Grant (2.9 MGC), 10m 4.4s, 73.86 mph; 2, Barry Sidery-Smith (1.8 MGB), 10m 4.6s; 3, Mike Harris (1.8 MGB), 10m 23.6s. **Fastest lap:** Sidery-Smith, 59.0, 75.66 mph.

Pre-1955 MGs (10 laps): 1, Dave Clewley (1.3 MGTC), 10m 25.0s, 71.43 mph; 2, Gerry Brown (1.5 MGTC), 10m 28.6s; 3, Andy McLennan (900 MGJ), 10m 56.2; 4, Ron Gammons (1.5 MGTC), 10m 57.0s; 5, Chris Jones (1.3 MGTC), 11m 12.4s; 6, Stuart Dean (1.2 MGTA), 9 laps. **Fastest lap:** Clewley, 1m 01.2s, 72.94 mph (record). **Handicap award:** Peter Faulks (1.2 MGTC), +13.2s.

Special Saloons (10 laps): Overall: 1, Gerry Marshall (5.0 Vauxhall-Repco Firenza V8), 9m 7.2s, 81.58 mph; 2, Colin Hawker (3.0 DFVW), 9m 7.4s; 3, Paul Taft (1.3 BLMC Mini), 9m 37.8s; 4, John Davies (1.3 BLMC Mini), 9m 39.0s. **Over 2000cc class:** 1, Marshall, 2, Hawker; no other finishers. **Fastest lap:** Marshall, 50.4s, 88.97 mph. **1301-2000cc class:** 1, David Horne (1.6 Ford Escort), 9 laps; 2, Denis Murphy (1.6 Lancia Fulvia), 8 laps; no other finishers. **Fastest lap:** Horne, 59.6, 74.90 mph. **1001-1300cc class:** 1, Taft, 77.26 mph; 2, Davies; 3, Micki Chittenden (1.3 BLMC Cooper), 9 laps. **Fastest lap:** Taft, 56.0s, 79.71 mph. **Up to 1000cc class:** 1, Fred Hall (1.0 Hillman Imp), 9m 43.6s, 76.49 mph; 2, Mick Chittenden (1.0 Ford Anglia), 9 laps; 3, Alan Prestbury (1.0 BLMC Mini), 9 laps. **Fastest lap:** Mike Scott (1.0 Ford Anglia),

57.0s, 78.32 mph. **Standard MGAs, MGBs, MGCs, MG Midgets and AH Sprites (10 laps): Overall:** 1, John Targett (1.8 MGB), 11m 11.4s, 66.49 mph; 2, Larry Quinn (1.3 MG Midget), 11m 23.0s; 3, Robert Melzack (1.3 MG Midget), 11m 23.2s; 4, Ian Polley (3.5 MGBV8), 11m 40.0s. **MGA class:** 1, Keith Blight (1.6 MGA), 9 laps, 58.62 mph; 2, Neil Stevenson (1.6 MGA), 9 laps; 3, Richard McKoen (1.6 MGA), 9 laps. **Fastest lap:** John Halton (1.6 MGA), 1m 12.0s, 62.00 mph. **MGB and MGC class:** 1, Targett; 2, Polley; 3, David Franklin (1.8 MGBGT), 11m 45.8s. **Fastest lap:** Targett, 1m 05.2s, 68.47 mph. **MG Midget and AH Sprite class:** 1, Quinn 65.36 mph; 2, Melzack; 3, Mick Marks (1.1 MG Midget), 11m 50.6s. **Fastest lap:** Melzack, 1m 06.0s, 66.64 mph.

Modified Sports Cars (10 laps): Overall: 1, Malcolm Beer (1.3 MG Midget), 9m 36.0s, 77.50 mph; 2, Keith Ashby (1.3 MG Midget), 9m 36.6s; 3, Danny Arundel (1.6 Lotus Elan), 9m 49.2s; 4, Derek Grant (2.9 MGC), 10m 11.66s. **2001-3000cc class:** 1, Grant, 72.99 mph; 2, John Maycock (2.1 Triumph TR3A), 9 laps. No other finishers. **Fastest lap:** Grant, 59.6s, 74.90 mph. **1301-2000cc class:** 1, Beer; 2, Arundel; 3, Barry Sidery-Smith (1.8 MGB), 10m 12.0s. **Fastest lap:** Beer 55.2s, 79.43 mph. **Up to 1300cc class:** 1, Ashby, 77.42 mph; 2, Paul Bernal-Ryan (1.1 MG Midget), 10m 13.0s; 3, Martin Wilson (1.3 MG Midget), 9 laps. **Fastest lap:** Ashby, 56.2s, 79.43 mph.

Formule Libre (10 laps): 1, Gerry Marshall (5.0 Vauxhall-Repco Firenza V8), 8m 44.2s, 85.16 mph; 2, Philip Guerola (1.8 Brabham-Cosworth FV3 BT30), 9m 00.2s; 3, Jeremy Hunt (1.6 Mallock U2-Holbay Mk. II), 9 laps; 4, Tom Wood (1.6 Hawke-Ford), 9 laps; 5, Paul Sleeman (1.6 Mertyn-Minster Mk IIA), 9 laps; 6, Colin Shaw (1.6 Crossle-Ford 25F), 9 laps. **Fastest lap:** Marshall: 49.6s, 90.00 mph.

After the premises, the first thing that Curnock did was find himself a designer. Rory Byrne had just finished an association with fellow South African Roy Klomfass at the time, having come over from South Africa to help him out. He'd never designed a production racer, although he'd built and designed a car in South Africa for Klomfass. With winter rapidly running out in 1974, they elected to stay with the FF RP16 for 1974 with just a few changes, and continued with the SuperVee, which, of course, was taken to the Silver Cup championship in this country by Chris Barnett.

In July of '74, Rory designed the RP21. It was testing by September of that year with Tony Trimmer initially, and then Peter White and Geoff Lees. One problem during the winter was that they tested with Avon tyres, before Dunlop racers were chosen, which set things back a little. Once into this season, the testing has continued. Most weeks of the season they were testing with various modifications: playing with shock absorber types, shifting the radiators, roll centres, adjusting the geometry, all that sort of thing. Most of the experimenting has been carried out on the Rob Roy car that Geoff Lees has used and which lives at the factory. The information gained has been passed on to such customers as Rad Dougall, Geoff Smailes, John Bright, etc, who have adjusted depending on whether they could afford it or not. The effort was made in the first place to ensure that Royale keep one step ahead, and there's no doubt that they were successful, although it hasn't been without considerable expense.

Although it hasn't necessarily been evident, the similar story has been going on with SuperVee. The reason that it hasn't been evident is that most of the testing goes on in the States where Royale have a good market for those cars. Of course, Barnett won the '74 title, and Peter White started the season well in this country, and was certainly one of the top three runners. However, after engine trouble, there were then sponsor bothers and the car was sold. There are a couple of Royales in SuperVee on the continent, but most of the attention is focussed on the States.

Of course the other market in which they became involved was Formula Ford 2000. It hasn't been a happy year for either the car, or driver Roger Orgee. Curnock says that there weren't too many enquiries regarding the car, so that the effort wasn't perhaps very serious. As far as Orgee is concerned, it was a disaster, and he's now sold the car and it is being converted to a Formula Ford. But next year could be better.

For 1976, the effort is still going to be there. Curnock obviously goes for calculated decisions, which, in the fullness of time, will prove fruitful. Next year's Formula Ford will still be called the RP21, but it will incorporate all the modifications from this year's car. Anyone wishing to update to the '76 spec will have an outlay of around £300, but Royale will do the work. The SuperVee is also a different car, with all the '75 mods, but a new type number, the RP19. As for the FF2000 Royale, that too will benefit from the works more than Orgee's car this year. In fact Curnock says that if Geoff Lees doesn't find the money to get into Formula 3, he has been offered the works FF2000 drive.

To gain some idea of the way that Royale are going about things, they are even now designing a Formula 3 car. This will be the first for that Formula for some years — remember Tom Pryce drove one with success in 1972. The F3 car is expected to be testing around April or May, but the lafeness doesn't really matter because it's intended for the 1977 season anyway. It'll also be built so that it can adapt to F3 or Atlantic. It'll be a very quiet development in 1976, really getting ready for the following season. Curnock has two views on F3 currently that lead him into the Formula. Firstly, he doesn't see why the drivers who've gained success in his Formula Ford cars shouldn't go on and do F3 with him. And secondly, he doesn't see why an F3 car should be so expensive, so that he'll obviously be out to build a cheap car, which, with the amount of testing programmed, should also be successful.

In his first major year as a constructor of racing cars off his own bat, Alan Curnock, with a lot of help and co-operation from designer Rory Byrne, has proved to be shrewd, professional businessman and racing team manager, operating the FF season the way he meant to win it. If his plans for the future run as they have in the past, it may well see Royale as a bigger constructor of racing cars than ever before.

BOB CONSTANDUROS

THE SHAKE-UP AT REGIE RENAULT

Alpine shock—rallies out?

The Shake-up at Renault has proved to be of rather greater proportions than was suggested by last week's disclosure that Gerard Larrousse was taking over as Executive Competitions Manager within the organisation. The management restructuring started at the top with the appointment of a new Regie President in Bernard Hanon. Under him there are three basic departments, Commercial Research and Products. The latter is overseen by M. Martin and under him, Larrousse takes over immediate control of Alpine, Renault Gordini, and the R17/R30 programme. The plans are now that Alpine should continue to invest heavily in Prototype racing, development of the R17 programme and encouragement for Renault Gordini, the Cosworth-style engine development shop.

The idea behind these aims is a deliberate policy to "corporationize" Renault, as relations between the parent company and Alpine are, despite the merger, still strained; (rather as is still to be found in certain areas of the Leyland empire). Jacques Cheinisse is first and foremost an Alpine man, and as a result of policy changes, he was told he could still continue to run the rally team — an offer which he predictably declined; stating that he was not prepared to continue work there on the grounds that the new situation

would involve him in working for one of his ex-drivers (Larrousse). Cheinisse has been given until tomorrow (Friday) to make up his mind, and sources close to him suggest that he will be offered, and accept, an executive post in another part of the organisation a non-competition post in the Commercial department.

Meanwhile the rally plans are being wound-up. An announcement should have been made today (Thursday) in Paris; the content of which is that Alpine are withdrawing all their cars from the Monte Carlo Rally, traditionally a strongly supported event for the Alpine team, and at Renault's annual press conference at the end of the year it is expected that the company will announce their complete withdrawal from rallying in '76. The reasons will be fundamentally that of firstly: finance — the Prototype racing programme has cost them a bundle, and since they are firmly wedded to that and the F2 engine project, it is expected to cost them a whole lot more. Secondly, the A310 itself — the car is, in fairness, not ultimately competitive with the 1800 cc engine installed and the company would have to build 400 of them over the next two years to homologate the car in G4.

As the situation stands there is little chance of them homologating



Larrousse — new boss.

the V6-engined version at all before the end of the year — even though a prototype is running at present — and the car desperately needs the V6 to give it the urge necessary to combat the pace of the Italians. In addition to this is the knowledge that recent tests with the car at Ricard have not proved as encouraging as it was initially hoped — and even when all the basic development work is complete — the car will still have to be tested on the loose. Thirdly, it is now rumoured strongly in France that the newly-formed Renault competition department prefer to build the Renault answer to the Stratos — presumably a mid-engined device — and it is expected that work is shortly to begin in earnest on this project.



Cheinisse — decides tomorrow.

Formula 1 star drives Stratos

The continuing saga of the Chequered Flag Stratos this week involves some sensational revelations in that Graham Warner has acquired the services of none other than Welsh Formula One star Tom Pryce to pilot the troublesome Lancia on the Peter Russek Tour of Eppynt, the last round of the Castrol/AUTOSPORT championship, just three days after Christmas. This latest deal, a strictly one-off appearance, was apparently originally mooted by David Ricards, and the agreement was finalised late last Saturday night.

Pryce is to test the Stratos this week and when we talked to him on Monday, the UOP Shadow driver was thoroughly looking forward to the experience — "even if I don't go well, I'd keep doing rallying if someone were to offer me the opportunity, if only to prove to myself that I can do it well." From a promotional point of view the deal is obviously very advantageous and for the first time since the Avon Tour of Britain two years ago, Warner is introducing a premier league motor racing star to rallying in one of its most testing environments — the Eppynt Ranges — an area of some of the most deceptive tarmac roads outside Otterburn. Certainly Pryce's racing style, noted for its spectacular sideways momentum, seems rather more easily adapted to unseen roads than many of his peers and it will be really interesting to see how the talented Pryce copes with the chal-

Tom Pryce — big challenge.



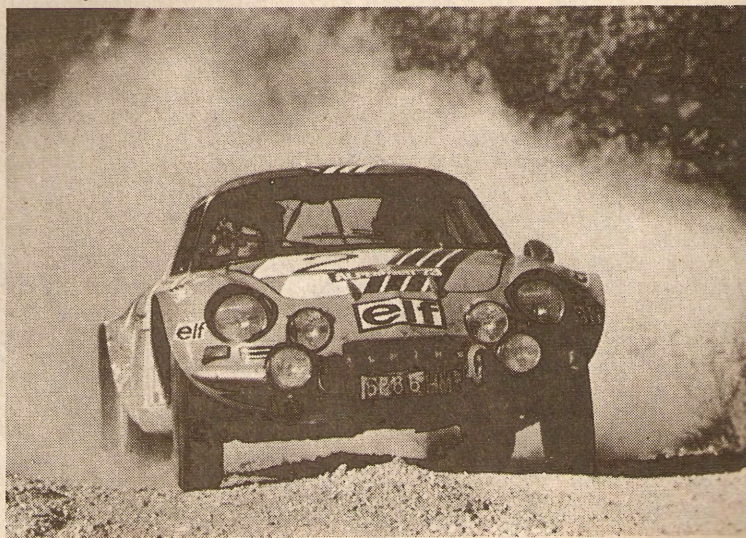
lenge. He will have to go quickly to beat a certain Mr Tony Fowkes.

Graham Warner is still trying to persuade the factory to give the much needed financial assistance which the project has continually required; and while a breakthrough has been made in that Italy have pledged to supply the team with the latest information on updating and technical development, there has so far been little on the horizon in terms of sponsorship. Warner is naturally anxious to retain the services of Per Inge Walfridsson, the diminutive Swede who is always capable of pulling off that shock result, but Per, while expressing a desire to continue with the Chiswick team, has other offers to consider and has yet to finally make up his mind.

Meanwhile Warner plans to contest the major rounds of the RAC championship with the car and the first round, the Shellsport Tour of Dean will see the car driven by none other than Andrew Dawson, *Cars and Car Conversion* resident expert; but other drivers have expressed their keen interest in the project so there is the chance that we may see other prominent British pilots behind the wheel of the hitherto troublesome car.

There are now two engines and gearboxes at the team's disposal, and these are now to be prepared by Ken Brittan of Racing Services on a rotational event-by-event basis, and will be brake tested prior to each event. Both these units were recently rebuilt by the works, and Racing Services currently are working on the ill-fated RAC unit. Meanwhile only one foreign sortie is planned at present — to the Swedish, where the car will, of course, be provided for Walfridsson to drive.

Darniche on the Austrian Alpine — the resulting storm over protests and counter protests cast a slur over Alpine's World championship season



Terry's Proteus

Using two stages from the recent RAC Rally — at Merehead and Asham Wood quarries — among the eight stages, Weston-super-Mare MC had a full entry of 70 crews for last Sunday's Proteus Stages Rally, which comprised 18 stage miles in a 40-odd mile route.

Winners, leading Fords into the first six places, were T. Nicholas and Richard Winter of the Tavern club who had 340 penalties in the their RS 1600.

Second, and running second for most of the day, were Ivor Pengelly and R. Young in a similar car on 365 penalties, while the 3-litre Capri of

David Warren and Richard Norman was third on 381 penalties.

The next three places were very close for K. Aslep and L. Hunt came fourth on 384 penalties in their RS 1600, while fifth and sixth crews were Mike Blake/Anthony Northway (RS 2000) and Peter Gould and David Whitlock (Mexico), both on 388 penalties.

The capacity classes were won by Dave Vanderlist/D. Habgood in an Imp on 431 penalties, Bernard Taylor/David Lawrence in their Clubman on 391 penalties and the last class went to Ed Hardy and C. House in a Mexico on 392 penalties.

The Ladies' award went to Wendy Stokes, who co-drove with Mike Nixon in an Anglia and were ninth overall.

Ford's French Connection

The regulations for the Monte Carlo, which as previously stated, stipulate the use of one type of tyre only for the entire event, the choice having to be made before the start, seems to be causing quite a few headaches, and at Dunlop there is some disquiet over the fact that it is not expected that there will not be any testing time available prior to the event itself, thus leaving the choice to be based on previous Monte experience. As a company spokesman said: "It's a gamble we have to take and its got to be right." One of the central issues is the non-availability of Makinen, the principal tyre 'ideas' man, and the fact that Dunlop are very much in the hands of Finnish manufacturers as far as the studs question is concerned (the Scandinavians have the business of studding tyres very much to themselves, most companies preferring to leave these unique problems in the hands of people who tackle the situation on a regular annual basis). Makinen is currently in Africa for the Bandama Rally with Henry Liddon, and the two of them will go from there to the Turini, where they are expected to spend Christmas with their families. One imagines that they will be doing a little more than merely drinking in the local atmosphere and taking early morning constitutionals.

Ford have two cars entered on the event, one to start in Copenhagen, the other in London and Roger Clark is to drive the second car - this amid some speculation as to what his exact plans for next year involve. (A spokesman for the company insisting that "we haven't signed anyone as yet".) Ford themselves are committed primarily to a World Rally Championship programme whose exact rounds have yet to be fixed and the extent of the season will no doubt be partially dictated by the series of talks which Ford top men are currently engaged in with a major international fuel company who are to sponsor the venture. It seems also that Ari Vatanan is still very much in favour, and we can probably expect to see him in a works Ford again before too long. One theory currently being mooted is that he will be given a car in which to contest the Finnish Championship and gain more experience before he is again let loose on an international round. Meanwhile there is always ice notes on the Monte.

Prospects

In any case the RAC championship seems to be shaping up well although no major manufacturers, save Leyland (who are running into supply problems with their TR7 programme and now do not expect to field a new car before the Snowman) and Vauxhall, have announced their plans officially.

DOT are remaining tight-lipped about their plans with regard to the Kadett, while Baidon is flooded out with drivers' requests to field the car following Tony Pond's fine performance on the RAC, illustrating its now obvious potential. An official announcement, which was to have been made "after the RAC" is not now expected until early January, about the same time as Ford, at their annual Motorsport Conference, are to unveil their total '76 plans to an astonished world.

Meanwhile the silence promotes the growth of the rumours, the strongest of which are that Tony Fall is to drive the car himself under the auspices of 'testing and development'; or that he is to import a Finn to conduct the car on home internationals; or that Walter Rohrl is to drive the car over here when his foreign commitments permit - or, of course, a combination of any or all of these three . . . !

It was only to be expected that Toyota, after the setback on the RAC, should retire at least temporarily to 'lick their wounds' and though Ove Andersson and the team were not too optimistic of the reliability of their rushed development Celica, Pride and Clarke, the British importers/concessionaires who footed a substantial amount of the bill for the RAC effort, took the news in a rather less stoic fashion.

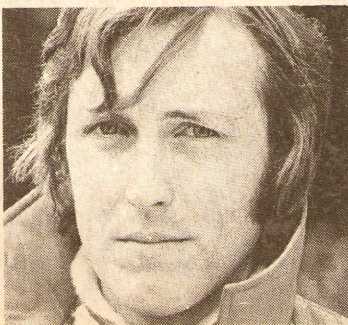
Nevertheless the Toyota spearhead will undoubtedly continue in Europe, although this is at present of little comfort to Chris Sclater, who went so well on the RAC in the little 1600 Levin and who is fervently hoping to get his hands on either a Levin or a Celica to contest the RAC championship.

Chris told us on Monday that he is now definitely not going to drive the new Sutton Mark 2, debuted by Jill Robinson on the RAC . . . a decision which was apparently mutual. "Under the terms of the deal I wouldn't have driven it, and the sponsors" (with whom the Sutton team are closely linked next season) "were not happy that I should want to compare their products with other types . . ." Thus Chris is waiting at present and it is to be hoped he may receive that Toyota and get a chance to have a real 'go' at the principal Ford standard bearers in the 'Master's' absence, Billy Coleman and Russell Brookes - the latter now heavily involved with Castrol. David Sutton, commenting on Chris' decision on Tuesday said that: "it is regrettable that due to minor contractual difficulties he will not be driving the new car; however details of our new drivers and sponsor will be available shortly."

Meanwhile...

Meanwhile as previously rumoured, DTV's plans, which have now been made official, include the retention of Will Sparrow who will be calling on the services of various co-drivers throughout the year. The team are of course operating out of Shepreth under the watchful eyes of Gerry Johnstone, with a severely reduced budget. The G1 programme has been 'farmed out' to 32-year-old

Chris Sclater - waiting.



Scotsman Jim McRae who will be driving a Magnum prepared by SMT at Perth. SMT have in the past few months been giving some assistance to the Scot's own G1 Magnum, and he has been setting competitive times with the car.

Thus, having won the manufacturers' team prize in the RAC for two years in succession, first with Datsun and then with DTV, Paul Faulkner and Monty Peters are back on their own again - a situation which in fairness, they probably enjoy best. We have known for sometime that Paul has been preparing a Mark 2 for just such an eventuality, and it is almost complete now. The car is apparently built to the high standards of preparation for which the old "43 FOR" was noted, and is to the fullest works specification available to the private entrant. Paul has been to all the right people of course - Maurice Gomm



Paul Faulkner - "upmarket"

has prepared the shell; Terry Hoyle the engine, and Terry Samuels the gearbox. Boreham bits are used elsewhere. The car is virgin white at present but Paul is expecting to announce an "upmarket" sponsor/entrant shortly. Plans for the car include the Castrol/AUTOSPORT championship (as opposed to the RAC championship on the grounds of cost and time spent away from work) although the first event will be the Shellsport Dean in January.

Meanwhile up at Southam rumours percolate through over the prospects of a rally car which is being prepared to be run entirely under the company's banner. Ralph Broad did not deny rumours of a rally car project when we spoke to him on Monday, although he was naturally not forthcoming, as apparently negotiations are still in process - Leyland or Ford?

Meanwhile on the horizon lies Opel's 16-valve twin cam cylinder head for the 1.9 block, a development which is expected in mid-summer to be in operational service. We also hear that the work, surprisingly is being carried out by the factory, and not Irmischer as is more usual for engineering of this specialised type.

So if the drivers get some of the cars they hope to get, and the money they dream about, while the engineers get the cars ready and/or make them available in sufficient quantity and sponsors are forthcoming, then the RAC Championship is something to look forward to indeed . . .

Meanwhile Tony Fowkes went out to lunch at Boreham yesterday, so there may well be a chance that his great drive on the RAC gets the recognition from the manufacturers that it deserves.

Short list?

It would appear from the recent extension of the closing date for Monte entries from December 9 to December 20 that crews are again rather sparse on the ground this year. Since the entry fee alone for this now rather tiresome, 'classic' is about £280 for a private entrant, and comfortably over £300 for trade entries, there is at least one pertinent reason why this is so. This expense coupled with the time and finance-consuming concentration routes puts a unique and unwanted stress on the competitor who must find an inordinate number of days 'holiday' to compete and then spend the majority on what must seem like a rather unnecessary motoring marathon across Europe to (hopefully) get to grips with the rally in the Alps. Latest change to the route involve minor alterations to the locations of the start and finish of SS 11.

Fighting spirit

Gordon Batchelor tells us that the Castrol/AUTOSPORT championship is to be his goal next year. He is expecting to announce a sponsor for his rallying activities and he will, of course, be returning to 2-litre power for the season, although apparently the Tour of Dean will be campaigned with the 1300 Robinson motor with which he was very pleased on the RAC until it expired at Cirencester Park on the Sunday.

Furore finale

Last week an RAC tribunal upheld the counter-protest lodged by Colin Barrell, the Clerk-of-the-Course in the Southern Stages furore. The tribunal ordered that the results of the controversial Woolmer stage, the 12th test, were to be reinstated in the results. This decision reversed that of club stewards Paul Faulkner and Monty Peters following initial protests lodged by the crews of car number six (Ivor Jones/Ray Ward) and car number 16 (Nigel Jurd/Dave Orrick) that the stage was "impassable" at one point.

The tribunal, chaired by Peter Cooper, ruled that in the light of fresh evidence, the initial stewards decision was incorrect and that there was no undue delay so that all competitors could have continued to the end of the stage at competitive speeds. Ordering Colin Barrell's £20 protest fee to be refunded, the tribunal added that they did not criticize the stewards on their decision in the light of the evidence available to them at the time.

In terms of results, this now means that Jones moves from a provisional third to 35th overall and Jurd tumbles from a provisional fourth to 36th overall.

The bone of contention came about because of overlapping stage routes. SS 10 and 12 used partially similar routes so that late runners on 10 were meeting early runners on 12. One of these late crews became bogged down in some sand and it was claimed that this competitor's car constituted a block to the stage. Neither of the co-drivers who filed the original protest were apparently present at the hearing.

Mannucci: Halda co-driver '76



Mario Mannucci - winner.

Quite an expected accolade - in the form of the Halda Co-driver of the Year Trophy, went to Italy this year, like just about everything else in the international rallying world. Mario Mannucci was the beneficiary, the 43-year-old Milanese being one of very few international names to have stayed with the marque throughout his career. Mannucci won the European co-drivers title in 1973 and this year, and last, he shared a great many successes with his compatriot, Sandro Munari.

The jury, of which both Erik Carlsson and Gunnar Palm were members, awarded the first trophy to Henry Liddon last year. The award is a golden Halda Tripmaster. It will be presented to Mannucci shortly.

Triple Crown

The 'Triple Crown,' an idea suggested in our PURELY PERSONAL columns some time ago seems to have come about at last, for a new RAC rally championship for teams from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, is being introduced for '76. The five qualifying rounds are to be the Circuit of Ireland (April 16-20); The Welsh (May 6-9); The Scottish (June 3-7); The Castrol Manx (September 17-18); and the Lombard RAC (November 26-December 1). Only the best four results will count, based on overall positions. Each team will comprise four cars but only the best three scores will be used - this is to allow a team at least one retirement. The teams are to be selected by the Rallies Committee from entry lists prior to the events.

Henderson's nail biter

There was a nail biting finish to last Saturday's North Star Rally run by Sunderland & District MC, with Fred Henderson winning by a mere second from Richard Mawson. Henderson, accompanied by Alan Thompson in the absence of Trudi Binks who was indisposed, totalled 183.29 penalties on the 200 mile route in their Escort RS 1600 and they won because they were just a second quicker on the three mile selective.

Mawson, with David Nicholson, drove his Mexico in most spirited style to keep up with Henderson throughout the night in which the 46 crews travelled through Northumbria and Teesdale. Their battle with Henderson allowed them to draw well away from third placed John Saint and Alan Graham who finished on 213.32 penalties in their RS 2000. A good scrap for fourth went to Bates Jobson and Ed Graham in their Mexico who were three seconds quicker than Mike Austin and Ian Drummond (Marina) while Norman Sidney and Martin Liddle, in their Escort TC, collected sixth on 284.00 penalties.

Best novices were S. Bowman and J. Clark in an RS 1600 on 363.52 penalties and the best Sunderland & District crew were Colin Bulmer and Alan Marchant who finished tenth in their Toyota on 374.00 penalties.

Top Scots collect their winnings

Top Scots in 'The Scotsman' Gaelic Oil Scottish Rally Championship attended a Dinner and Dance in Edinburgh last weekend when the awards in the Championship were presented.

Scottish Champion Charles Samson, who received the awards from 'Scotsman' Editor Eric B. Mackay, received a cheque for £500, 'The Scotsman' Gaelic Oil silver quail and replica, the Championship shield, a free entry to the 1976 International Scottish Rally, plus a £50 Ford Rallyesport voucher as the top Ford driver in the championship.

Brother Alec Samson, as Champion co-driver received a trophy and £50. Second-place man, Murray Grierson, had a pensive look as he received his £350 cheque from Eric Mackay, no doubt thinking of what might have been, but for that steering break on the Border Rally.

The Champion Challenger, Alistair Mackay, received his awards from Dr Charles Fairley of Gaelic Oil. He won £250 and a silver tray as well as a £50 DTV Sportsparts voucher for the highest placed Vauxhall driver in the Challengers' section (Andrew Cowan won it in the Drivers' section!)

Gaelic/Scotsman presentations; left to right: Dr Charles Fairley of Gaelic Oil, Charles Samson, Eric Mackay of the Scotsman and Alec Samson.



Meet the Stars! an evening of fun in Birmingham

This Monday at 8.30 pm in Bristol Street Motors' premises, Birmingham, the Birmingham Post and Andrews Heat for Hire, are holding a motorsport forum, entitled "Meet The Stars!" and in the chair will be Stuart Turner. He will be presiding over a panel which boasts an appearance from Roger Clark among the distinguished company which includes Ken Tyrrell as well as Russell Brookes/John Brown of course. Admission is free, as are wine, beer and snacks, which has to be an exceedingly good deal. However, there is more - and rally films will hopefully include a new one made on the Lombard RAC this year. Static displays also include Timo's latest RS1800, The Elf/Tyrrell Project 34 six-wheeled F1 car, and Russell Brookes' RS18000. As forums go this one has got to be very good value in terms of both panel, video, refreshment and financial status.

Ystra regs..

Howard Wilcock, the organiser of Dukeries MC's Ystra Rally has issued the regulations for the 1976 event on January 10/11th. Sponsored by Tyreservices GB, the retail outlet of Goodyear Tyres, the rally is a round of the East Midland and Northern rally championships.

Starting at 11.30pm from Peter Blake's GM Garage on Chatsworth Road, Chesterfield, the event covers 180 miles to finish at Owl Bar near Chesterfield. There is a high percentage of competitive motoring on long sections using Ordnance Survey maps 119 and 118.

Regulations are available from Tony Bukowski, 42 Abbott Road, Mansfield (tel: 35542) with the entry fee being £6.50. There are classes for Experts, Semi-Experts and Novices with £50 cash and over 20 awards to win.

As normal on night rallies these days, noise will be carefully controlled as will excessive use of lights in populated areas, the penalty for which is exclusion, conscientious organisers being very mindful of their responsibilities to the public.

Avon Tour - outlook is bleak

The Avon/Motor Tour of Britain after being in existence for only three years looks to be in severe jeopardy of fizzling-out. Both the Avon Rubber Co. and Motor magazine have been forced to withdraw their support of the event due, it is said, to rising costs. Motor magazine subsequently appear to have instigated the pull-out as Avon representatives talked with other possible co-sponsors, apparently without success, before deciding instead to continue with "Team Avon Tyres" and support of individual drivers as well as a production motorcycle championship in '76.

Originally conceived as a racecum-rally round Britain, the "Tour" never fully lived-up to what one suspects the original plans might have been, but even as a predominantly racing orientated circuit of Southern England and Wales, the event quickly gained popularity and the favour of the press. It suffered

perhaps most of all from a bias towards circuits, becoming a procession around all the familiar race-goers haunts with a few - mostly "Mickey Mouse" - special stages thrown in which were to all intents and purposes of correspondingly little competitive value. After James Hunt's first year win with Robert Fearnall (then AUTOSPORTS Club Editor) certain rally drivers took a greater interest in subsequent events and it is to their credit that Roger Clark and Tony Pond took-on and beat the "circuit" men; the Tour becoming quite a rally drivers pot-hunting ground.

It is hoped that the BRSCC will find new sponsors for this unique event and that in future years the rally/race ratio can be improved; for even in its present form the Tour has been one of the most popular motor sporting competitions among racing drivers and rally pilots alike.

● It seems that road rallyman Mick Bryant has found at least some of the cash he required, for it is now definitely set to compete in the G1 section of the RAC championship next year, initially, with his own car. Boreham are providing "technical assistance" and the project is receiving further help from Shell and Dunlop. The RS2000 is to be prepared as usual by Roland Shepherd and co-driver is John Kappler.

● In response to mounting rumours that Brian Nelson is just about to launch a shattering five car 'super' team upon an astounded World, he reports that he has just bought a new fishing rod complete with monocoque shell, freewheel and five speed gearbox... there is also a Safety Devices wrist grip built in as standard - Brian further hopes to be out "fishing" on the Circuit of Galway and possibly The Big One in April where he will be competing in an indoor competition involving gruelling long distance priorities.

Cheinisse at the crossroads?

By JOHN FODEN

I was convinced I had discovered the height of frustration: sitting in the midst of the biggest and most complicated traffic jam I had ever encountered. Alone at the wheel of a sleek and comfortable Alpine A310, the 8-Track blaring hard rock, rain drumming against the blue glass fibre body, and the Rue Periferique stretching in front of me; a four lane motorway that would take me direct to the reason for my visit to Paris; an interview with Jacques Cheinisse the Directeur Sportive of Renault Alpine. Only 1,000 demented horn blowing and wildy gesticulating Parisien motorists stood in my way, and the only solution to my predicament turned out to be a combination of patience, and driving like a London taxi driver with the promise of a £1 tip. Even so I was nearly 45 minutes late for an appointment for which I had allowed an hour to travel five miles. Such is Paris in the wet; just like London!!!

The approach to the new Renault building on the bank of the Seine at Quai du Point-du-Jour proved to be no less complicated as I had to cross the river over one bridge in one direction, re-cross at the next in the right direction, turn right past the entrance until there was no longer a solid white line in the middle of the road, throw a U-turn drive back to the entrance, and only then could I enter the heavily guarded portals of Mr Renault's underground car park. Standing close to the existing Renault factory, and opposite the Citroen factory, the new building is completely out of keeping with the character of its surrounding industrial neighbours. A high rise office block of concrete, stainless steel and glass, brightly lit-up to provide an oasis of stark modernity overlooking a spacious open concrete plaza. High on the 8th floor sat my first point of contact, the man who had organised my visit, and already provided the Alpine as my method of transport, Jacques Poisson the motorsport PR man for Renault Alpine.

However, things were not to be quite so easy as the non-English speaking security man wanted me to park on the lower level and my limited French was insufficient to convince him that this level was already full and could not accommodate another car. In the end the problem was solved by merely parking the car in the first empty slot on the higher level, locking it and disappearing into the nearest available lift. It later transpired that the first level was for company cars and the other for visitors, and the poor security man with his paucity of both English and understanding couldn't work out a satisfactory compromise within strict company rules! So it's not only England. . . .

Reaching Poisson's office I apologised for the delay which he accepted with a typical Gallic shrug, and commented: "It is always the same when it rains in Paris, they go mad, and end up going nowhere." He then ushered me into the lift and we descended from his eyrie to Cheinisse's office.

Jacques Cheinisse is craggy faced, ebullient, tousle-haired and typically French in his mannerisms and dress; a man who has been at the centre of various controversies during his reign as Directeur Sportive. His first contact with Alpine came in 1960 when he drove an Alpine A106, the Dauphine-engined predecessor of the successful A110 Berlinette, in the Rallye of the three Valleys of Anjou. Unfortunately I did not manage to discover the result of his Alpine debut. From this event onwards his involvement with Alpine continued to grow and he drove the Dieppe cars in both rallies and races until 1966 when he retired after his last race, the 1,000 KMs de Paris at Monthery, where incidentally the engine blew-up. Along the way he had his fair share of success including a category win at Le Mans in 1964 when he also finished in the top ten.

Since Cheinisse has been involved with all aspects of Alpine competition involvement including their attempts at Le Mans with the 3 litre V-8 Gordoni engined A220 up until 1969, their highly successful two seasons in formula 3 (72/73) with the slippery shaped space framed cars. Their two World Rally Championship wins in 1971 and 1973 plus of course their involvement over the past three years with the A440 and A441 2 litre and A442 turbocharged Sports Prototypes. Altogether a man of many parts and a wealth of experience.

I started off by enquiring his age. With a twinkle in his eye he replied "I was born today!" this retort was greeted with gales of laughter from Jacques Poisson, who was sitting in to help with any translation problems, who later explained this was a favourite Cheinissism which roughly translated means "In 1935, Paris."

Cheinisse questioned me about the rally scene in England, especially as he had heard the story that Ford wanted to do a larger series of events in Europe in 1976. "I hope this is true," he commented. "Then I have a good reason for my company to spend more money on rallying next year." He then went on to enquire about the possible drivers, as he had heard that: "It is possible that Roger Clark would rather stay in England and work in his motor trade business? Alas I have the same trouble with Therier." It would seem that competition managers the world over have the same problems including lack of money in the kitty!

● Monday's Renault revelations indicates the end of the road for Alpine's autocratic competition boss
— see special stage



Alpine Motorsport Director — Jacques Cheinisse.

During the past year, we have not seen as much of Alpines in rallying as we have been used to, can you tell me why?

Because we have some problems with money; because we have a big problem of development of the A442 prototype and turbocharging and we therefore have less money for rallies.

You have been developing, and we have seen it on a few rallies, the 16-valve twin cam head for the push-rod engine that has been used in the A.110, when will we see more of this engine in competition?

Now the 16-valve engine is ready but we were working on the engine all the year and I hope for the next events this engine will be in the cars and I hope for good events with this engine.

Will you be doing more rallying events in 1976 and will you be using the newer car (the A310)?

I hope so, but we must choose now between the

races and the rallies for next season and we are very advanced in the races with the Alpine A442 with the turbocharged V6 Gordini and I think the Sportscar Championship is easy for us and it is difficult to have a big programme for rallies as well.

Over the past few years you have only some as a team to the RAC Rally three times, 1970, 1971 and 1972, why is this?

The date of the RAC is at the end of the season and unfortunately at the end of the season we have no more money! The other problem is that our drivers cannot practice and they don't know enough of the special stages on the RAC to be good on this event, and they have not a good chance to win the RAC Rally. The last problem is that the dates of Corsica and the RAC are very near and for us is very important to have the cars in Corsica for commercial reasons, so it is difficult after Corsica to prepare the cars for the RAC.

Fruits of competition — a roadgoing A310 waits on the concrete plaza outside the new Renault building.



in Ireland 1975, you have given help to Brian Boyd in Ireland who has been running a A110 and I understand you lent him a works prepared engine. Are you pleased with what he has done with the car and can you consider giving him some more help in 1976?

Yes, I think Boyd was good in his Alpine in Ireland on the rally, and we shall try to help him during the next year with also the help of Renault UK Limited if they are interested by Boyd's performance.

People who have run Alpines and Renaults in England often complain they cannot get any help from Renault GB and they are told to come to France to get assistance and information. It can not be of use to you in France to have people competing in England, but can you offer any advice to Alpine or Renault owners who wish to compete in England?

I suppose it is difficult for English owners to come every month to France to prepare the car and to get information, I hope that if Alpine or Renault customers, are numerous in England, Renault UK Limited will do something to help them; I hope so. You have what is virtually a works team in Spain, do you expect to see this in other countries?

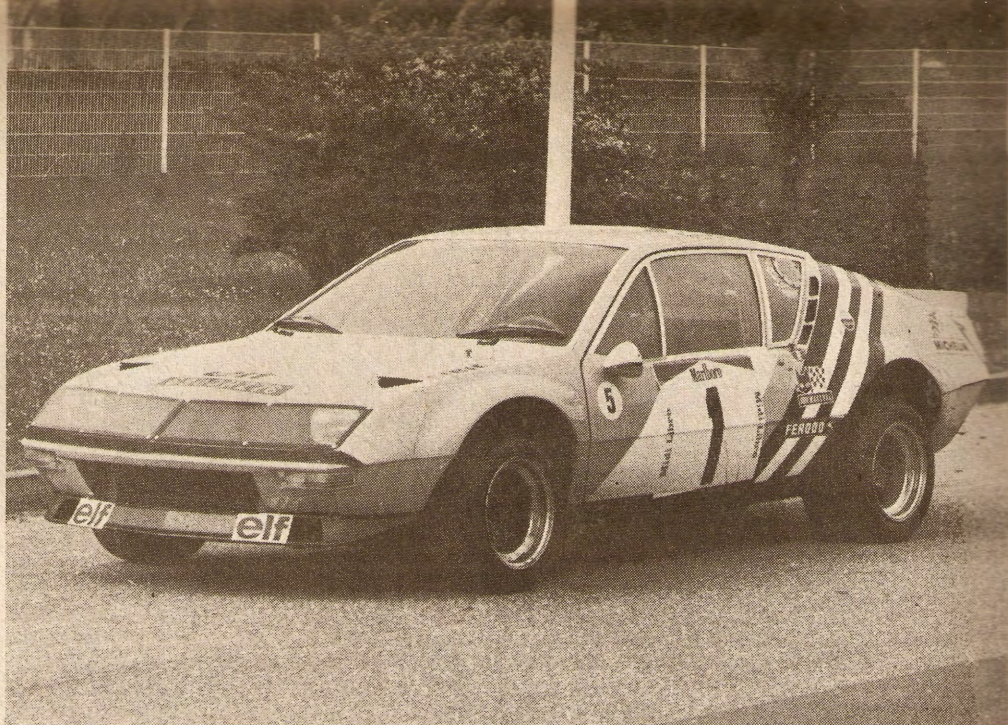
The problem in Spain is different, because they have built the cars in Spain and I suppose they have more money than Renault UK Ltd which only sells the cars.

The racing cars and the rally cars in Spain are now appearing in yellow rather than the blue we have been used to, is it a policy that all cars entered by Renault from now on will be painted yellow?

Yes, the yellow and black are the official colours of Renault and the blue colour was the French colour, but now in the European community we feel that Renault colours are more important.

During 1975, Achim Warmbold and John Davenport campaigned an A310 for the German importers, will you continue this programme with them in 1976 and does their use of the A310 imply that that is the car you are going to use from now on in rallying?

Well, Achim Warmbold rented a car last year with his sponsor, KWS, and with Dutch Renault, and I don't know now if they can enter a car next year in the same conditions, I hope so. They had an Alpine A310 and I think they won two or three events and Achim was very very happy with the car, like Therier. For next year the problem is different because regulations of Appendix J are different with the weight of the car, the weight is dictated by the cc's — capacity — and in 2-litre class the minimum weight is 820 kilos, so we must put 100 kilo more in the Berlinettas, which is absolutely stupid, so with the same weight the A310 is better than the Berlinetta. So I expect next year we will campaign only A310s in rallies and no more Berlinettas.



Only the A130 will be used for rallies in 1976. The car pictured above is in the latest "tarmac" trim.

Will you be considering, because of the weight problem, putting the 2.7 V6 engine into the A310?

There is a problem of recognition because we must wait until we have built 500 A310s with the new V6 engine; and that is not for tomorrow!

The rally with which most people associate Alpine success is the Monte Carlo Rally. Even if you have to cut back on your rally programme next year for the considerations you have mentioned already, will you be entering the Monte Carlo Rally of 1976?

I hope to enter next year in Monte Carlo, but we must wait for the official decision before preparing the cars.

Would these be A310s or Renault 17 Gordini's?

I don't know.

I understand there are now more problems in France with regard to rallies, and that they are slowly being pushed off the public road because of complaints by people living along the route with regard to the practice and the rally itself; I also understand that some of the sponsors are

beginning to pull out — can you see rallying in France going the same way as in England, being forced onto private land, like forests or military land?

I think the problem is that we have not many private roads in forests, many forests are public property of the "Remiseissions de Aout de Foret" and it is very difficult to negotiate with this administration to open roads and really it would be a good solution to use these roads but I am afraid that it will be difficult.

But you do not see, as yet, an end to rallying in France?

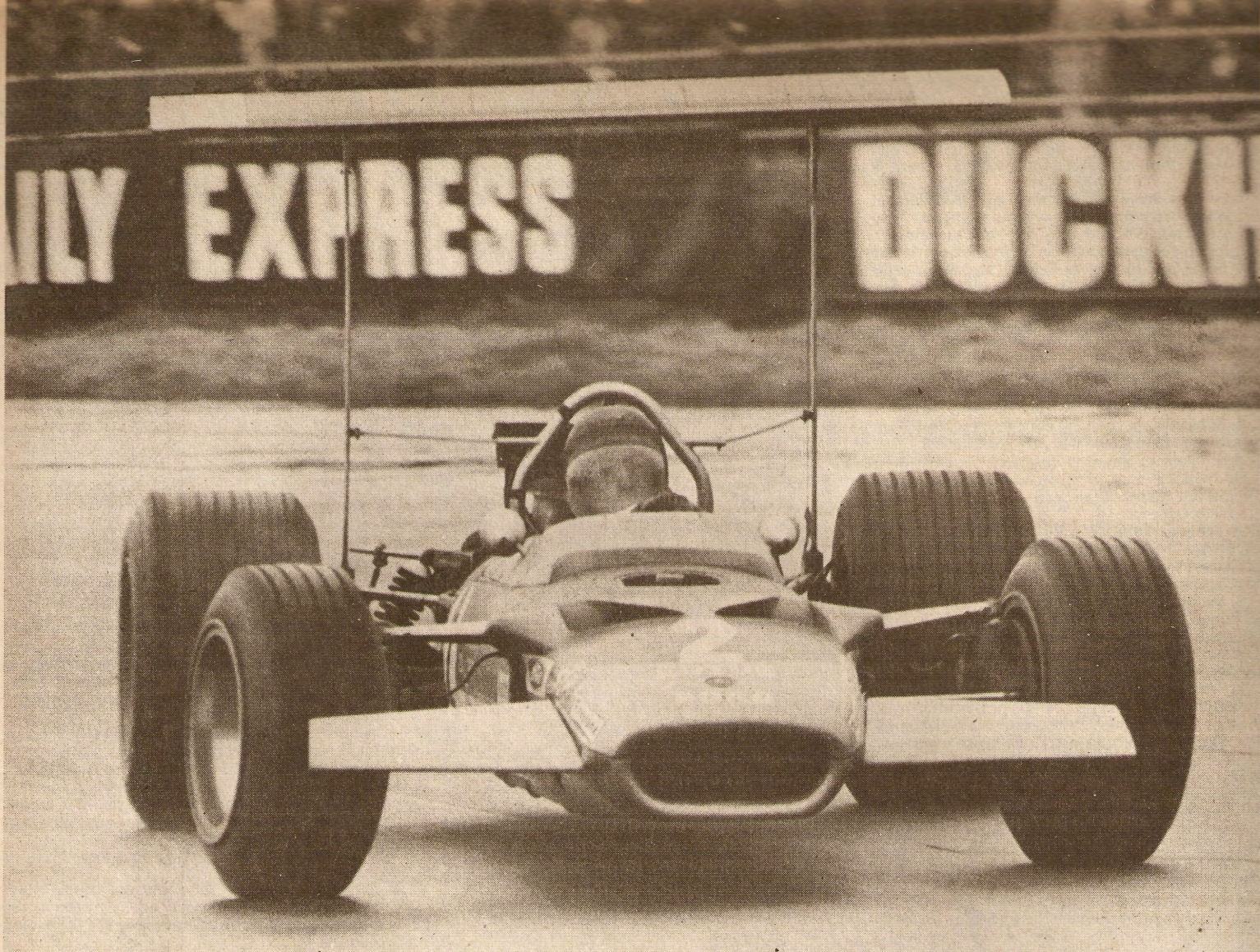
I think not, there are many means to negotiate with authorities in France who open the roads, the problem is more of the practice that the rally itself produces.

One last question to you, personally. If you had the choice yourself without the pressure of a government owned company, which would you prefer to involve your department in, racing or rallying?

I think the best is formula 1 in rallying!

An impressive line-up is formed as the active competitions department (1973) poses for the camera prior to the Monte Carlo Rally.





Jochen Rindt showing familiar style during his fantastic drive at the 1969 Silverstone International Trophy in the Gold Leaf Lotus 49.

NAME FROM THE PAST

The most exciting driver?

NIGEL ROEBUCK discusses the career of JOCHEN RINDT

One morning, in the fall of 1969, I drove out along the M4 to Heathrow Airport. At that time I had a Lotus Elan and I was driving it quickly because, as ever, I was late. There was very little traffic around that day. I recall, and one of the cars I overtook was a yellow Elan Plus 2, dawdling along in the middle lane. A minute later, it had ceased to dawdle and was right behind me, lights flashing. For a while we continued like that, going faster and faster, until finally I moved over and let him by. But the yellow Plus 2, instead of overtaking, drew alongside and held station. The driver, grinning broadly, was Jochen Rindt. I nearly went off the road.

Quite recently, I was discussing Rindt with Chris Amon. "The thing about Jochen," said Chris, "was this tremendous competitiveness in everything he did. Obviously it came out in his driving, but he was just the same when he played table tennis or gin rummy." At the time of the M4 incident, my only connection with motor racing was that of a complete fan. I was not a journalist, not "inside" the sport at all. Rindt and I had never even met, so he wasn't fooling around with a friend or anything. He was overtaken by another Elan, and immediately all his competitive juices were set to work. It may be naive but, to me, that morning provided a pointer to the man.

Books have been written about Jochen Rindt, as well as hundreds of articles, and there seems little point in recounting his place of birth, schooling, early racing career, and so on. Rather, I would prefer to write of incidents I remember, of things I saw. When the mood took him, Jochen Rindt was capable of anything in a racing car.

The mood took him at Silverstone in 1969. Twice. This was his first season with Lotus, yet by April the signs were that all was not well between Rindt and his new team. The age of diplomacy and tact has not reached motor racing six years ago,

and Jochen was unequivocal in his criticism of the way Colin Chapman ran his team. When the first qualifying session for the Daily Express Trophy began, there was no sign of Gold Leaf Team Lotus. The celebrated transporter bearing the legend "Racing for Britain" did not show up all day long. Practising for Britain needed one day only, apparently. Saturday would be enough.

Friday was a perfect day, and while Stewart's Matra, Black Jack's Brabham and Amon's Ferrari annihilated the lap record, Jochen watched and fumed. "They didn't think it was necessary; I did." As it turned out, the Austrian was right, for Saturday brought rain and the track was treacherous. Times in the first session were 15 seconds away from those set the day before, and Lotus were in trouble.

When the final session began, the situation looked hopeless. The rain had stopped and the circuit was drying out but it was still very slippery. And then Jochen Rindt came out, grim-faced and determined, and spectators everywhere suddenly remembered why they had trekked great distances to stand, cold and wet, in a field in Northamptonshire. For this was an occasion, a great occasion. Out on the circuit, a virtuoso



performance was in progress. At Woodcote (remember Woodcote?), a string of cars, Brabham, Siffert, Ickx, would come through, slithering and twitching right out to the grass, and then Rindt would arrive, the Lotus 49 travelling at a completely different sort of speed and you knew, you just knew that this time he had overdone it, this time he wasn't going to make the corner. Yet he always did.

I was sitting in the Woodcote grandstand that afternoon, and I shall always remember it, not least because of the behaviour of the crowd. Oblivious to the misery of the day, all those spectators watched and wondered at the progress of Lotus number two. "Here he is!" Every ninety seconds, there was a huge gulp of air from everyone as Jochen pointed that car at the apex, followed by a roar of relief as the car hurtled off

cote yet again. Unforgettable. The result of all this heroism was a remarkable lap in 1.23.9, a long way from the dry times but still good enough for the inside of the third row. Race day was again showery and cold, and we all wondered if Jochen could reproduce the form of the day before. Ahead of him on the grid were seven cars, but his task was easier than Stewart's. The new Matra MS80 had been diabolical in Saturday's conditions, and Stewart had opted to forgo his pole position and run the MS10, a known quantity in the wet, from the back of the grid. Stewart and Rindt, with lots of people to get past... clearly, a great race was in prospect.

As always happens on these occasions, various things went wrong from the word go. At the end of the first lap it was obvious that two of the favourites, Rindt and Amon, had problems. Chris had missed the wet sessions of Saturday, having flown to Le Mans to test the sports car, and was finding the Ferrari completely impossible in the wet. Jochen was on six or seven cylinders and dropping back, the electrics soaked. In the early laps, the only saving grace was Jackie Stewart who was scything through the field and gaining places all the time.

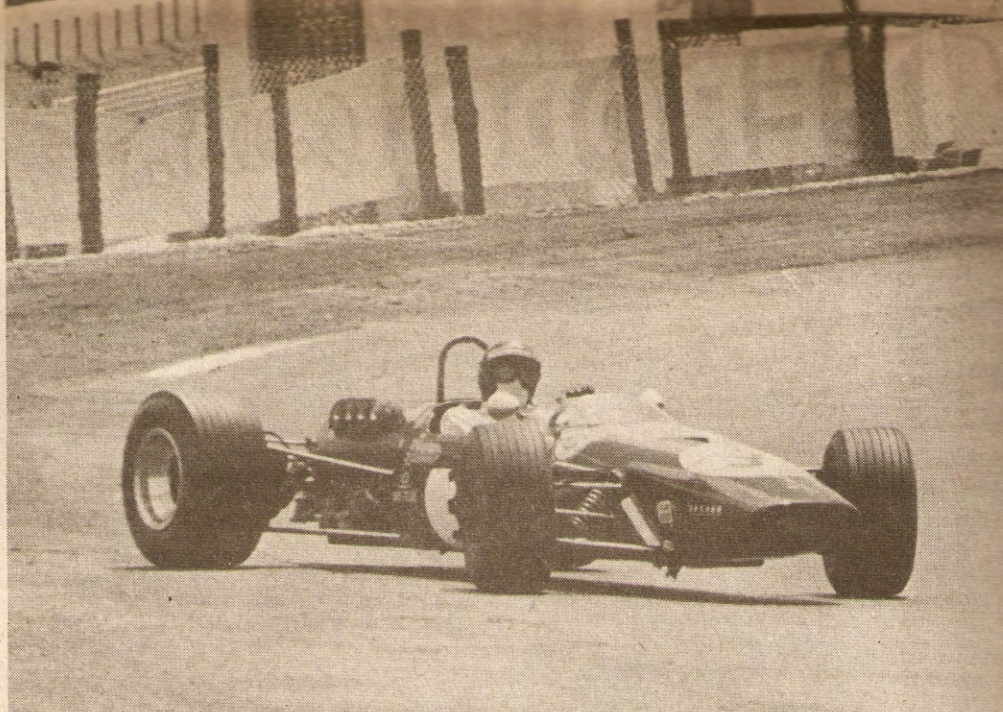
And then, suddenly, the race came alive. Rindt's Cosworth was on eight cylinders! Having dropped to 11th place, the Lotus began to make dramatic progress. In five laps, he picked up five places and, more important, was taking two seconds a lap from the leader, Jack Brabham. Behind the Australian were Ickx, Courage, Hulme being caught by Stewart, and then Jochen catching everybody! It was Saturday all over again. Conditions at this point were just awful, with rain falling all the time and visibility terrible. But Jochen Rindt was putting together a stupendous drive and went past Stewart as if he were a backmarker. It is one thing to catch the guy in front of you, but quite another to pass him, as they say. Frequently, one driver will close on another, catch him, sit on his tail and keep station for the rest of the race. The time to attack is as soon as possible, when you are still hot and the other driver is rattled because he has been caught. That day, Rindt gave no one the time to settle down. He caught them, he passed them. Like that.

Stewart dispensed with, Rindt was in fourth place, with Brabham, Ickx and Courage ahead. Piers and Jacky were involved in a private scrap for second place at this point and as they headed down towards Stowe, they came up to lap Graham Hill and Pedro Rodriguez who were dicing for seventh spot. Already you have the ingredients for a heart-stopping situation at the end of the straight, but there was more to come. Behind the four, looming out of the spray, was Rindt. In a big hurry. As the five cars approached the corner, Jochen was at the back. When they came out of it, he was at the front... Messrs Ickx, Courage, Rodriguez and Hill must have felt somewhat confused at this point.

Brabham's lead, with twenty laps left, was almost half a minute, but Jochen refused to concede, and the gap came down and down. Time after time, the Lotus came through Woodcote at ludicrous angles, twitching this way and that, revs racing as the rear wheels scabbled for adhesion. It seemed almost that the track was moving to contain the car, to keep it on the tarmac. It was magnificent and majestic, a man having one of those days.

Sometimes taking as much as four seconds a lap away from Brabham, Jochen continued to close, but there weren't enough laps left. When Jack went into Copse for the last time, his lead was nine seconds, and it was all over. But then the Brabham began to run out of fuel. Coming through Abbey, Rindt was closing dramatically but to no avail. At the finish, the Lotus was just two seconds in arrears. All the way round the slowing-down lap, there was tremendous applause. Brabham's victory went down well, and the spectators were well satisfied with what they had seen. Jochen Rindt had given his all. Those who were there will never forget.

Rindt captured the imagination of racing aficionados everywhere, and nowhere more than in England. In many ways, he fitted the classic mould of what a racing driver should be. He had a good sense of humour, which came across in several languages. He was arrogant, was never under any illusions about his ability. He knew just how good he was, and could see no point in pretending otherwise: "I have only two rivals — Stewart and Amon," he once said. But success was a long time coming in Grand Prix racing. Although he finished third in the 1966 World Championship, there were no wins, and the next two years were



The style we loved so much: in the Winklemann F2 Brabham BT23C at Jarama in 1968 and . . .

disastrous. In 1967, Jochen was merely living out his three-year contract with Cooper, showing little enthusiasm for most of the year. For 1968, he signed for Brabham and thoroughly enjoyed the season, despite the fact that the cars, with their four-cam Repco engines, were woefully unreliable. Having decided to run Cosworth engines for 1969, Brabham was very keen to keep Rindt, and the Austrian thought long and hard about it, before opting for Lotus. His obsession was to win the World Championship, and he believed the Lotus was the car he needed. For most of 1969, he must have regretted his decision.

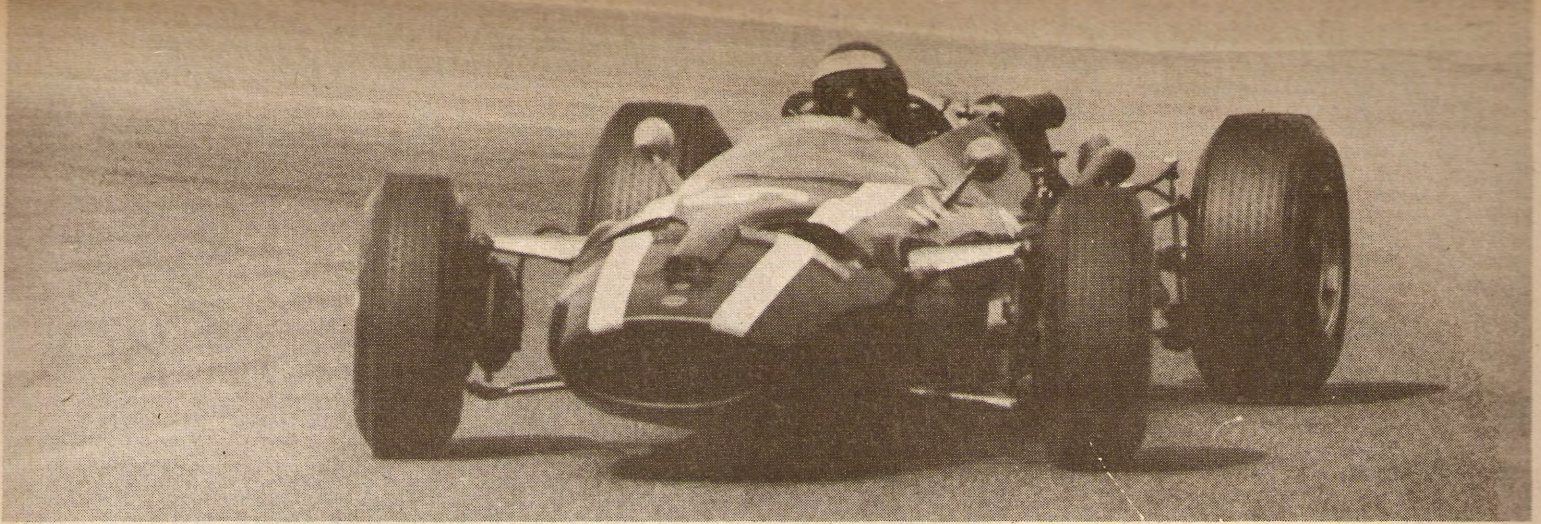
Rindt's first races for Lotus were in the Tasman

Championship. He won some, he lost some, and finished second to Amon in the Championship. But Jochen came back from the Antipodes an unhappy man. An accident at Levin, which was no fault of his, had unsettled him. The Silverstone practice fiasco unsettled him, too. Barcelona did more than that.

Jochen got the pole at Barcelona, throwing the Lotus 49 around the glorious Montjuich Park in confident style. In the race, he led from Chris Amon's Ferrari before having an almighty accident when the rear wing collapsed. This was the era of the very big wing, when the art was in its infancy and breakages were frequent. Graham

. . . in his own team's works F2 Lotus 69 at Crystal Palace in 1970.





Rindt put in some sensational drives in the heavy and unweildly F1 Cooper Maserati – this is at Rheims in 1966.

Hill's Lotus 49 had had a similar accident a few laps earlier, and Jochen hit the wreckage. The car was completely wiped out, but the driver miraculously escaped with a broken jaw and concussion. It was an appalling accident and it completely transformed Rindt's attitude to safety, and to motor racing in general.

In hospital, he had time to think. From there, he wrote a letter to Colin Chapman, in which he stated frankly that the cars were not strong enough. Jochen hated wings on racing cars, in any case, and no one was happier than he when the big wings were banned, once and for all. Even so, throughout 1969, nothing would go right. Jochen was becoming desperate to win a Formula 1 race. Time after time, he started from the pole, hurtled off into the middle distance and then the car broke. At Clermont Ferrand, he had to retire because he felt sick, a legacy of the concussion he had suffered at Barcelona. It was all going wrong.

Back at Silverstone, for the British Grand Prix, Rindt and Stewart staged a heroic battle from the fall of the flag, and Jochen seemed to have the upper hand. After fifty laps, the Lotus headed the Matra by three seconds, but suddenly Stewart was closer, much closer, right on Rindt's tail and past into the lead. Once again, Jochen had rear wing trouble — the left-hand sideplate had broken away and was fouling the tyre. Into the pits came the Lotus, its driver white with rage. Half a minute was lost while the sideplate was removed. There was now no question of a win, but Jochen was still firmly in second place. A few laps later, even that was denied him, for the Lotus then ran out of fuel and he had to stop once more. In the end, Rindt finished a completely dejected fourth — and those three points were his first of the season.

Things had gone wrong for Jochen long before the race. Once again, Lotus had failed to turn up for the beginning of practice — this time because all but one of the cars had been sold! Chapman was adamant that the four-wheel-drive Lotus 63 was the way to go, and Jochen was adamant that he wouldn't drive it. He said it wasn't safe. He wanted a 49 for the rest of the season, and then he was going to get the hell out. Things were at a very

low ebb indeed. And then they began to pick up.

First of all, Chapman and Rindt had a heart-to-heart, and Chapman promised Rindt a new two-wheel-drive car for 1970. Jochen would be the number one driver. It all sounded very attractive. And things got better. At Monza, Jochen was second, at Mosport, third and at Watkins Glen, finally, first. He had won a Grand Prix. A big hurdle was behind him. For years, he had been completely dominant in Formula 2, and now he was a winner in Formula 1.

When the talk is of Jochen Rindt and his greatest drive, I imagine that most people would single out Monte Carlo 1970. It was a race which proved once and for all that, for a great racing driver, second place is no better than last. Throughout practice, Rindt was despondent. The new Lotus 72, on which he had pinned all his hopes, was so far scarcely living up to them. He had raced it at Silverstone and at Jarama, and it had pleased him at neither race. So, for Monaco, it was back to the 49. He gave himself no chance in the race. He was in Monaco because his contract required him to be there. That was the impression he gave, and it was borne out by his practice time which landed him halfway down the grid.

For much of the race, he drove efficiently, but without fire, in fifth place, behind Pescarolo's Matra. Only when Stewart, Amon and others had fallen by the wayside, did Rindt really start to move. There was only Jack Brabham ahead: dispense with him and Jochen would get to meet the Princess. It was a daunting task which he faced, for Black Jack had a comfortable lead, and there were few laps left. But Jochen began to drive as never before, hurling the 49 through Casino Square like a Formula 3 car, breaking the lap record, closing all the time.

As they went into their last lap, Brabham still led by nearly two seconds but Rindt was not giving up now and put everything into that final tour. And Brabham, unbelievably, allowed himself to be pressured into a mistake at the Gasworks, leaving his braking too late and understeering into the barrier. The race belonged to Jochen.

Amidst all the post-race pandemonium, there was almost disbelief as the commentator

announced a new lap record for Jochen on the last lap: 1.23.2. This time, set at the very end of the race, was a second quicker than Stewart's pole time and nearly three seconds better than Jochen himself had done in practice! Never have I seen as much emotion after a race. There was Jochen, up in the Royal Box, waving to the crowds as tears flowed down his face. And there, on pit road, was the crumpled BT33, its driver in the depths of despair. It was a very poignant situation.

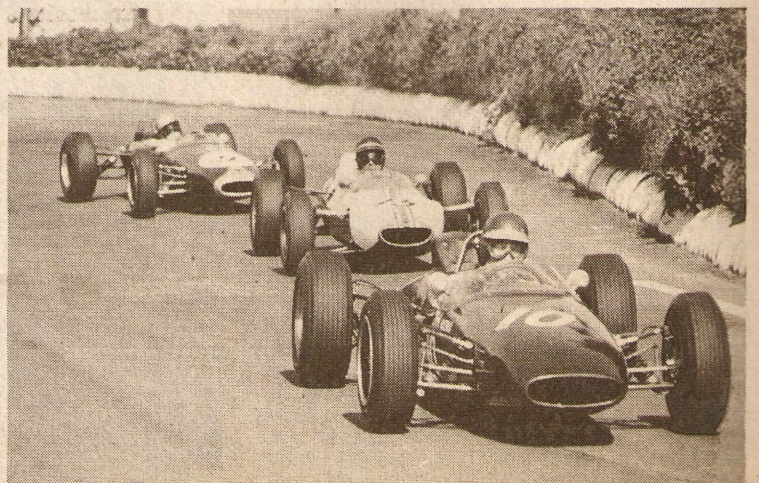
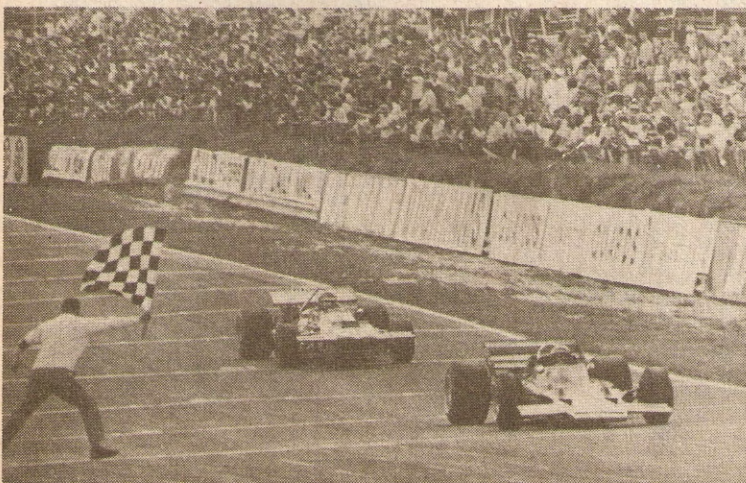
Later that day, or rather early on Monday morning, Jochen was outside the Casino. Nina, his beautiful wife, was with him, and I recall the look of total exhilaration on his face as he held the cup aloft to yet more cheers. This was sheer honest-to-God joy; there was no affectation, no attempt to be super-cool. He was happy and he wanted the world to share it. And that's a very pleasant memory of mine.

The summer of 1970 was then one of almost total triumph for Jochen Rindt. He won at Zandvoort, at Clermont Ferrand, at Brands Hatch, at Hockenheim. But there was great sadness, too, for Bruce McLaren died in a testing accident at Goodwood, and then Jochen's great friend Piers Courage was killed in the Dutch Grand Prix. Retirement was coming into Rindt's thoughts more and more.

I went to Monza in 1970, but only for the race. On the Saturday afternoon, I was in my flat, packing a few things for the trip. In the lounge, the radio was on and I heard something about Jochen Rindt and Monza. By the time I had reached the radio, the news was of other things, so I rang Associated Press and it was from them that I heard the news. God only knows how many thousands of people around the world must have felt as I did then. It seemed just too cruel and too ironic to be true. Just one small step from his greatest ambition.

The following day, on my way to the circuit, I saw a small Fiat, a picture of Rindt taped to its rear window and beneath it, the words "Jochen non ti dimenticare" — "Jochen, you will not be forgotten." Anyone who was at Silverstone that weekend in April 1969 would agree with that. Jochen Rindt was a racing driver.

Leading Tony Hegbourne and Denny Hulme in the Brabham BT10 at Mallory in 1964 (left) and winning the 1970 British GP in the GLTL Lotus 72; following is a lapped Ronnie Peterson, the man who inherited Rindt's reputation (right).





In search of a star

By PETE LYONS

We might have seen it coming as early as January.

That was when we went to two GPs in a row not knowing who "the fastest man in F1 today" was going to drive for. It came down to public statements that were contradicted within hours, and behind the scenes there was an air of dispute and ill-feeling so poisonous you hesitated to breathe.

It should have been our clue that the whole year was going wrong.

Here was a GP season that followed on from one of the greatest in motor racing history, when the fortunes of battle were shared with remarkable equality and the issue was in such a balance that the two points leaders came to the final race exactly equal. Perhaps it was too much to expect that the new season would be quite as grand as the old, but after all most of the same elements were still there after the short F1 winter and why wouldn't they combine in much the same ways?

Yet for some reason the pattern of 1975 went very awry. It was a peculiar spectacle indeed. At various times and places we saw:

— a Mechanics' Revolt which brought a halt to a high level discussion about further practice;

— a Drivers' Revolt which halted almost all practice;

— a World Champion's Revolt which went as far as him boycotting a race;

— an Entrants' Revolt which cancelled one GP entirely, and which was followed up by:

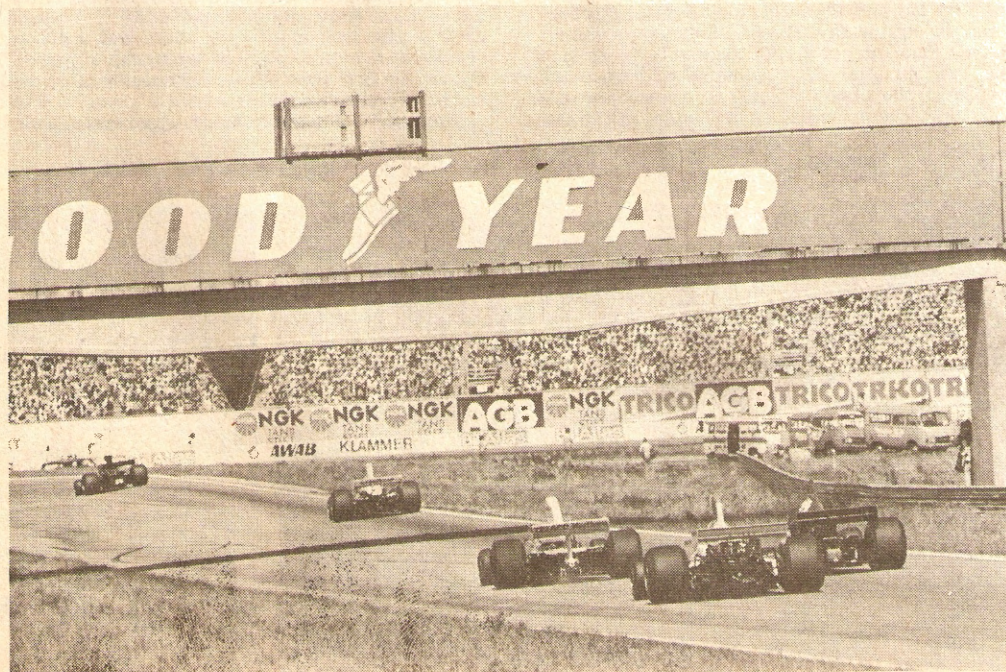
— an Organizer's Retaliation in which a legal strangle was put on the prize fund of somebody else's race.

There were other odd visions, like the little group of mechanics (and even some team managers) going around, spanners in hand doing up an organiser's job for him. That same organizer finally resorted to naked threats of police action to force a race to take place. Then we had the assault of a race official by a team manager over a black flagging incident, which seemed rather an over-reaction in view of the manager's other driver having the race securely in hand and the Championship already won.

We watched confused as, following an incident involving the front rows of one starting grid, the next starting grid had eight drivers cut from the back. Sardonically, we listened to a pious announcement of the supposed governing body's firm intention to make F1 cars "safer" by making them slower so that circuit owners could relax; this resulted finally in new regulations written almost entirely by car owners that could not possibly have any meaningful effect on speeds; at the very end of the season circuit owners were still being forced to alter and even to remove "safety improvements" which they had been forced to erect only a couple of years before. Some of the latest "safety improvements", specifically chicanes and catch fences, were directly responsible in the one instance of wholesale mass shunting and in the other instance of injuries to both drivers and to spectators — the catch fencing, it is authoritatively thought, actually caused the death of the one driver to be killed in F1 this year.

Not to forget that in two tragic instances, guardrails failed to contain a crashing car and bystanders were fatally injured.

Opposite: Niki Lauda heads for yet another flag to flag victory. Below: the Ford powered runners having their own separate race.



AUTOSPORT, DECEMBER 11, 1975

didn't wash. For instance, the driver who refused to drive his entrant's car because "its cockpit is too small," even though bigger drivers thought it was fine, and anyway no matter what car the driver drove, he drove it slowly and finally separated from the team. (The dispute was about — what else? — money.) Or how about the sponsor whose insignia appeared on a car, but it wasn't sponsorship, it was just an "association," except that when the press omitted to mention the non-sponsor the non-sponsor became upset. (See if you can guess what this was all about.) And what did you think of the race result as published when the drivers in second, third, fourth and fifth places had all crashed and the man who actually did the second longest race distance in the shortest time, and didn't crash, was given sixth (No, probably not a matter of money on this one, just rules.)

And all that is said before we say anything about the racing itself. We did have some good races, it is true, but also we had in 1975 some of the most bizarre motor racing ever. Never mind the race we didn't get; four that we did have were shortened for one reason or another, two of them by so much that they were worth only half points. Remember how the winner of one of them was so startled by the chequered flag that he had a shunt the other end of the finishing straight? Remember the number of races that were so chopped about by changing weather conditions that you just didn't know what to think about the results? Don't forget the one race when it looked like every leading car was going to go out with punctures and, in this era of victory margins amounting usually to a few seconds, the winner (who had the luck not to puncture) won by over ninety-seven seconds. And surely you'll never forget the British GP, when . . . well, if you weren't there you'll never believe it!



The biggest cheer for Britain was when James Hunt scored a superb victory for Hesketh Racing at Zandvoort. Sadly the team has now folded.

Ah, gentle reader, oh pure-hearted enthusiast for simple, straightforward, hopefully even meaningful, motor sport: if you believe that once finally allowed to take to the circuit the Gladiators battled one against the other on a simple, straightforward, even meaningful, basis and that the best man won with the best machine . . . well, you haven't looked deep into the eyes of the designers of the Formula 1 cars, who spent the entire season of 14 fortnights absolutely amazed at the puzzles and contradictions and sheer perversities displayed by these the most sophisticated of all the world's racing machines.

This was a weird year.

LES GRANDS PRIX

Mechanical perversity was never better displayed than by Jean-Pierre Jarier's UOP Shadow in South America. For some reason — some thought it might be a matter of engines, others suspected a suspension tweak, still others put it down to a chance special balance of qualities, but nobody ever really found out for sure — the new DN5 was a revelation for speed in both Buenos Aires and Sao Paulo. And a revelation for heartbreak, too.

Argentina. Jarier was on pole, having dominated practice by an untouchable margin, and went out to do the single warm up lap before the start already very nearly the moral winner of the race. As he accelerated away from the pit lane his engine suddenly revved free. The teeth on his

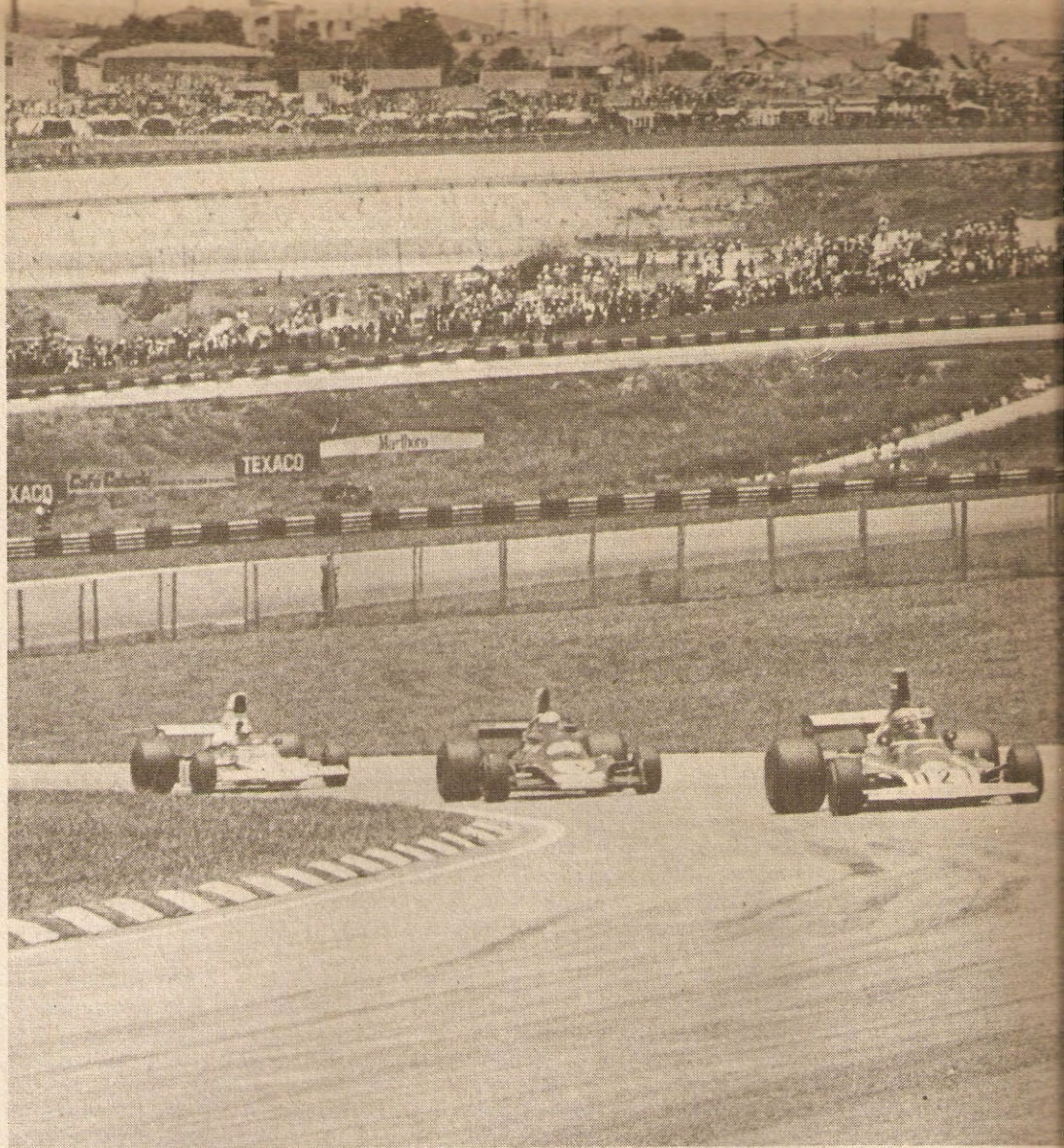
improper material, "all snapped off like carrots." The race went off without him, and developed into an excellent tussle between the new Martini Brabhams of the Carloses Reutemann and Pace, the Hesketh of James Hunt (running on Aeon rubber front springs), and the defending World Champion Emerson Fittipaldi with a revised version of the Texaco Marlboro McLaren. Both the Carloses went into the lead but then went off the road, and Hunt was left holding off Fittipaldi. But then James too spun away his advantage, and although he rejoined second and set the fastest lap trying to catch up he had to watch Emerson start off the new year with another victory.

Brazil. Jarier again dominated the starting field at Interlagos, by 0.8s from his nearest rival, Fittipaldi. But it was Reutemann from the second row who beat both of them at the start, and for four patient laps Jarier trailed the Brabham before finding a way by. Then the Shadow simply drove away into the distance, unassailable; sweet revenge for the disappointment two weeks before. Meanwhile Reutemann dropped even further back while teammate Pace, starting sixth best, but having chosen a different tyre combination, moved up rapidly to a second place almost as secure as was Jarier's lead. Then just eight laps from the end the Shadow's metering unit seized up, and Jumper had to sit stunned at the roadside watching Moco win his race. Fittipaldi meanwhile was striving as hard as he could to make up for having muffed his start; held up for a while by Clay Regazzoni and by Reutemann, he was catching Pace by the end, but his time ran out.

South Africa. Up to now the Shadow was the Car of the Year, but F1 is so intricately specialized a pursuit that on the Kyalami track the DN5s had no advantage; in fact Jarier started 13th. It was the Brabham team on the front row this time, and Brazilian hero Pace started from pole and went off into the lead — but only for two laps. On the third lap Jody Scheckter, having started third, took over command of his native GP and scored a close but authoritative victory for Elf Team Tyrrell over Reutemann. In retrospect this race stands out as one of the few actually simple, straightforward, perhaps even meaningful races of the year. It also stands out as the last time the Ferrari team weren't fast; Regazzoni and Niki Lauda were debuting the new T-model but at Kyalami it just didn't shine.

Spain. There was uneasiness about the Barcelona street circuit even before the scheduled opening of practice, but nobody could have foreseen the full horror of the season's most unpleasant weekend. No party emerged without some taint of disgrace. The race organisers, the RAC de Cataluña y Baleares, were primarily at fault for displaying a callous disregard for the well being of the competitors: the guardrail erected under their command was shockingly inadequate with bolts improperly installed and nuts left loose — often even missing — all around the circuit. The CSI of the FIA, who are supposed to control GP racing, displayed disgusting weak-kneed political vacillation and ultimately sided with the organisers. The GP Drivers' Association, representing all but one or two of the drivers, tried to present a unified front to the world but their unity was at certain stages held together more by strong-arm muscle power of certain members than anything else. What finally broke the GPDA's stand was an economic ultimatum pressed on them by their entrants, who were finally nakedly threatened by the organizers with legal action — which would have meant confiscation of every item of racing equipment in the easily-closed paddock.

Emerson Fittipaldi was the only driver with enough courage of his convictions to follow his own path. He carried out the bare minimum of timed practice to fulfil the letter of his entrant's obligation to the organizers, and then he went home. All the rest plunged into a frantic last-minute scramble for grid positions, quite overcome emotionally by the fervour of driving a racing car. Lauda and Regazzoni put their Ferraris on the front row, with Hunt and Mario Andretti (Parnelli) behind. At the start of the race, at the first corner, Andretti was apparently rammed and himself rammed Regga, who rammed Lauda; Hunt emerged leading the race but only for six laps as he repeated his Argentina disappointment and fell off the road. Andretti led until his damaged car broke, and then it was Rolf Stommelen, who had started ninth, in front. Starting the 26th lap his Embassy Hill had a structural failure which sent it into and over the guardrail; the driver was badly injured but several trackside men were killed. After four laps of official inaction the race was finally stopped before half distance, and half World Championship points awarded. Jochen Mass,



Jarier's Shadow having already disappeared into the distance, Reutemann and Pace (Brabhams) head Regazzoni

Fittipaldi's teammate, happened to be first at the point, but it was a victory that no one was proud of.

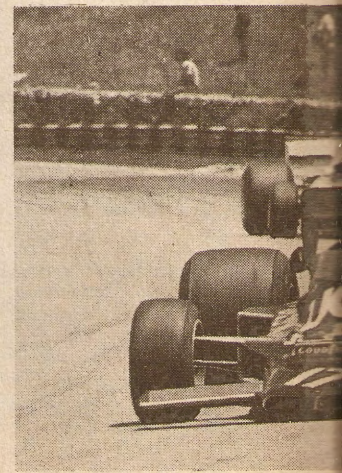
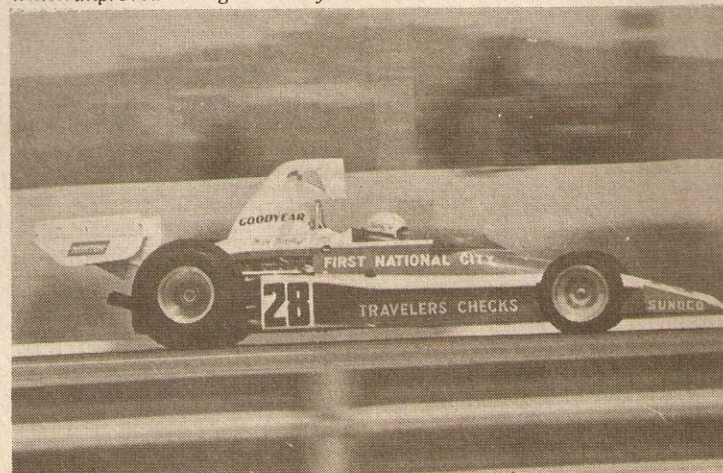
Monaco. Several changes were made in the conduct of this second street race, chiefly the cutting back of the starting grid from 26 to 18—at the insistence of Ferrari. It was Lauda's Ferrari on pole, but behind him the Shadow speed was back and Tom Pryce was second on the grid and Jarier was third. The race started in wet conditions, and Lauda preserved his lead, but Jarier, like more than one Frenchman before him at Monaco, crashed on the first lap and Pryce crashed a total of three times during the day. The previous year's winner Ronnie Peterson put his JPS second for a while in the wet, but after the road dried and everyone stopped at the pits for a change of tyres it was left to Fittipaldi to put pressure on Lauda. In the last

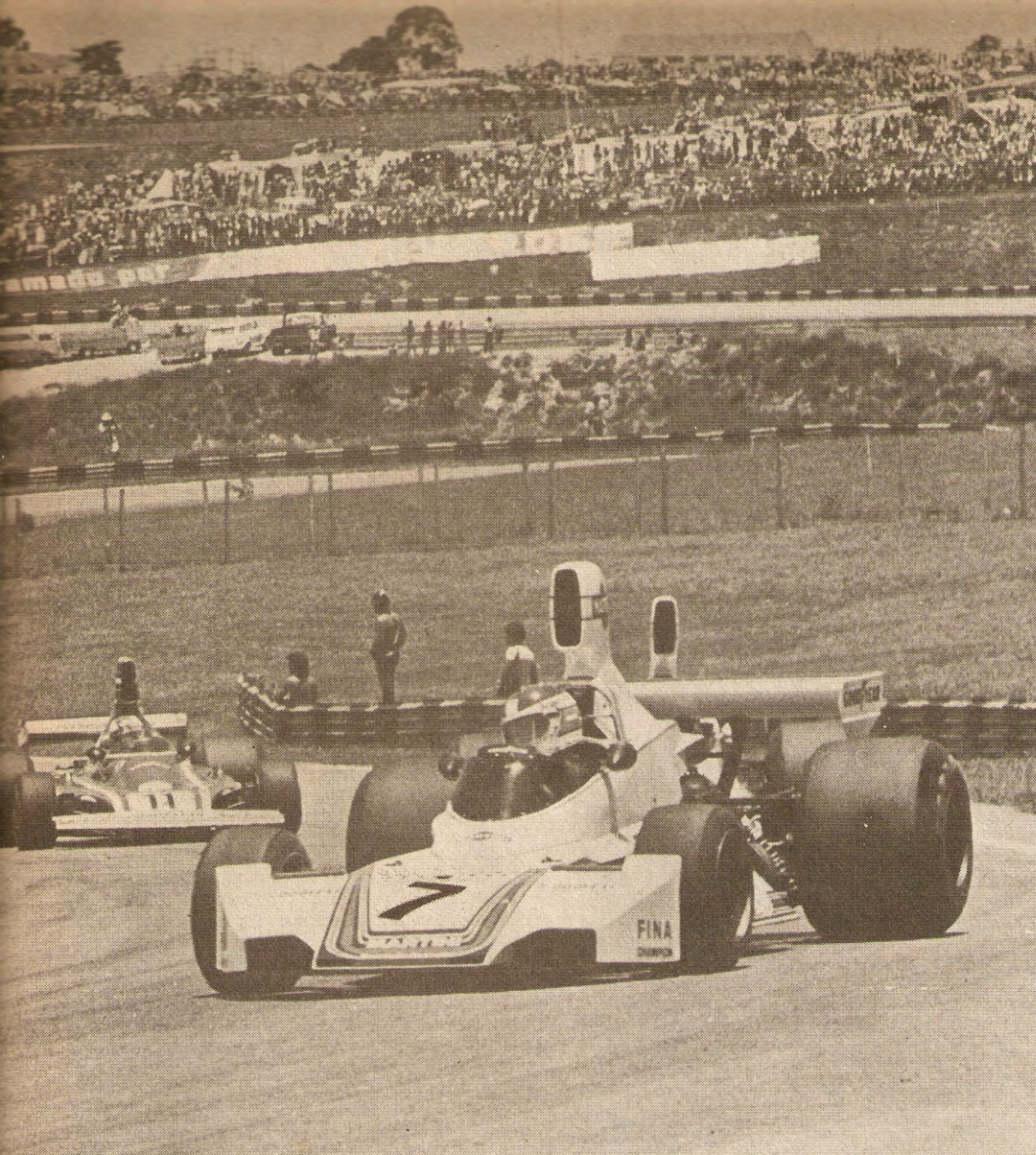
few minutes the Ferrari's oil pressure began to fail, and the McLaren came up to less than three seconds with three laps still scheduled — but due to the earlier wet running the two hours mark had passed so the chequered flag was waved now. It was the first of Niki Lauda's 1975 victories.

Belgium. Here at Zolder was Lauda's third pole position of the year so far, and although at the start of the race first Pace and then — surprise — Vittorio Brambilla in the Beta March headed him, he was in front by the sixth lap and that was the story of the race. Toward the end, it is true, his car once again gave minor trouble — a broken exhaust pipe this time — and there was a driver closing up behind — Jody Scheckter this time — but for the first time in two GP seasons a driver had scored two victories in a row.

Sweden. At Anderstorp Niki had some real luck.

The biggest American F1 challenge yet. Left: Mark Donohue in the Citibank Penske. Centre: Jean-Pierre Jarier which improved throughout the year.





...a (Ferraris), Scheckter (Tyrrell) and Fittipaldi (McLaren) in the Brazilian GP at Interlagos.

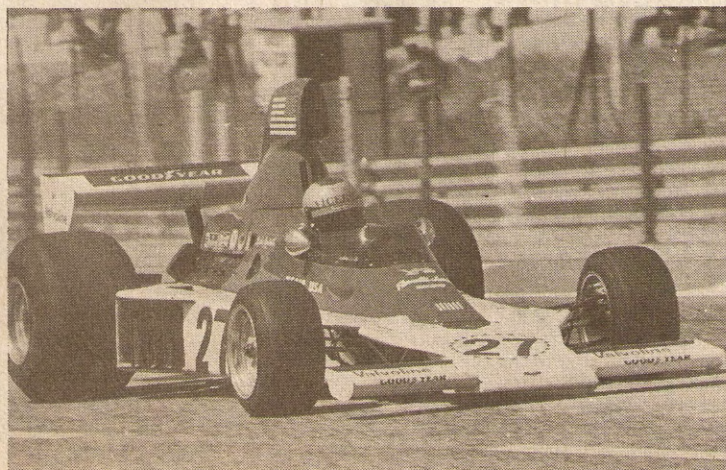
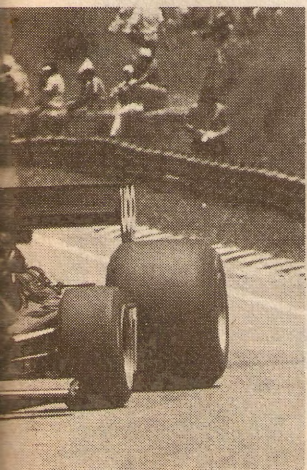
Proving that the 312T was not a SuperCar everywhere he qualified only fifth this time (Brambilla was on pole here) and in the early going he was only holding on. But one by one those ahead ran into troubles; his last opponent was Reutemann, who late in the race suffered his rear tyres wearing out, and with ten laps to go the Austrian swept ahead for his third successive GP. That was a feat not seen since 1973. Niki was on his way.

Holland There had so far been an element of luck in the Ferrari dominance, and especially in Sweden — what must have been the feelings of the Ford Cosworth brigade as they turned to Zandvoort, where the Ferrari had the year before proven itself without equal? Sure enough, once again it was an all-red front row; the best V8 was James Hunt's Hesketh, more than .4s behind pole.

But a joker crept into the game on race day: the weather. As at Monaco, the race started in wet conditions, and again the drivers were all faced with the necessity of a pit stop as the track dried. As he had at Monaco, Hunt made the decision to come in early; this carried with it the risk of spinning off should his newly fitted slick tyres stray off the narrow drying line, but the potential benefit was being able to lap faster during the period the other drivers were trying to decide. James stopped on lap seven. Lauda waited until lap 13, when they were both up to racing speed again, Hunt was ahead of Lauda.

That was the way it ran out, with the Hesketh driver holding off the might of Ferrari all the way to the flag. Too often previously James had spun off under such pressure, but that day at Zandvoort he came of age.

Shadow DN5 in which he promised so much but achieved very little and, right, Mario Andretti in the Parnelli,



France. So Niki Lauda's string was broken, but at this the mid-point of the season's scheduled 15 races it hardly seemed to matter. (The Ferrari driver had 38 points to Reutemann's 25 and Fittipaldi's 21.) Paul Ricard put him back in the groove anyway, as he ran off from pole and won without anything more than a threat of a challenge from anyone else. Toward the end he was having to cope with a worsening case of understeer, and James Hunt and Jochen Mass — who set fastest lap — were pushing up close, but early in the race Niki had been given a cushion: Jody Scheckter in an intransigent mood had started from the front row and, although his car couldn't keep up the pace in the race, he refused to let anyone else by and thereby broke up any pursuit of the Ferrari until too late.

Great Britain. The tenth of the year's GPs was quite the most spectacular. As a show it had everything: disaster, drama, dismay . . . it was even drôle. Tom Pryce was on pole in his Shadow. Carlos Pace went into the early lead, however, and then was overtaken by Clay Regazzoni. But then the weather turned: a stealthy rainstorm crept up from Club corner, sent Regga off, and Pryce, finally left in the lead, went off too. Scheckter was now leading, but he prudently went into the pits for rain tyres. Unfortunately it wasn't the right thing to do, for although he rapidly caught up the dry-tyred remainder of the field and led once again, the weather as rapidly turned dry and left him with another tyre change to perform. Jean-Pierre Jarier lead then, but he too had to change back to dry tyres, and thus it was James Hunt from Emerson Fittipaldi — neither of whom had stopped at all. Then the Hesketh broke an exhaust pipe, and the McLaren moved on ahead, becoming the seventh actual car to lead the race. Now a second rainstorm swept Silverstone, and Fittipaldi got through while the next four men behind him crashed. In fact a total of 16 drivers had crashed by this point, and ten laps early the officials stopped the race. The rulebook however called the race completed as of the previous lap, so that Vittorio Brambilla, who was actually second on the road, was moved back to sixth behind the four drivers who were tangled up in the catch fences around the circuit.

Fittipaldi had been sunk in a slump up to this point, as after his good finishing positions in South America very little, except Monaco, seemed to go well for him. Indeed once or twice he appeared to "blow a fuse" (a former competitor's description) as his car just wouldn't handle for him — he said. But his excellence in the British GP, keeping on the road while nearly everybody else crashed, brought him back up to second in the championship standings.

Germany. In its way the next GP was as much of a mess, for here at the Nurburgring a plague that had been generally banished from F1 came back to strike deep into the field. There were over 20 punctured tyres even before the race, and at least nine cars retired from the race from the same cause — six of them by crashing heavily. Of the quick men only Carlos Reutemann escaped unscathed, and at the end he was over 90s ahead of the equally lucky second man, Jacques Laffite in his Williams.

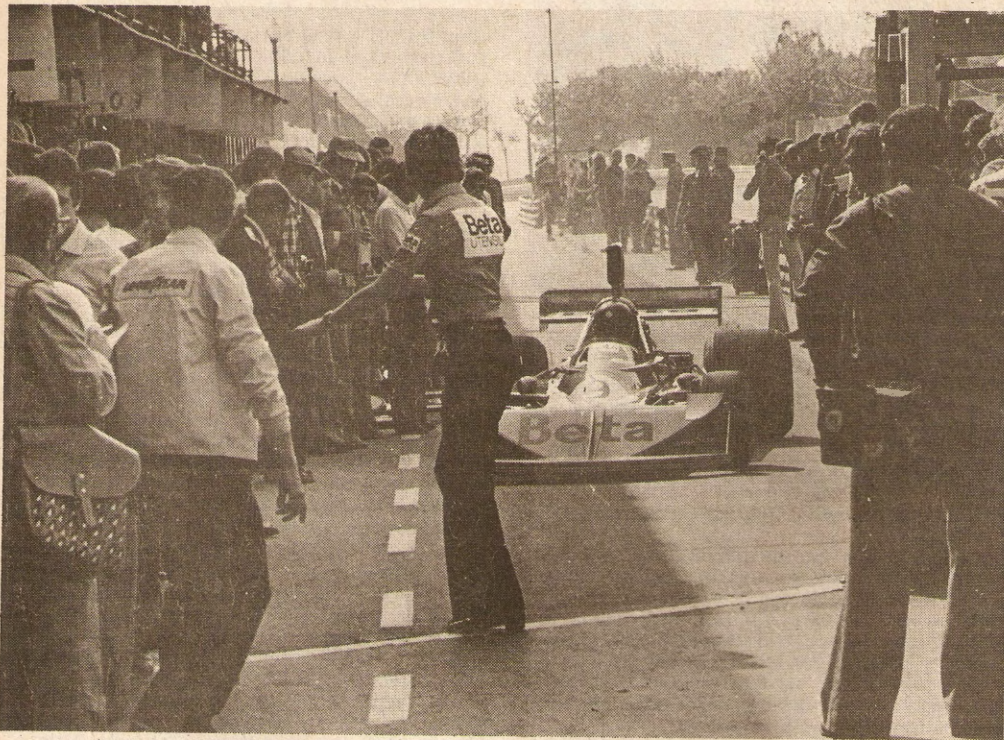
Lauda's commanding position in the championship did not protect him from the disease. Having once again established quickest practice time (the first ever under seven minute lap at the 'Ring at 6m 58.6s, 121.953 mph) he led off reasonably comfortably. For a while both Patrick Depailler and Carlos Pace were keeping him alert, but suspension failure took both of them from the picture and Niki was all alone when, halfway round the 10th of 14 laps, a front tyre went down. He wound up third overall, a long way back.

Austria. He came down to his home GP with a chance to wrap up the title there and then, and once again put the screaming red Ferrari on pole. Then the weather turned against him.

There was along delay while everyone dithered about trying to out-guess the rain. Finally the start was given in conditions that were at the moment soaking wet but with the lightning sky promising a dry track later. It was a false promise. The rain became a blinding deluge and on its compromise settings the Ferrari fell back. James Hunt took over the lead, but was in turn overwhelmed by Vittorio Brambilla. The man who had led in Belgium, who had earned pole and led again in Sweden, now achieved his fulfillment on the flooded Oesterreichring. When the officials, responding to the strong suggestion of the GPDA, stopped the race a little over half distance due to increasingly impossible visibility, the Beta March driver lifted one arm in surprised joy — and promptly lost control. He went crunch into a



Mechanics fixing the guard rails in Spain . . .



. . . one of only two practice contenders in Spain . . .

barrier, and finished what turned out to be the cool-off lap with his nosepiece comically askew!

Italy. The points situation for Lauda was now as near-yet-so-far as it could possibly be. Austria had once again awarded half points, so for his sixth place there he earned exactly half a point — one half a point less than he absolutely needed to be safe from anything Reutemann could do. Fingers could not have been crossed tighter in Austria, Italy, Argentina or Britain, but once again it was No 12 on pole and the best the Brabham man could do was the fourth row. It looked like all Niki had to do was keep going in the race — but first the race needed to get going. A heavy morning rain storm, an absurdity at Monza in September, had the Circus clustered in bedraggled huddles discussing the possibility of cancelling the race entirely.

Then like an improbable reprieve from on high, the skies cleared, the sun dried the track, and the Italian GP was on after all. Lauda relaxed. Teammate Regazzoni went on from second grid place to win, while the new World Champion allowed the old to achieve some small consolation by finishing a fighting second. Reutemann was a distant fourth.

United States. A wrangle about money exacerbated by personality clashes caused the F1 Constructors Association to boycott the Canadian GP, which meant there was no Canadian GP, so there was a month's hiatus before the final round at Watkins Glen. It dampened no degree of Niki

Lauda's life, and he came to demonstrate Ferrari's excellence to the Americans, and succeeded: his ninth pole position and his fifth victory. There was only one flaw in the performance of the Prancing Horse: the grossly unsportsmanlike conduct of Clay Regazzoni. Starting back in eleventh grid-place he early on got involved in a nose-damaging incident and made a pit stop. That put him back out on the road just ahead of a furious scrap that had developed between Lauda and the front-row-starting Fittipaldi. Lauda was let by easily. Fittipaldi was held up a total of eleven seconds in five laps. The results were a race ruined for the spectators, a black flag for Regga, and a punch up between the Ferrari team manager and the clerk of the course.

Somehow, though, it didn't seem an altogether inappropriate end to the year 1975.

NON-CHAMPIONSHIP RACES

Brands Hatch. As the British GP was not to be held in Kent this year the Race of Champions was somewhat short of Champions, but South Africa winner Jody Scheckter was romping along in the lead when his engine failed and so Kent resident Tom Pryce scored his, and Shadow's first ever F1 victory.

Silverstone. Until now Ferrari had not looked much of a threat, but Niki Lauda gave early warning of what was to come by scoring the transversale's first competition success. He had to



. . . Constructors (l to r) Ecclestone, Tyrrell and Mosley discuss politics in Spain . . .

14 GPs held there were 363 serious entries made, or an average of just under 26 per race. This figure of 26 was the agreed starting number for most GPs, with the exception of the curtailed Monaco grid; however the year saw an actual 337 race starts for an average of just a fraction over 24, so F1 racing would not seem to be truly overcrowded.

Trying to establish a ratio of starters to finishers is not very rewarding, given all the peculiarities of the season, but counting only those cars that were actually running at the official end of each race and classified we tot up 191. This gives a finishing percentage of 56.7%, which is very, very close to what it was in 1973 and 1974.

A total of 52 drivers participated in actual qualifications (some in two or more kinds of car), and 21 of them earned points (or half points), for a "success percentage" of 40.4%.

In winning his World Championship Niki Lauda not only won five races against his nearest competitor Emerson Fittipaldi's two, not only started from pole nine times to J-P Jarier's two, not only led eight races to the five leads put up by Carlos Pace (six if Moco's twice leading the British GP is counted) and by James Hunt, and not only did he set two fastest race laps whereas only fellow Ferrari driver Clay Regazzoni set more than one (Regga was quickest four times) — Niki was the only driver who started from all 14 grids who finished as many as 13 times. This is a reliability record of 92.9%, and furthermore only one of those 13 finishes was out of the points. So not only was the combination Lauda/Ferrari very fast, it was extremely effective and outstandingly reliable; in these calculations is the true story of his improvement over his bitterly disappointing 1974 season.

Runner up on points, Emerson Fittipaldi out of his 13 starts retired twice and was unclassified once again, a finishing percentage of 76.9% — really very good, and typical of McLaren. Only

. . . the drivers' threatened boycott of racing in Spain.

wait until pole man James Hunt had blown up, and he was chased by a tenth of a second at the finish line by Emerson Fittipaldi, but still it looks in hindsight to be Niki's breakaway.

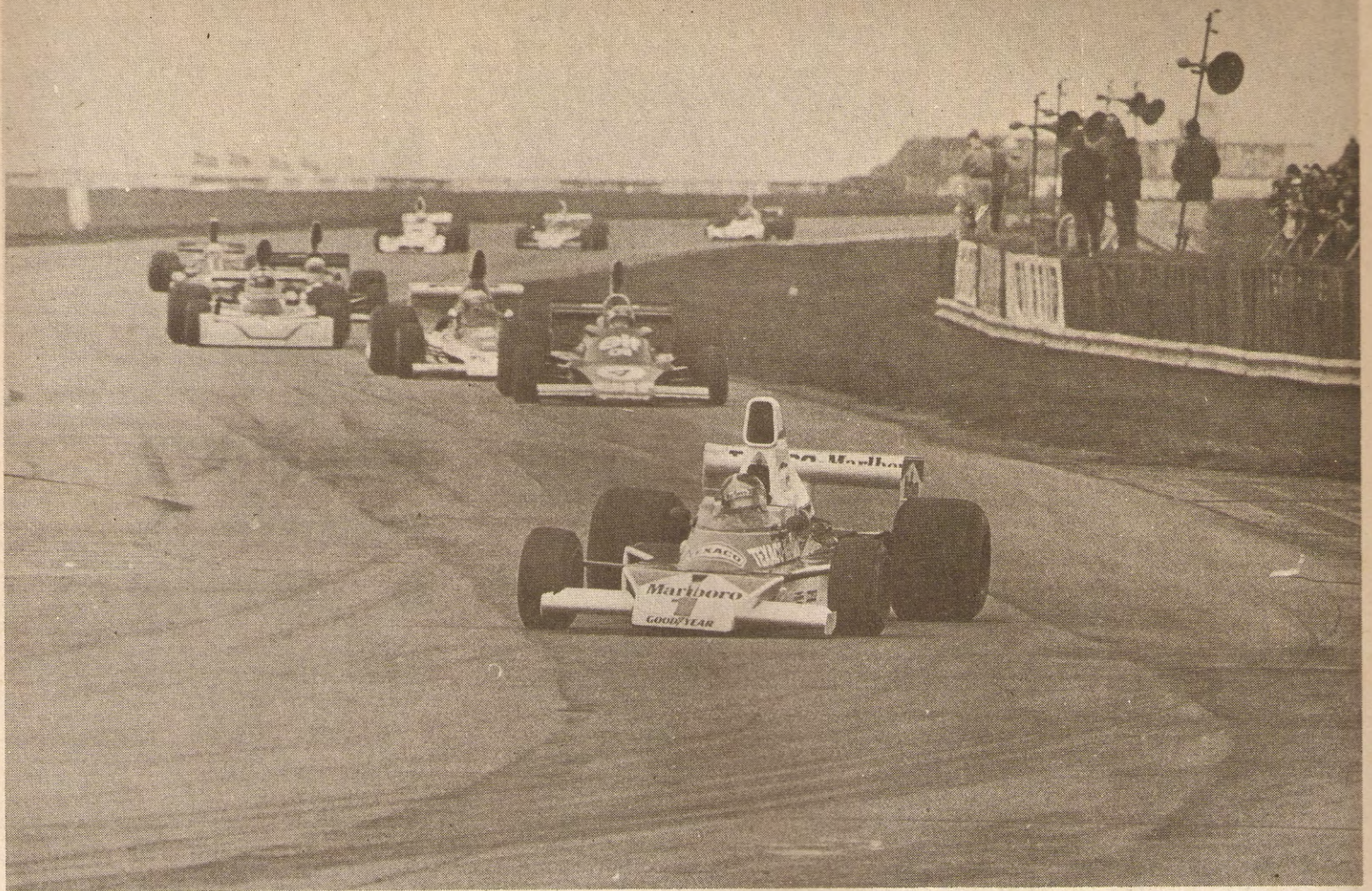
Dijon. For some reason it seemed drôle to go to watch the "Swiss GP" in France, but it turned out to be a worthwhile enough little race and after all why should the Swiss give up racing just because their government doesn't approve. In flavour however it was more of a French race than Swiss, to start with at least, as Jean-Pierre Jarier took pole with his Shadow (ahead of Fittipaldi) and romped off to a steadily expanding lead. (Fittipaldi retired immediately with clutch trouble). With the return of Shadow's South American form, however, came the same disappointing turn of fortune, and 'Jumper' stopped with a broken transmission. So Italian-Swiss Clay Regazzoni won for Ferrari, chased as hard as possible by Frenchman Depailler.

STATISTICS

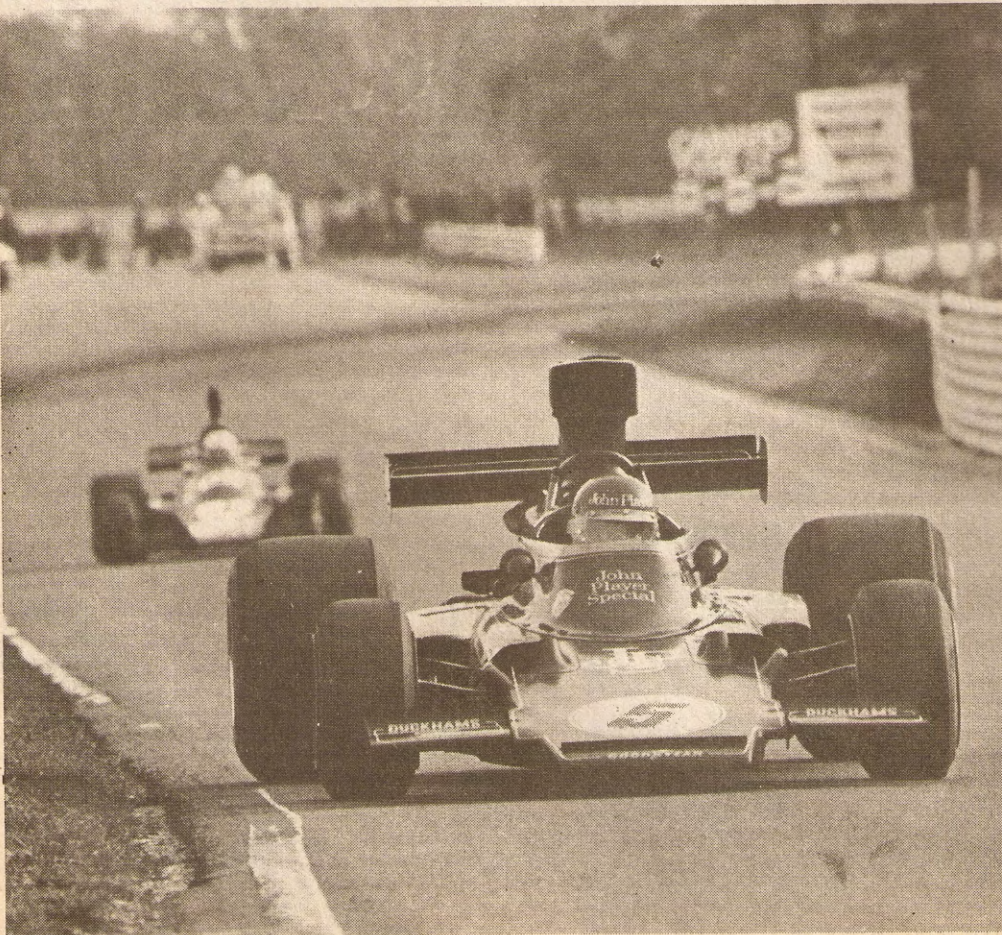
It doesn't give the full shape of the thing to remark that the 1975 GP season doesn't lend itself well to statistical analysis! Whatever can you do with a year that didn't go to the full number of races, in which four of those held were shorter than planned, and several more were disrupted to various degrees by the weather or by other factors.

For what it's worth, though, this year out of the





The reigning world champion, Emerson Fittipaldi, won two GPs and finished second in the championship (above). It was an unhappy year for Ronnie Peterson (below) who again had to rely on the ageing JPS Lotus 72.



seven times did he score points, however. Third man Carlos Reutemann started all 14 races and finished 12, including an excellent run of nine straight finishes from the beginning of the year. This works out to 85.7%, and eight of his 12 finishes were in the points.

Of the nine drivers who won the GPs, four had never done so before: Carlos Pace, Jochen Mass, James Hunt, and Vittorio Brambilla.

To look at things from a manufacturer's point of view, Ferrari won six GPs, as well as both the non-championship races they entered. McLaren scored three times to Brabham's two, but lost out by one point to the Ecclestone team for second place behind the Ferraris. It is perhaps noteworthy that all three of these teams scored victories with all six of their regular drivers. On overall "reliability" (in quotes because, of course, other things come into it) Ferrari still comes out on top, 22 finishes from 28 starts or 78.6%. McLaren had, with one private entry in South Africa and counting Fittipaldi's non-classification there as an effective retirement, 20 out of 28 for 71.4%. Brabham finished 18 out of 28, which is 64.3%.

All of these figures are good indeed. One can wonder what they might have been reduced to had those four races gone to actual scheduled competition, but it would not be entirely wrong to conclude that this year, compared to the last two, the top teams were concentrating more on the consistency side of the problem.

INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENTS

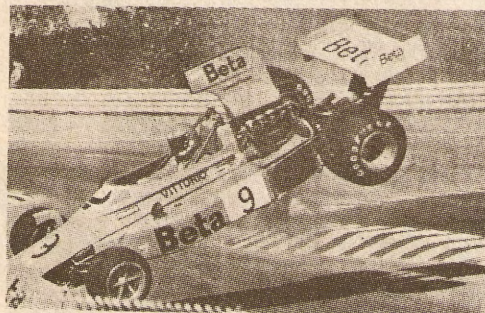
Ferrari, Niki Lauda, Clay Regazzoni. The record tells us all we really need to know about the performance of the Prancing Horse. It was superb. The Italians managed, perhaps a little surprisingly, to mount just as strong an effort as the year before and then to make it count more effectively. Rather against the odds, this year represented a second chance which came off.

It was all said last year: lots of money well spent,

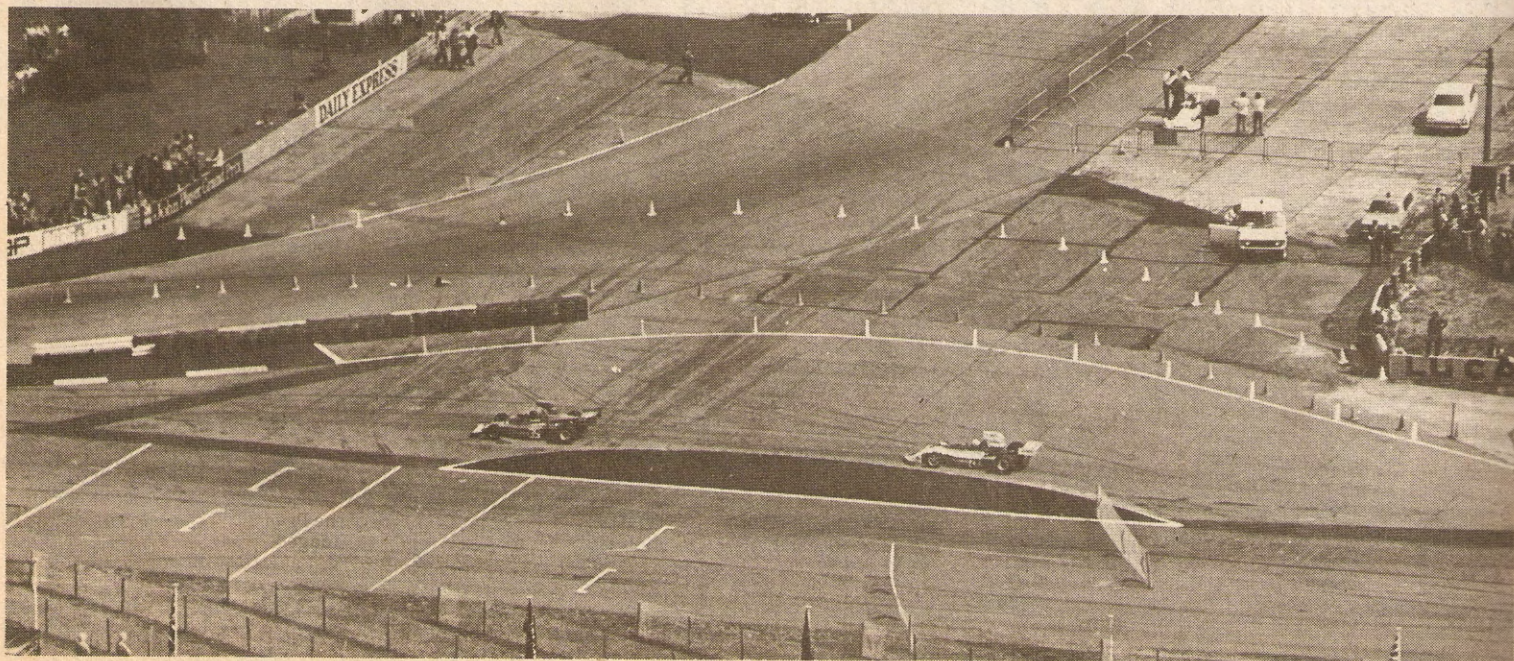


Controversies concerned catch fencing (above) and chicanes at Watkins Glen (left) and . . .

a dedicated, scientific approach with lots of painstaking testing on a private circuit; in Lauda a driver with the self-controlled talent to make the best of his team's qualities. The Austrian in fact was even more impressive than last year, for he just did not get involved in those lapses of judgement and even plain bad luck that so ruined his first Ferrari year. As for Regazzoni, who was so consistent last year, more went wrong this time and three V8 drivers beat him on points. Never the faster of the Ferrari drivers — never was he placed



. . . at Silverstone. The ideas were basically good but need a lot of refinement.



higher than Lauda on the grid — he did do fastest race lap four times, more than anyone else, and his victory in the Italian GP was an excellent team effort. His subsequent blocking performance at Watkins Glen, however, was as unnecessary as it was unforgivable.

Ferrari's designer Mauro Forghieri took the gamble that a new car to his own theories would be worthwhile, and, happy day, he was right. The 312T, the "transversale" for its transverse gearbox, was narrower, had better penetration, carried more of its weight on the front wheels, and responded better to steering inputs. With the already finely developed 12 cylinder engine it was extraordinarily smooth around all circuits and very quick around many; only at a few tracks was it merely the equal of the British cars. Late in the season a revised cylinder head gave even more performance.

Enzo Ferrari, for so long so faithful to his proud credo that his cars will be all his own, for so long so unsuccessful, finally proved 11 years after his last world title that in this era of the "kit car" it is still possible to be different and win. The motor sporting world applauds him.

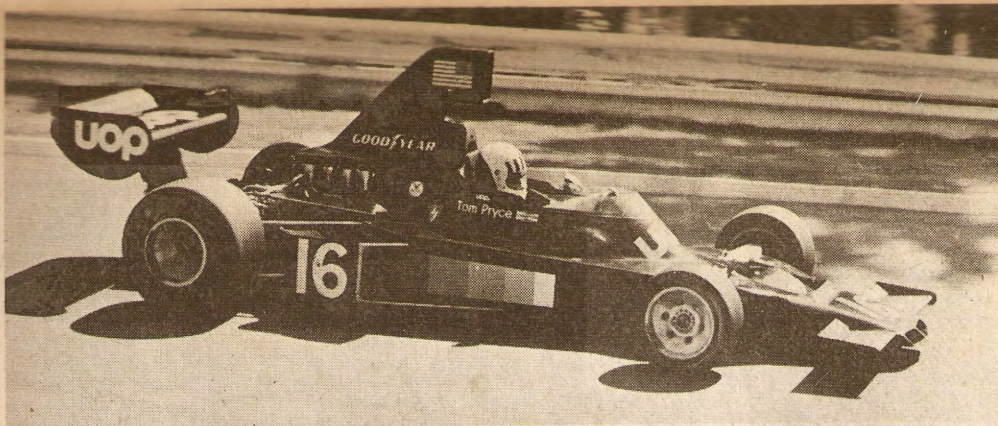
Brabham. Carlos Reutemann, Carlos Pace. Here is another different sort of team, for Bernie Ecclestone's cheerful band of craftsmen lack that para military organization of some other teams. This year, though, they achieved a better overall record than any other "kit car" organization — which was precisely what they set out to do.

Last year they'd started well and finished well, but had suffered an enervating slump in the middle. For 1975 they determined to make haste slowly: their BT44 was revised only subtly into a B model, they played a conservative game on engines, and restrained a natural urge to wild technical experimentation. There were occasions when the cars didn't seem as quick as they had the year before, but beating the reigning champions McLaren by one point with one less victory shows exactly the sort of consistency Brabhams had aimed to achieve.

The pair of Carloses proved a well matched set of drivers, perhaps the strongest in F1 today, although it must be said that they both still exhibited the "hot-cold" unevenness both men have been criticised for in the past. But they were balanced, at least — when one was off, the other was on. Frequently of course they were both on. As they split the two team GP wins between them, one might think their efforts diluted each others' chances to win the Championship, but looking at the results shows no more than two events when one driver took any points from the other. This was Reutemann both times, who had a better finishing record. His win in Germany was definitely lucky, though. Pace went out of the races three times with crashes (although it would be hard to blame him for the Barcelona crash) but his victory at home in Brazil showed a maturity and a pre-planning that even his close friends had not seen before.

As a season upon which to build for the future, this was the post-Black Jack team's finest hour.

McLaren. Emerson Fittipaldi, Jochen Mass. It is a matter of history that the World Champion's



Tom Pryce was very fast throughout the year in his Shadow but suffered from unreliability – 1976 could be his year.

withdrawal from the Spanish GP put his team to no overall disadvantage, for his young teammate was there at the finish and took all the points that were awarded. There is no way out of the fact that the team just did not do as well this year as last, though. It was their turn to have a slump in the middle, when Fittipaldi could be seen caning his car in frustrated fury without result. Twice Mass out-qualified him, and a couple of times, notably in France, he out-raced him too. Yet Emerson rallied and like Reutemann in 1974 turned in some outstanding performances at the end of the year. Very often throughout his career people have turned to the results list and said with astonishment, "Why there he is again!" It was Fittipaldi who was the most consistent, determined nemesis of Lauda in 1975. After the last hope of his third title was gone, he drove all the harder. At Monza and again at Watkins Glen, he made the race. Jochen was a happy success, especially with his outstanding drives in Brazil, France and America.

McLarens were the most technically restless team this year, which is not new, but their changes to their car were not puzzling only because other teams also were apparently "progressing backwards". The Kiwis first copied Brabham's rising-rate suspension, then abandoned rising-rate altogether. They also reverted to an earlier pattern of engine inlet ducting, and while Ferrari's direction was to put more weight on the front wheels, McLarens lengthened their wheelbase in such a way as to shift weight to the rear. There was too an unfortunately abortive attempt to let



Jody Scheckter put in some brilliant drives for the Elf Tyrrell team – but consistency was missing – here a blown engine hands the Race of Champions to Tom Pryce (below). A new team on the scene was Wilson Fittipaldi's Copersucar set-up. It was very much a learning year but with Emerson driving, next year could be very different (above centre).

the driver adjust his own front anti-roll bar, but an adoption of body-side "skirting" (one year after its first appearance) was permanent.

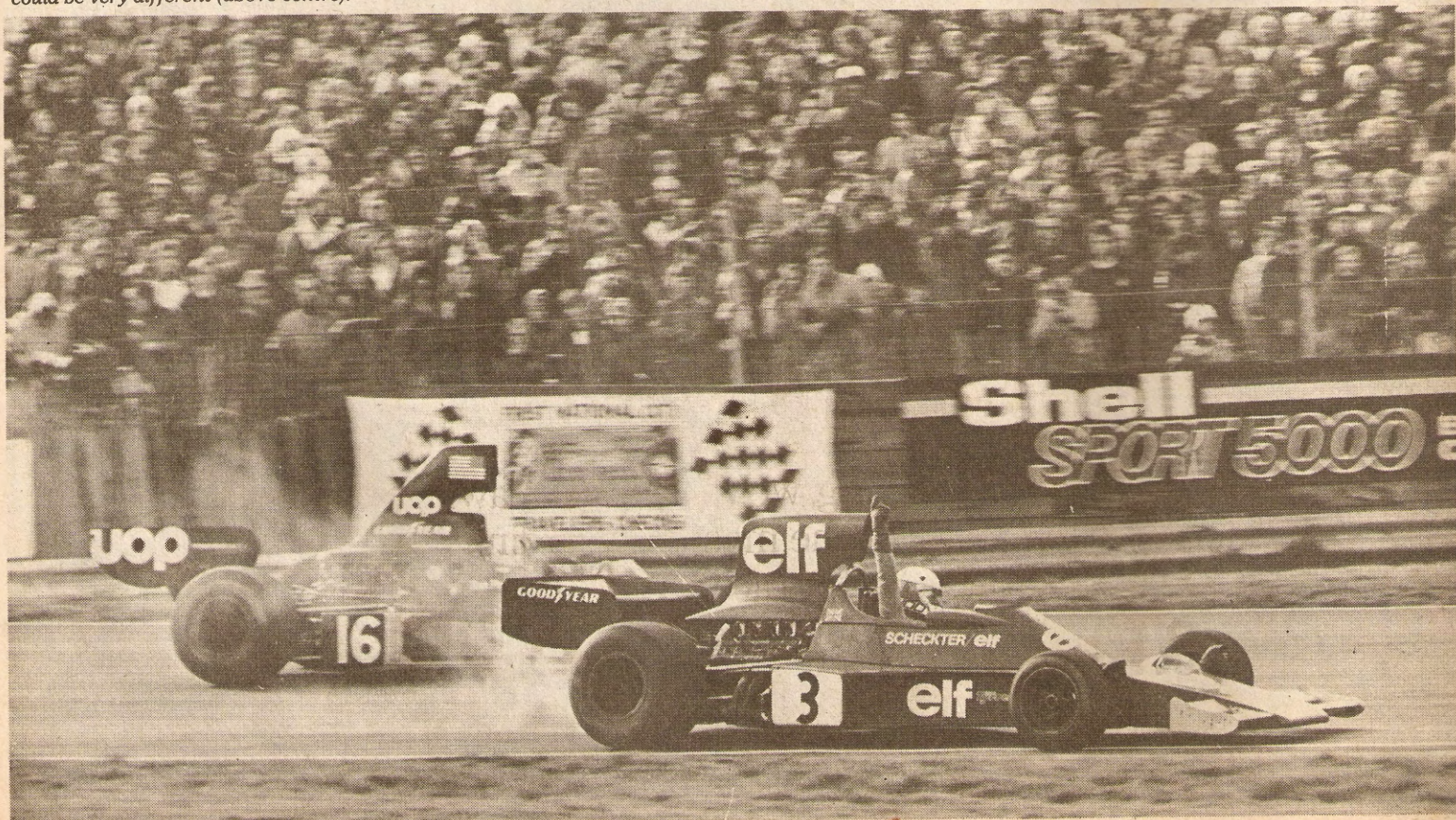
Hesketh. James Hunt. This was the long-awaited time when Hesketh Racing proved their basic excellence. After frankly dropping the ball twice earlier in the year (although he in turn was let down by a bad pit stop in Monaco) the driver put Lauda and Ferrari down thoroughly in Holland and did it with a splendid display of brains, coolness, controlled skill — all the good things. Hunt wound up the year with eight finishes from his 14 starts, which is only average reliability, but all eight were in the points. His and his team's fourth placing overall was thoroughly deserved.

The already competitive 308 design improved by the innovative use of Aeon rubber springing, Harvey Postlethwaite was encouraged to press on with an all new car. One of the season's very few all-new cars, the 308C was the most exciting, an extremely elegant design that in many respects must forecast trends in F1. What a shame the happy Hesketh band won't share any success it might have as a complete team.

Tyrrell. Jody Scheckter, Patrick Depailler. Here is the first bad story of the year. To be sure, Scheckter won his native country's GP and in a thorough manner, and in several other countries — Belgium, Britain, Germany — put up storming drives, but overall he just did not do as well as he should have. The Tyrrell team was by no means alone in experiencing this phenomenon, but on a number of occasions through the year one of their drivers was quick while the other was slow — and then perhaps at the very next circuit the situation would reverse. Depailler too was often outstanding, and got a lap record at Monaco, but his first victory eluded him. He put together a more mature season than his first in F1 last year, but still he became involved in perhaps too many shunts.

Tyrrells shared the curious tendency to retreat from theoretical advancements; they produced a revision to the basic 007 design that was lighter, but gave up inboard brakes and torsion bar suspension. Out of 31 starts, Tyrrells were represented at 22 finish lines, which is 67.7%.

Shadow. Tom Pryce, Jean-Pierre Jarier. It is hard to know what to make of this very talented team, which were far and away the fastest at the start of the year, which were often among the quickest later, which had both cars in the lead of the British GP, which always tried extremely hard and had one of the most generous sponsors — but which put up one of the poorest finishing records (37%, not counting Jarier's non-start in Argentina) and which hardly improved at all on their overall

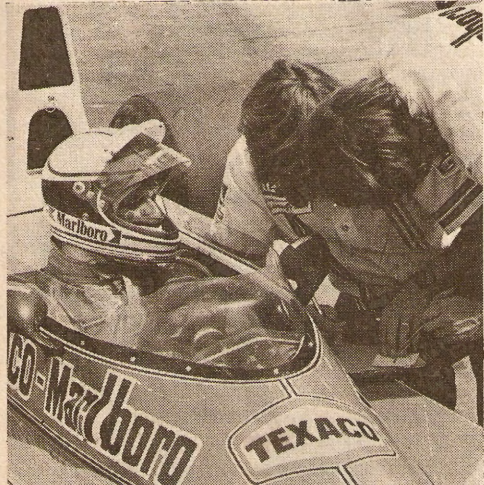


points score after three years in F1.

Both drivers must accept some of the blame, for both crashed several times, and Jarier has not one of the gentlest hands in racing. The Frenchman in fact seemed to lose his head a couple of times, and to his undoubted natural ability (for he was very fast in Sweden, Holland, England and America) must be allied a more visible maturity before he can expect success. Pryce did seem to achieve this suddenly in the middle of the year: at the French GP he abandoned his wildly spectacular style and was the quicker for it. He still had the old fire, though, and his petrol-soaked finish at the Nurburgring was gritty indeed.

Lotus. Ronnie Peterson, Jacky Ickx, Brian Henton, Jim Crawford, John Watson. The list of drivers indicates that something was wrong, for Ickx walked out of his second team in three years and Peterson tried everything he could to change over to Shadow at the beginning of the year. Largely it was a financial problem, as Colin Chapman had to fight to retain any sponsorship at all this year. Coupled with the non-success of last year's new car was the inability to develop the old one over the winter, a vital consideration in view of the constantly changing tyre situation. There were fewer mechanics on the strength and fewer spares; Team Lotus could not have tried harder, the sleepless eyes of the men proved that and so did the great range of mechanical alterations done to the cars, but once off on the wrong foot it was impossible to make up ground.

Peterson had to accept that he would not be released, and commendably turned in some tremendous drives anyway, especially in the wet at both Monaco and Austria, and when Goodyear

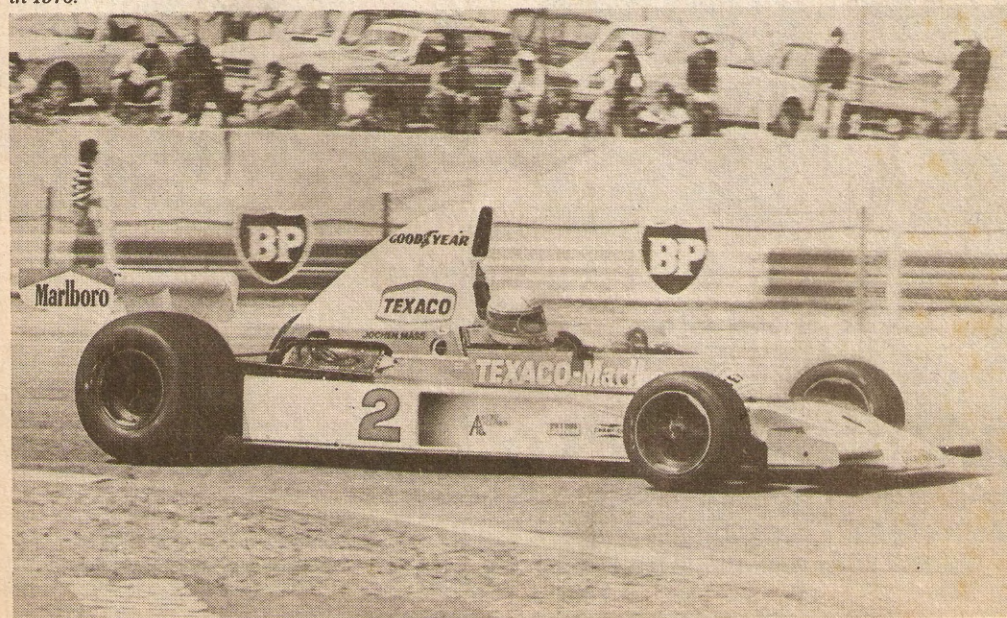


Tyres played an important part in success in 1975 — here the McLaren mechanics discuss Mass' problems.

produced some 1973-pattern tyres for America Ronnie was with the second bunch all the way in the dry.

March. Vittorio Brambilla, Lella Lombardi, Hans Stuck. Here was a surprising team, that on a budget went racing often among the best and led

Jochen Mass had a tremendous year in the second McLaren and promises to be a consistent front runner in 1976.



Wet weather played havoc with a number of races — here Jarier's V12 Shadow-Matra heads Amon's Ensign at the shortened Austrian GP.

two races and finally won a third. It was an intelligent use of those budgeted resources that was perhaps most important, for an already sound, practical car was developed through extensive private testing — many teams were unable to do that this year. "The Monza Gorrilla"

had a couple of relapses, but by and large he showed a smoothness and control that nobody had even credited him with before. Stuck too was good, especially at the Nurburgring (only his second GP in '75), indicating his sabbatical half-year racing saloons in America may have settled him, without harming his effortless speed. Lombardi, however competent a driver she is technically and although she doesn't seem to get in the way on the track, has no speed at all.

Williams. Jacques Laffite, plus many others. Only the French F2 star remained faithful this year, and was rewarded with the team's only finish in the points, a survival job into second place in Germany. His 15th starting position there was more typical of the season as a whole. Once again one can write that Frank Williams is one of the hardest triers in F1 — his whole style of approach is set by his early morning running — but once again one has to put a full stop on the end of that statement. Adoption of some cast-off Hesketh technology improved his cars during the year, and it would be very popular were this essentially talented team to keep on rising and find the financial support needed for a fair shot at the top.

Parnelli. Mario Andretti. Lord Hesketh made much of his personal F1 team, but Vel Miletich, while more self-made, is less flamboyant. It was his own money, largely, that backed this very strong attack on the GP bastions. There was only limited success, unfortunately, but for a novice season it wasn't really a bad effort. A personnel shake up showed internal strains. Andretti, already a winner in F1 (1971), had to miss two GPs for USAC events but on three grids he was in the top six and he led the Spanish GP before first lap shunt damage put him out. From his four finishes,

whose thorough professionalism won him friends in Spain. Mario shows no signs of being near retirement but may well be getting into a mood of "next year or else". He was outspoken this year about his team sometimes putting other projects in the Vel's Parnelli Jones empire before his F1; "Parnelli's Baja car got priority, for Chrissake."

Hill. Tony Brise, plus Rolf Stommelen and Alan Jones and others. Brise was certainly the find of the year and it was Graham Hill who signed him, and thereby found his team solidly enough based that he could bear to step down to retirement. Moving on from last year's Lolas to his own new 'GHIs' brought the team's competitiveness up another notch, and although it ended in disaster one cannot forget that Stommelen was leading at Barcelona when he crashed. Later on Brise was twice as high as fifth in a race, and once scored a point from his five (out of nine Hill starts) finishes. Jones gave the team a good fifth in Germany.

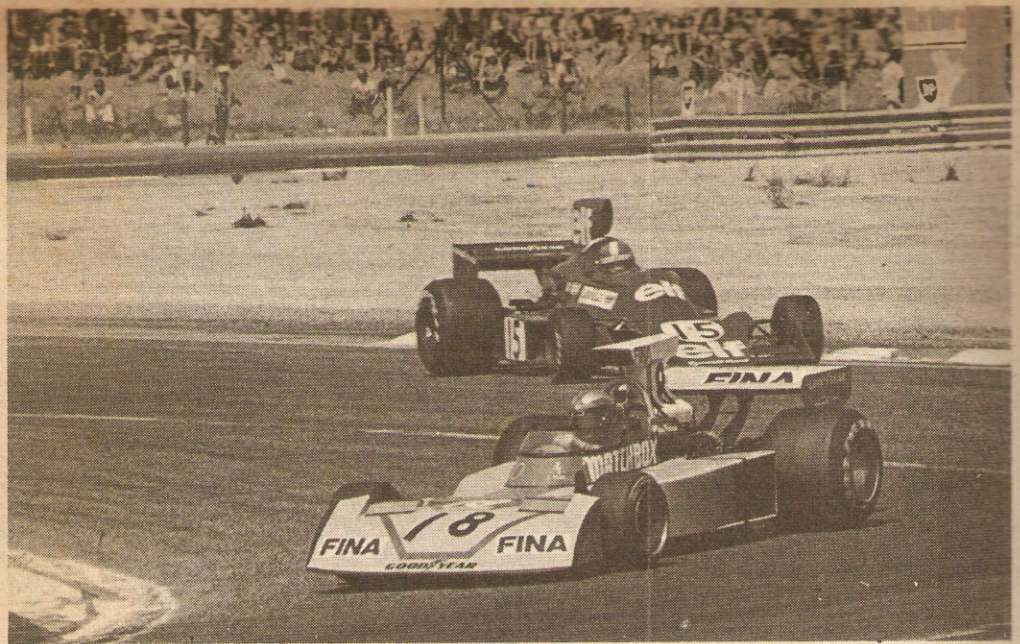
Penske. Mark Donohue, replaced by John Watson. There is no way out of recognising that Mark Donohue's last year was not a happy one, and when he received fatal injuries on the morning of the Austrian GP he had achieved only limited F1 success, two finishes in the points from 11 starts. Like Parnelli, Penske was in the first full year of GP racing, and seemed to be making progress at about the same rate. Their problems were much the same.

The team bounced back as well as it could, and John Watson joining at Watkins Glen gave them a moral shot in the arm with his plucky finish in an old model of car he hadn't even practiced.

Ensign. Roelof Wunderink, Gijs van Lennep, Chris Amon. Morris Nunn bit off a large mouthful this time, an all-new car of advanced specification, but he brought it off beautifully. One of the quiet, plodding sorts of people, he most now be taken seriously as a potential future challenger. It was van Lennep, experienced and steady driver, who gave Ensigns their single point at the Nurburgring, but driving in GPs, plus the Dijon race, it was Amon who seemed to provide the spark. As with several others of motor racing's hard triers, success here would be popular indeed.

THE TAIL ENDERS

Six manufacturers were represented without earning any points. Of BRM it is difficult to say



Two of the hardest drivers who did not get just results were Watson (Surtees) and Depailler (Tyrrell).

much positive, except that the chassis seemed good and the team members, especially disappointed driver Bob Evans, were remarkably cheerful throughout a difficult period. A brave attempt to produce a competitive V12 engine never quite came off. Wilson Fittipaldi's own Copersucar car was generally nearer the back than the front, but it was after all a very ambitious project and the tiny little, new little team actually accomplished what they set out to do.

Lolas were used by Hill only so long as his own design was unfinished, and John Nicholson only made one appearance with the ageing Lyncar, so neither record means anything. The overly-ambitious Maki was a big disappointment as it deserved to be.

John Surtees was given almost no cause to smile this year. John Watson several times — Brazil, Spain, Sweden and the Race of Champions —

drove outstandingly hard, but trying to carry on in the absence of sufficient sponsorship came to an end after the Austrian GP.

AFTERTHOUGHT

So Ferrari were the stars of the year, and it was a year that desperately needed a star. Just what went wrong with it will never be more than bar room discussion, but that something did go wrong is undeniable. There were too many surface incidents to conclude anything other than that there was a sickness underneath.

But what? How can it be cured? And will it be cured by next season?

For more than the usual reasons, the F1 world awaits the openings rounds of 1976 with baited breath.

ANALYSIS 1975 GP's

RACE DATE	1-RA 12 JAN	2-BR 26 JAN	3-ZA 1 MAR	4-E 27 APR	5-MC 11 MAY	6-B 20 MAY	7-S 8 JUN	8-NL 22 JUN	9-F 6 JUL	10-GB 19 JUL	11-D 3 AUG	12-A 17 AUG	13-I 7 SEP	14-USA 5 OCT	CHAMPIONSHIP POS. DRIVER PTS
WINNER	FIT	PCE	SCH	MSS*	LDA	LDA	LDA	HNT	LDA	FIT	RTM	BRA*	REG	LDA	1 LDA 64½
2ND	HNT	FIT	RTM	ICX*	FIT	SCH	RTM	LDA	HNT	PCE	LAF	HNT*	FIT	FIT	2 FIT 45
3RD	RTM	MSS	DEP	RTM*	PCE	RTM	REG	REG	MSS	SCH	LDA	PRY*	LDA	MSS	3 RTM 37
4TH	REG	REG	PCE	JAR*	PTR	DEP	AND	RTM	FIT	HNT	PRY	MSS*	RTM	HNT	4 HNT 33
5TH	DEP	LDA	LDA	BRA*	DEP	REG	DON	PCE	AND	DON	JON	PTR*	HNT	PTR	5 REG 25
6TH	LDA	HNT	MSS	LOM*	MSS	PRY	BRS	PRY	DEP	BRA	LEN	LDA*	PRY	SCH	6 PCE 24
MARGIN	5.91s.	5.79s.	3.74s.	1.10s.	2.78s.	9.22s.	6.29s.	1.06s.	1.59s.	NA	97.70s.	27.03s.	6.60s.	4.94s.	7- SCH 20 7- MSS 20
LEADERS	RTM	RTM	PCE	HNT	LDA	PCE	BRA	LDA	LDA	PCE	LDA	LDA	REG	LDA	9 DEP 12
	PCE	JAR	SCH	AND	PTR	BRA	RTM	REG		REG	RTM	HNT			10 PRY 8
	RTM	PCE		STO	LDA	LDA	LDA	HNT		PRY		BRA			11 BRA 6½
	HNT			PCE						SCH					12- LAF 6
	FIT			STO						PCE					12- PTR 6
				MSS						SCH					14 AND 5
				ICX						JAR					15 DON 4
				MSS						HNT					16 ICX 3
										FIT					17 JON 2
FAST. LAP	HNT	JAR	PCE	AND	DEP	REG	LDA	LDA	MSS	REG	REG	BRA	REG	FIT	18 JAR 1½ 19- BRS 1½
POLE MAN	JAR	JAR	PCE	LDA	LDA	LDA	BRA	LDA	LDA	PRY	LDA	LDA	LDA	LDA	19- LEN 1
SECOND	PCE	FIT	RTM	REG	PRY	PCE	DEP	REG	SCH	PCE	PCE	HNT	REG	FIT	21 LOM ½
ENTRY	23	23	28	26	26	24	26	25	26	28	26	30	28	24	
STARTERS	22	23	26	25	18	24	26	24	25	26	24	26	26	22	
FINISHERS	14	15	15 (+2)	9 (+1)	9	12	16	14	18	16 (-3)	9	18	14	12	
WEATHER	DRY, WARM, BREEZY	DRY, HOT.	DRY, HOT.	DRY, WARM.	WET, THEN DRY.	DRY, COOL.	DRY, HOT.	WET, THEN DRY, WINDY.	DRY, HOT.	DRY, WET, DRY, WET.	DRY, HOT.	RAIN.	DRY, WARM.	DRY, COOL, WINDY.	* HALF POINTS AWARDED.

R - RETIREMENT
 RC - RETIREMENT DUE TO CRASH
 DNS - DID NOT START
 NC - NOT CLASSIFIED
 DNF - FAILED TO QUALIFY
 DSQ - DISQUALIFIED

MARQUES AND DRIVERS - 1975 GP's

DRIVERS CHAMP		FRANCE			J. PLAYER GB			GERMANY			AUSTRIA			ITALY			USA			MARQUE	DRIVER	DRIVERS CHAMP	POINTS				
POS	DNFS	Q	H	F	Q	H	F	Q	H	F	Q	H	F	Q	H	F	Q	H	F			FINAL POS	POINTS				
1	38	1	1	1	3	3	8	1	1	3	1	1	6	1	2	3	1	1	1	FERRARI	N. LAUDA	1	64½				
5=	16	9	2	R	4	1	13	5	2	R	5	6	7	2	1	1	11	10	R	1st-72½	C. REGAZZONI	5	25				
2	25	11	9	14	8	9	R	10	1	1	11	9	14	7	3	4	3	4	R	BRABHAM	C. REUTEMANN	3	37				
4	18	5	5	R	2	1	2	2	3	R	6	12	R	10	7	R	16	12	RC	2nd-54	C. PACE	6	24				
3	21	10	4	4	7	1	1	8	7	R	3	5	9	3	2	2	2	2	2	MCLAREN	E. FITTIPALDI	2	45				
9	10½	7	3	3	10	4	7	6	-	RC	9	3	4	5	4	RC	9	3	3	3rd-53	J. MASS	7=	20				
																					P. CHARLTON						
5=	16	3	2	2	9	1	4	9	2	R	2	1	2	8	5	5	15	3	4	HESKETH	J. HUNT	4	33				
		(HILL)			(HILL)			(HILL)													4th-33	A. JONES					
																						T. PALM					
											17	13	13	21	9	10	18	9	RC			B. LUNGER					
								22	7	8	25	18	R	17	9	9						P. H. ERTL					
7	15	2	2	9	6	1	3	3	6	RC	10	7	8	11	3	8	10	6	6	TYRRELL	J. SCHECKTER	7=	20				
8	11	13	6	6	17	6	9	4	2	9	7	3	11	12	5	7	8	9	RC	5th-25	P. DEPAILLER	9	12				
		21	12	12																		J.-P. JABOUILLE					
																	20	16	R			M. LECLERE					
																						P. I. SCHECKTER					
13=	2	16	15	R	1	1	RC	16	2	4	15	3	3	14	5	6	7	9	11	SHADOW	T. PRYCE	10	8				
15	1½	4	5	8	11	1	RC	12	6	R	14	14	R	13	8	R	4	3	R	6th-9½	J.-P. JARIER	18	1½				
10=	3	17	10	10	16	13	R	18	23	R	13	4	5	11	7	R	14	4	5	JPS	R. PETERSON	12=	6				
10=	3	19	15	R																		7th-9	J. ICKX	16	3		
					25	14	RC							25	13	13						J. CRAWFORD					
					21	13	16										19	12	12			B. HENTON					
		(SURTEES)			(SURTEES)			14	11	R	(SURTEES)						(PENSKE)					J. WATSON					
																						P. E. KEIZAN					
																						P. G. TUNMER					
16=	1	8	7	R	5	5	6	11	10	R	8	1	1	9	23	R	6	4	7	MARCH	V. BRAMBILLA	11	6½				
18	½	26	18	18	22	23	RC	24	7	7	21	17	17	24	9	RC	(WLLMS)			8th-7½	L. LOMBARDI	21	½				
					14	7	RC	7	6	R	4	4	RC	16	8	RC	13	7	8			H. STUCK					
		(PENSKE)			15	5	5	19	23	R	20	DNF										P. M. DONOHUE					
														(COPERSUC)								WILLIAMS	A. MERZARIO				
		16	11	11	19	21	R	15	2	2	12	14	R	18	8	R	20	DNF			9th-6	J. LAFFITE	12=	6			
		(HILL)			(HILL)			(HILL)			(HILL)			(HILL)			(HILL)						T. BRISE				
																							I. SCHECKTER				
																							D. MAGEE				
		24	DNF																				F. MIGAULT				
								DNF															I. ASHLEY				
											27	20	R										J. VONLANTHEN				
														22	12	14							R. ZORZI				
		(MARCH)			(MARCH)			(MARCH)			(MARCH)			(MARCH)			24	DNF					L. LOMBARDI				
10=	3	15	5	5	12	7	12	13	9	R	19	11	RC	15	11	RC	5	5	R	PARNELLI 10th-5	M. ANDRETTI	14	5				
											24	13	16	23	24	RC						HILL	R. STOMMELEN				
																							11th-3	G. HILL			
		(WLLMS)																					F. MIGAULT				
																							V. SCHUPPAN				
		20	12	16	20	9	10	20	5	5													A. JONES	17	2		
16=	1	12	7	7	13	8	15	17	7	RC	16	9	15	6	9	RC	17	13	RC				T. BRISE	19=	1		
13=	2	18	14	R	(MARCH)			(MARCH)			(MARCH)												PENSKE	M. DONOHUE	15	4	
		(SURTEES)			(SURTEES)			(JPS)			(SURTEES)						12/22	9	9				12th-2	J. WATSON			
								DNQ			26	18	18				22	10	R				ENSIGN	R. WUNDERINK			
		22	15	15				23	6	6													13th-1	G. VAN LENNEP	19=	1	
											22	11	12	19	12	12								C. AMON			
																								BRM	M. WILDS		
		25	17	17							23	18	R	20		R								B. EVANS			
		23	18	R	24	15	¹⁹ NC	21	17	R							23	10	10				COPERSUCAR	W. FITTIPALDI			
														26	10	11								A. MERZARIO			
											(HILL)			(HILL)										LOLA	R. STOMMELEN		
																								G. HILL			
					21	15	17																	LYNCAR	J. NICHOLSON		
																								MAKI	H. FUSHIDA		
								DNQ						DNQ										T. TRIMMER			
		14	13	13	18	10	11	(JPS)			18	9	10				(PENSKE)							SURTEES	J. WATSON		
					23	17	¹⁸ NC																		D. MORGAN		



There is a certain amount of roll on corners, the car understeering fairly strongly, especially when cornering under power.

An extrovert little car

The greatest luxury in motoring is to have some power in reserve. Though small cars have many advantages in modern traffic conditions, not to mention the petrol bill, one must pay attention all the time and row the little things along with the gearlever. The main blessing of a big car is the way in which it stays ahead of the traffic without the constant effort of keeping the revs up all the time.

The Renault 5TS offers the best of both worlds, for it has the advantages of compact size and fuel economy, yet it possesses the reserve of power of a much larger car. It has the body shell of a car originally designed as an 845 cc vehicle, for which the largest available engine has been the 956 cc unit of the 5TL version. Now, it has been endowed with a tuned Renault 12TS engine, giving 4 bhp more than it does in that car. With the considerable capacity, for such a car, of 1289 cc, it develops 64 bhp, which is distinctly useful with a kerb weight of only 14¾ cwt.

Naturally such an engine pulls higher gears than the normal unit and the car has been endowed with anti-roll bars at both ends. As this is an up-market model, it has been given a lot of extra equipment, including a rev-counter, rear window washer and wiper, extra halogen lights, and interior carpeting. Recent Renault models have perhaps been noted more for their practical features than for their good looks, but the 5 is an attractive little thing, with clean, functional lines and smooth body panels that would be easier to straighten after a slight contretemps than some of the contorted shapes one sees.

The engine has pushrod-operated valves and a twin-choke Weber carburettor. Like all Renault motors, it has a lot of low-speed torque and calls for very little gearchanging. Driven thus, it is outstandingly economical and appears actually to use less petrol than an 850 cc Renault 4, driven at a similar speed. If the gears are used a great deal and the car is driven continuously at maximum speed the consumption is a good deal heavier, but unfortunately such driving is seldom possible these days. Pressing on a bit and keeping one eye on the driving mirror, the carefree motorists in a hurry may bring the consumption down to the region of 30 mpg but on more leisurely journeys he may well see 45 mpg.

The speedometer often goes over the 100 mph

mark, though the honest maximum is just under that speed. At a cruising speed as high as 90 mph, the car is rather quieter than would be expected. It has a healthy sound when accelerating hard, but it cannot be regarded as objectionably noisy, such sound as it produces being all part of its sporting character. The amount of wind noise is moderate and road noise is seldom heard, apart from an occasional thump on bad roads.

It is easy to spin the front wheels, even on dry roads, but the traction is very good and its simple to make a racing start. The acceleration is most satisfying and all the more enjoyable because the car looks small and innocent. A floor-mounted gearlever is standard and, in the past, competition

drivers have preferred the dashboard umbrella handle. Now the floor change has been improved and it works just as well as the push-pull device. Indeed, the excellent gearchange adds to the fun of driving the little machine.

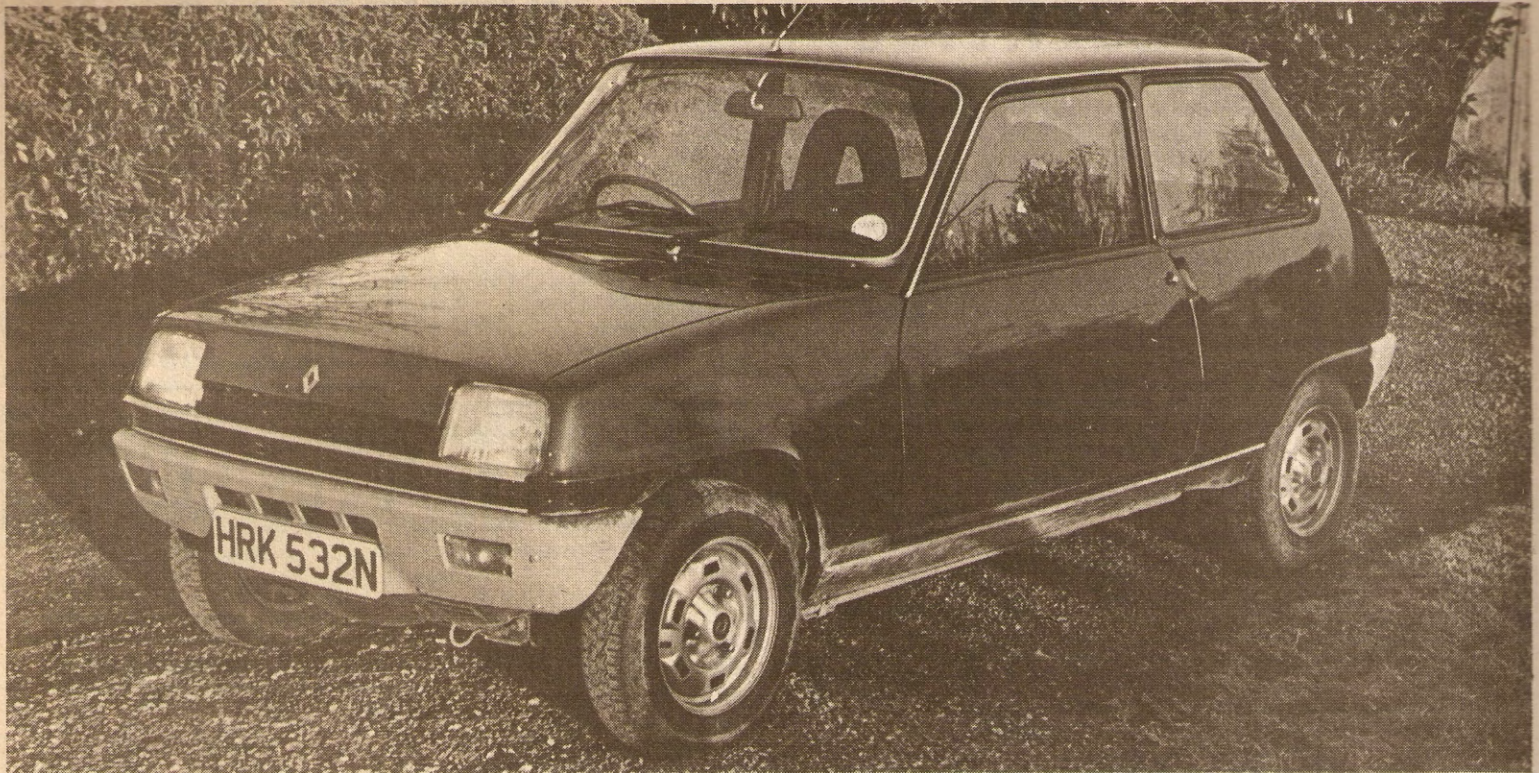
Fun is what the 5TS is all about, the handling qualities adding to the enjoyment. At first, the steering feels a little unusual, because the castor return is exceptionally strong. One soon becomes used to the steering response, however, and the roadholding is found to be very safe, giving great confidence on slippery surfaces. There's a certain amount of roll on corners, but this is not excessive, the car generally understeering fairly strongly, especially when cornering under power. Naturally, there is a more noticeable difference in handling between power-on and power-off with the bigger and more potent engine.

The brakes are well up to the extra performance, showing no distress during hard driving. The car is particularly rewarding in hilly country,

Compact three-door bodysell is entirely practical and a trend-setter for small car design.



Road test



The Renault 5TS offers the best of both worlds with compact size, good fuel economy and a healthy reserve of power.

the way it holds its speed up considerable gradients being most satisfying. When following less lively cars the Renault can be treated as having a 2-speed gearbox and still keep up with the traffic. At night, the normal lights can be employed or a switch can select two extra spotlights that come on when main beam is used.

The power of these lights is so tremendous that I fully expected the autumn leaves to catch fire!

Though the car is only 11ft 5½in long and 5ft wide, it converts into a remarkably roomy estate. Here, the full advantage of front wheel drive is seen, for there is no back axle and so a really low floor level can be used. With a modern low roof, a

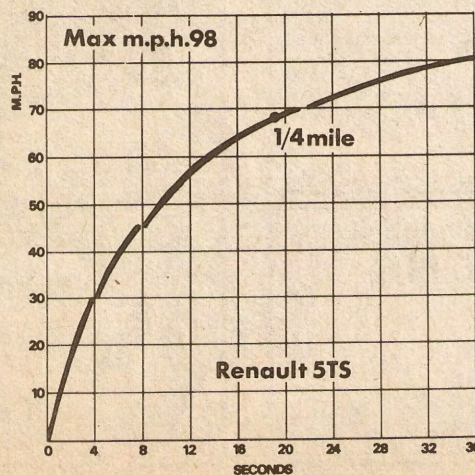
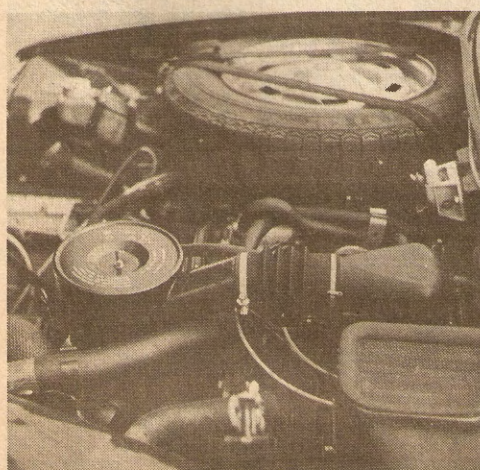
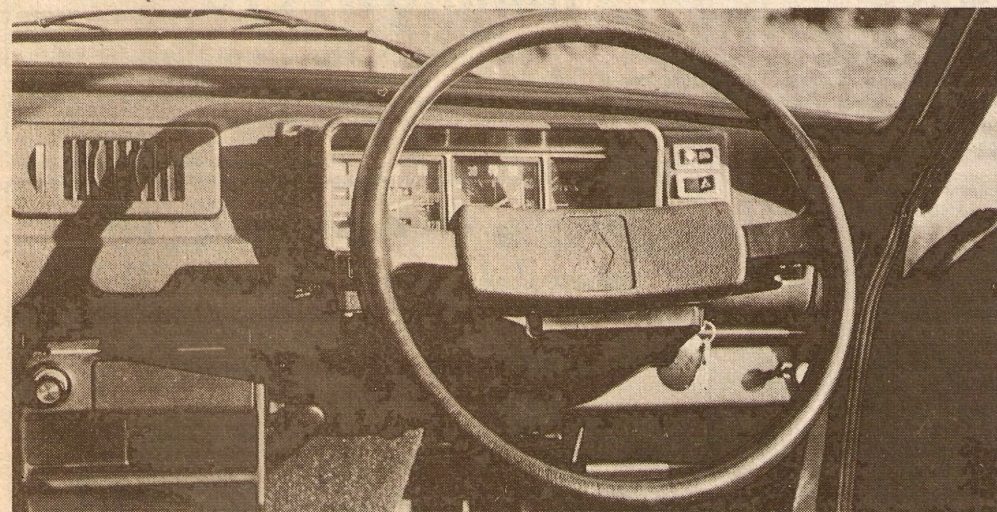
high floor unduly restricts the loading capacity of an estate-type body. The spare wheel is neatly stowed under the front bonnet, but need not be disturbed for most jobs around the power unit.

With the rear seat in its normal position, two extra passengers have plenty of space and their entry is aided by the neat folding front seats. When the rear seat back is erect a well-arranged shelf conceals the luggage from prying eyes, loading and unloading being particularly easy because the big door opens right out of the way. Its window is kept free of mud spray by wiping and washing equipment, which is particularly desirable with estate-type bodies.

Paper being expensive, I shall not waste AUTOSPORT'S valuable space in praising the seats, for everybody knows that Renault seats are always very comfortable. These are new ones for the 5TS, with "horse collar" headrests that avoid that awful isolation of the people behind. The torsion bar suspension complements the seats in giving all the occupants a ride worthy of a bigger car, though the effective damping avoids any feeling of excessive softness. A soft rim and small diameter ensure that the steering wheel will suit the modern taste, while the heating and ventilation system, though not at all elaborate, does its job efficiently.

The price of the 5TS saddens me, but I suppose we shall have to get used to that. At least it should be cheap to run, by today's standards, and you could buy a much more extravagant car that would not be half so much fun to drive. 5TS spells FUN in capital letters for even speed limits are enjoyable in this extrovert little car.

Below: instrumentation and switch arrangement is better than the French norm. Below left: Space saving under bonnet spare wheel location.



SPECIFICATION AND PERFORMANCE DATA

Car Tested: Renault 5TS 3 door saloon/estate, price £17,815 including car tax and VAT.

Engine: Four cylinders 73 x 77 mm (1289 cc). Compression ratio 9.5 to 1. 64 bhp (DIN) at 6,000 rpm. Pushrod-operated overhead valves. Weber twin-choke carburettor.

Transmission: Single dry plate clutch. 4-speed synchromesh gearbox with central remote control, ratios 1.03, 1.52, 2.37 and 3.66 to 1. Hypoid final drive, ratio 3.625 to 1. Constant-velocity driveshafts to front hubs.

Chassis: Integral steel body and chassis. Independent front suspension by wishbones and torsion bars. Rack and pinion steering. Independent rear suspension by trailing arms and torsion bars. Anti-roll bars both ends and telescopic dampers all round. Servo-assisted disc/drum brakes. Bolt-on disc wheels, fitted Michelin 145-13 tyres.

Equipment: 12-volt lighting and starting. Speedometer. Rev-counter. Fuel gauge. Voltmeter. Heating. Demisting and ventilation system with heated rear window. Windscreen wipers and washers with rear window wipers and washers. Flashing direction indicators with hazard warning. Cigar lighter. Reversing lights.

Dimensions: Wheelbase 7ft 10.5 ins. Track 4ft 2.25 in/4ft 1 in. Overall length 11ft 5.5 in. Width 5ft. Weight 14 cwt 3grs.

Performance: Maximum speed 98 mph. Speeds in gears: Third 70 mph, second 45 mph, first 30 mph. Standing quarter-mile 19.1s. Acceleration: 0-30 mph 40s, 0-50 mph 9.2s, 0-60 mph 13.1s, 0-80 mph 33.5s.

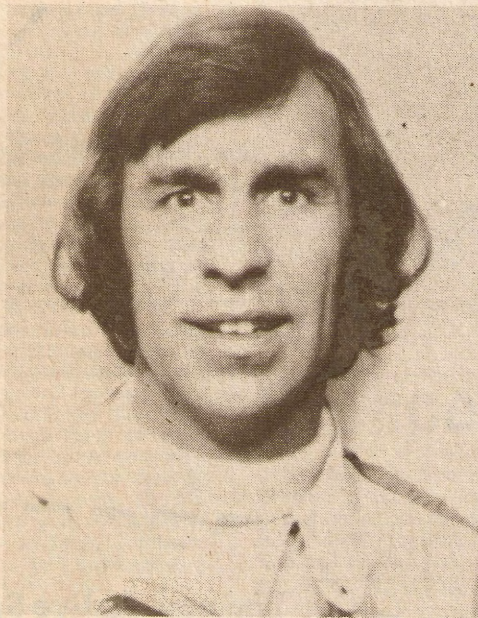
Fuel Consumption: 30 to 45 mpg.

Graham Wenham: Mini 7 King

For all too many people in British racing, there's an overriding sense of want, ambition and take. Thus it's always a pleasure to talk to someone who just enjoys his racing, isn't mortgaging his house to the hilt or dashing off testing all the time and upsetting his home life. In what could be termed 'the lower realms' of racing, there are a number of drivers and constructors who do the thing for sheer enjoyment, don't expect a lot of their racing, and, as Graham Wenham said "don't expect to embarrass Fittipaldi." Wenham is one of those men who enjoys his racing, it's his hobby, not his profession. Money is not a problem in the world of Mini Seven racing, the class he dominated this year. He reckons that racing his 850 Mini as far afield as Croft ("once up there is enough"), winning 16 out of his 21 races this year and taking both the National Mini Seven championship and TEAC's Mini Seven series, has cost him £30 per race. As a foreman plumber in and around London, with a wife and two teenage daughters, he can't afford much more than that, so it's been preparation of the car that has paid off. And it's typical of the Mini Seven Racing Club that his success has come thanks, partially, to his unpaid friend Mick Derrick who prepares the car.

In fact it was Derrick who was instrumental in getting Wenham interested in driving a Mini around the tracks of Britain. It was slightly a case of "I was living in Iver Heath (Berkshire) watching TV and getting thoroughly bored until . . . I discovered Mini Seven." The more accurate story is that, true, Graham was watching TV on his Sunday afternoons, working as a plumber for the same company as he does now. Then Mick Derrick suggested they go down to Brands one Sunday, and it just happened to be the day of the Mini Festival back in 1967. Standing at Druids, Wenham thought to himself "Christ, I could bloody do that." He joined the Mini Seven club and asked around about building a car, and armed with the advice, bought a 1959 Mini with about 70,000 miles on the clock and set about building it up. Perhaps it's worth noting for Leyland's satisfaction that two of the original parts still exist on Wenham's current car: the steering column and the gear stick. Anyway, Bill Blydenstein came along to one of the Mini Seven clubnights and Graham was so impressed with him that he asked Bill to build an engine for his car. "I wanted an engine capable of winning races, so that I just had to see if I was capable of winning them too. Well, in my first race in 1968, I came last at Lydden, and in the second, I finished second to last. Things were definitely improving, I thought." In his third race of the year, he finished eighth and that was about that.

Leading the field as usual, Graham Wenham splashes through the puddles at Snetterton at the head of a Mini Seven field.



The next year, 1969, was important for the fact that he won his first race, beating such aces at the time as Viv Church and Clive Trickey. "I'd won a race and I felt great." That was the high spot of the year, but low spots were writing the car off at Gerrards at Mallory and having an unfortunate collision between valves and pistons in the engine department. For 1970 then, Wenham bought Clive Trickey's engine but ran out of money halfway through the season, and duly retired to set up a good engine for 1971.

It was a wise move. "It just clicked that season, despite the fact that I missed out the first race and I always seemed to be second or third in the championship, but my best ten results saw me come out on top and I won the National championship." After that, Graham had a chat with Blydenstein again and got him to pay his entry fees for the 1972 season, but as with 1973, it proved disastrous: "I seemed to retire rather than complete a race. So at the end of 1973, I amicably parted company with Bill." After two seasons of depression from racing, 1974 must have seemed the final nail. Graham built up a new engine for the first race but it blew up in the Paddock at Silverstone while he was warming it up. So they built another one. "This one could be put down to

a driver's error," says Graham. "I blew it up at Croft changing from second to first instead of third. It doesn't half make a noise when you do that, you know."

Despite the amusement of the moment in retrospect, it was nearly the very end. "I was really ready to chuck it in, but instead we built a real nail of an engine. We went to Castle Combe really determined to finish. As it happened I led all but the last corner and we were still running it in. I was beaten by 0.5s into second place. From then on we started developing the engine and picked up four seconds, a first and a third. Over the winter, all I did was fit some new pistons and it's been absolutely reliable. I've been so confident in it lasting." In a season of 21 races, Graham has won all five TEAC championship races, nine National Mini Seven races, had a class win in a special saloon event, taken three seconds and a third. "And I retired once when the core plug fell out; on lap nine when I was leading."

Graham's never driven anything else but a Mini Seven: "I race purely and simply as a hobby. I see no point in going out of the Seven to Miglia or 1275. If someone was to come along and ask me to run in it, that might be different, but I've got no ambitions to embarrass Fittipaldi." Cost is obviously a great plus sign for all the Mini Seven competitors: "In 1971 I reckoned it cost me £10 a race, I reckoned my hobby of motor racing cost me £3 a week for the year. This year the actual outlay is in the region of £30 per race. That's broken down with 2½ sets of tyres for those 21 races, cost £160; engine components, £180; entries, £110; and petrol and oil, £100. "There are no bonuses or the like in Mini Seven, although TEAC were generous and offered £10 for their first member home in each of the five championship races." That man, in each case was Wenham, so there was a little return.

The Mini lives back in a lock-up at Iver Heath, where Graham lives with his wife Milly and two teenage daughters. Family support for racing is occasional, so Wenham relies very much on the man who introduced him to the sport in the first place, Mick Derrick, who's also editor of the Mini Seven Racing Club's magazine. "Without Mick," says Graham, "I wouldn't be where I am. He's the mechanic, we've got a tremendous set up. I get my kick out of driving, and he gets his out of preparing the car and seeing it winning."

Even though the relative cost of racing the Mini is pretty small, it requires a lot of time just checking out the small details. You can't say Graham, just leave it and get it out of the garage again the next weekend. It requires more than that and they've got a system worked out whereby certain parts are checked every three or four races. They somehow hit upon the "right" handling setup, and Graham is often told how his car goes round corners like a train, so that presents few problems. His main problem now is a new bodysell. "This one on the car has been with me now since 1969 when I bought it for £10 from a bloke's garden. It's beginning to show signs of wear now, so it's got to be another for next year." The actual Mini, Graham feels, is pretty strong. He's never been injured in a Mini Seven crash, and providing one doesn't have a head-on crash in the car, he feels that they are pretty safe.

From the humble beginnings of the man at the clubnight going round asking how to build up a car, Graham has recently "been conned" into becoming vice-chairman of the club. He also helps out Mick Derrick with the club magazine which his family (five) and Derrick's family (six) all put together round a table once a month, each child and adult having a certain job to do. There are around 211 paid up members of the racing sections, and around 67 cars currently in the series. Certain members (Chris Tyrrell) feel that Graham is rather the old man of the field. Up until a recent Silverstone meeting, Graham had managed to keep his 38 years pretty secret, but Tyrrell went to Somerset House, photostated Wenham's birth certificate, and duly publicised it all over the circuit. But at 38 or any other age, the Mini Seven club is obviously tremendous value, and with the support of Leyland next year, that number of 67 cars may well increase. However, if anyone's going to grab any of the honours, they've got a lot of experience up against them, and Wenham obviously won't be an easy man to beat.



Rallycross at Brands

Nearly, but not quite the first ever rallycross at Brands Hatch takes place on January 25. But it is the first rallycross for the BRSCC who are organising the event. Although it is still in the experimental stage, the BRSCC naturally hope that the Brands venue will become full time.

The first Brands rallycross took place way back in 1963 and was won by Timo Makinen in an Austin Healey 3000, after television suggested that a motoring event would replace horse racing which was frozen off at the time. While that year's course included parts of the access roads, next year's course takes place right in front of the grandstands. Competitors will use the conventional starting grid and will turn right on to the grass halfway round Paddock Bend, running down the hill parallel to Pilgrims Rise, and turning right on the grass behind the marshals' post at Bottom Bend. The course then runs across the camber of the hill towards the startline tower, turning left on to

the tarmac at Bottom Bend. Competitors then proceed along the circuit through Bottom Straight and into Clearways, where they make a right hand turn halfway round Clearways and cut across the grass joining the circuit again at the exit to Clearways and turning right to come past the pits in the normal manner.

The actual vehicle regulations are rather oddly worded and are being amended, but suffice it to say that the BRSCC are very keen to have all the regular rallycross people to this, their inaugural rallycross event.

There is a maximum of 80 entries for the meeting and classes will be up to 1000 cc, 1001 cc to 1400 cc and over 1400 cc. Cars will start in groups of four and will complete three laps. Each car will have three different timed runs with the fastest time for a three lap run counting for awards. Entries close on January 12, but those interested should contact Miss Ann Bradshaw, at BRSCC, Empire House, Chiswick High Road, London W4 5TW, tel: 01-995 0345.



Mike Stephens took this Mexico to victory at the Filtrate trial near Ilkley.

Spencer's shock defeat

Mike Stephens added the Filtrate Trophy to his already impressive collection of awards when he travelled north from the Midlands last Sunday to collect best performance, on index, at the Ilkley & District

Filtrate Trophy Trial at Bolton Abbey near Ilkley.

But the story of the day was the defeat - only the second all season - for double national champion Geoff Spencer, who was beaten by five marks by Barry Parker from Liverpool.

Spencer, in fairness, did not have a trouble-free day for at the end of the first round part of his ballast slipped and ripped off the fan in his Cooper S. However, he carried on with fingers crossed and finished five marks behind Parker, who took the class on 37 marks. Brian Midgley, in his 1.0 Mini chased Spencer hard and was only a mark behind at the end beating Kevin Caley (Mini) who had an identical score but fewer "cleans".

Stephens, in his Mexico, dropped 44 marks in the morning and then romped away in the afternoon, dropping only eight more for a 52-mark total which was no less than 26 better than class winner Keith Phizacklea in an Escort Estate.

Early on Harry Tregenza (Mexico) was a threat to the Escort driver, being only nine marks adrift, but he had a poor afternoon and finished 30 marks down. Stan Peel, in an Anglia, was third on 123 marks.

Two Austin Seven Chummys took first and second in the sports car class. D. Laxton beat John Busfield by a mere two marks, Busfield having made a remarkable recovery in the second half after being 21 marks behind at the break. Best of the modern cars was John Pape's Sprite, a long way down on 161 marks.

Class 4 went, predictably, to Mike Hinde in his Imp on 80 marks from P. Adelman (Imp) on 119 marks, who pipped John England's VW by two marks.

Overall: M. Stephens (Mexico), 52 marks lost
Class winners: B. Parker (Cooper), 37 marks
K. Phizacklea (Escort Estate), 78 marks; D. Laxton (Austin Seven Chummy), 125 marks; M. Hinde (Imp), 80 marks; C. Naylor (Imp), 160 marks
Novice: B. Buttle (Jowett Chummy), 187 marks.

Following our piece about helmets last week, it should be noted that as well as helmets complying to BS2495 with the fire specification, those complying with Snell 70 are also eligible for 1976.

Although we said that the Reynard was still waiting to be tested, we would note that Adrian Reynard looked particularly grubby at the APG FF2000 prizegiving, and claimed to have been testing his FF at Snetterton that day.

Jackson's fifth in a row

Winner in 1974, Gordon Jackson scored his fifth sporting trial success on the trot last weekend when his IbeX dropped only 18 marks to win the Gloucester Trial, run by London CC with the help of the Peterborough based Rent-a-Hill Marshals organisation. Jackson, who thus finishes up second to Jack Pearce in the BT&RDA series, and who would have led a similar position if he had registered for the RAC series, led throughout the day down at Bisley, near Stroud.

On the first round of the 10 sections he dropped 14 marks to head John Fack (Impunity) by three with the rest collecting at least 20 marks. In the second round, over the same sections, but with variations, he dropped a mere two marks, and he really rubbed salt into the wound by dropping only a further two on the last round to finish 12 marks better off than John Fack's Impunity.

Jack Pearce, who has lost the art of winning in recent weeks, clobbered a tree root in the Kincraft and stalled on the third round to lose second to Fack by four marks. Julian Fack closed to within one mark for fourth spot on 35 marks while Bill Warr's Cannon and Reg Allen (Kin-craft) were fifth and sixth.

A special award for the best turned out car, considering age, was won by George Stone of the promoting club, in a Cannon which he had restored to pristine condition and, what's more, he completed the course.

1. G. Jackson (IbeX), 18 marks; 2. John Fack (Impunity), 30 marks; 3. J. Pearce (Kin-craft), 34 marks; 4. Julian Fack (Impunity), 35 marks.

RAC Championship: Final positions: 1. Pearce 148 pts; 2. Julian Fack, 136 pts; 3. John Fack, 129 pts; 4. Lol Hurt (Ford Special), 104 pts.

BT&RDA placings: 1. Pearce, 240 marks; 2. Jackson, 239 marks; 3. Julian Fack, 229 marks; 4. John Fack, 22 marks; 5. T. Harrison and J. Benson, 221 marks.

LCC offer big LCAMC awards

In conjunction with the London Counties Association of Motor Clubs, the London Car Club are holding their Londoner Rally championship next year with tremendous financial rewards of £500. The main award is for £250 for the championship and the Londoner Trophy presented by the London Car Club. £100 goes to the second man, plus the Club Trophy presented by Inter-Credit International Ltd and third man gets £50, the Committee Trophy presented by Ian Walker (Service) Ltd. The first novice receives £100 plus the Juniper Trophy which is sponsored by J. W. E. Banks and Sons Ltd, Britover (Continental) Ltd, Burton Performance Centre and Ripspeed.

There are 18 rounds in the championship, all of which are events in

the LCAMC rally championship. Members competing for the London Rally championship must be members of the London Car Club and may not claim points retrospectively. Application forms for club membership, enrolment in the LCAMC rally championship, and decals for the LCC, Inter-Credit and IWR Blue Flash engines which must be worn on the car throughout the season, may be obtained from Terry Robinson, 14 Barnsbury Park, London N1 1HQ. Tel: 01-607 5964.

Events in the series are: January 10/11, Cloverleaf; February 7/8, Fildyke; February 14/15, Arlington; February 21/22, Reddings; March 6/7, Championship; April 3/4, Servais; June 26/27, Breckland; August 7/8, 200; August 21/22, August Moon; August 28/29, Mad Hatter; September 4/5, Nighthawk; September 18/19, Uniflo; September 25/26, Crowfoot; October 2/3, Starlight; October 9/10, Britvic; November 27, Croydon; December 18/19, Midnight.

Christmas autocross in North East

Eight clubs in the North East are joining forces to put on the first-ever autocross at Christmas. On December 28, South Dissington Farm, Ponteland, will be the venue for the event, which has received support from Silverscreen Printers.

A 1000 yards course in a stubble field will be used and already many of the regulars in *The Journal/ANECC* Championship have indicated they will be competing.

Clubs co-promoting the event are Cramlington, Newcastle, Hadrian, Ryton, Hexham, Tynemouth, Berwick and South Scotland. LTD will be worth £15 and class wins will start at £10. Regs are now available from Des Stewart, 25 Highburn, Stonelaw Grange, Cramlington. Tel: Cramlington 2572. A maximum of 100 entries will be accepted at £3 per head and the closing date is December 18.

RS2000s in Northants

Martyn Sims and Tony Hardware scored a comfortable win last Saturday night on the Pilgrims Progress rally run by the Bedford AEC over a 180 mile route mainly in Northamptonshire. In their RS2000 they dropped 16m 35s on an event which contained selectives totalling approximately 24 miles.

Keith Bushby and Ian Simson brought their RS2000 home in second place on 18m 51s but the next four crews were separated by only 46s. The 2.3 Fireza of Graham Parker and Nick Verney claimed third place by 4s on 22m 2s from the MGB of Derek Skinner/Peter Rushforth. Fifth place went to John Parsons/Barry Cooper in their Avenger on 22m 33s and they beat last year's winners Geoff Loos/Mike Wise who turned up with a brand new Escort and finished on 22m 48s. Best of the semi experts were Roger Geyton/Mick Williams in a Fireza who were seventh overall on 24m 5s.



John Taylor leads Keith Ripp in one of the best races of the day at Lydden.

Minis dominate Lydden

On a course which was slippery throughout the day, it was the turn of the Minis to dominate proceedings at the TEAC rallycross at Lydden Hill last Sunday, John Taylor being the only Escort driver in the first four. Mick Bird drove two fine races to take overall victory and a trophy put up by Platt's Markets, who were present in force in the spectator enclosure and who may have been partly responsible for the reasonable sized crowd which was present. Just two runs were to count for the prizes, although as it turned out, most cars had a third run in the rapidly gathering gloom.

Mick Bird's Airey Mini notched the fastest time in the first runs with a 3m 32.4s, but in the race following the first really good scrap of the day took place between the Minis of David Potter and Len Payne and Trevor Hopkins' Escort which the latter narrowly won. Keith Ripp pressed John Taylor hard for his points, John's 3m 35.1s being one second faster than the Ripspeed Mini. With George Warren nudging the bank at the hairpin, Rod Chapman came through to third in this race. To the great surprise of all, however, it was a hitherto little known Mini driver, Gordon Rogers, who scored the second quickest time, a 3m 33.3s, in the first heats.

After a few of the slower boys had had their second runs, some light-hearted relief was provided when Terry Grimwood strapped himself into the CCC Mini and staged a close race with John Taylor, George Warren and Mick Bird. While TG struggled to keep the car on the track and Keith Ripp crossed his fingers, John Taylor had time to look at the sights around the track as he tried hard not to pull more than a few feet ahead. Enjoyable stuff, but

if we have to have a Prod Sports driver we'd far rather have Valli!!

Trevor Reeves showed everyone how to peddle a Mini by rocketing around in the fastest time of the day, 3m 30.6s, and defeating George Warren by 11s. A waltz at Chessons by Rod Chapman and John Smith badly affected their chances of gaining any loot and provided Trevor Hopkins with no challenge to his victory. The last of the second runs showed the best that rallycross can provide with John Taylor having both Mick Bird and Keith Ripp to contend with. Mick shot ahead on lap two and then John and Keith touched on the Chalk, Taylor, for once, losing out and dropping to third. Gordon Rogers was the fourth member of this race but he came in some six seconds down.

The third non-points scoring-runs featured another splendid win by Trevor Reeves when, starting in the second group he beat all the first group runners, and then the racing culminated in a great finale with Hugh Wheldon at last getting it all together and leading Rod Chapman and John Taylor. Rod spun at Pits on the first lap while it took John another tour to assert his authority and gain a narrow win.

Mick Bird's consistently fast display gained him 29 points, while Keith Ripp only took second from John Taylor by the narrowest of margins, 0.1s, both having equal points. An unfamiliar name in the top ten was Richard Painton (Mini) who was placed ninth.

BTG: Trevor Reeves (1.3 Mini Cooper), 3m 30.6s. 1. Mick Bird (1.4 Mini), 29 points; 2. Keith Ripp (1.4 Mini), 25; 3. John Taylor (2.0 Escort), 25; 4. Gordon Rogers (1.4 Mini), 22; 5. Trevor Hopkins (2.0 Escort), 19; 6. Reeves, 19; 7. George Warren (2.1 Escort), 15; 8. David Potter (1.4 Mini), 14; 9. Richard Painton (1.5 Mini), 13; 10. Rod Chapman (2.0 Escort), 12.

First racing auction

Britain's first racing car auction takes place next month on January 11 at Northampton organised by former Formula Ford driver David Martell and ex-GRD development engineer Humphrey Corbett. AI-ready response has been good, and the organisers are quick to point out that the effort is a serious one.

The location is the Northampton Car Auctions hall which has 20,000

sq ft of space and is heated (restaurant facilities too). Lots may be delivered the previous week to the hall, although a collection service is to be arranged. The following entries will be accepted: racing cars, rolling chassis, engines, gearboxes, components, spares, etc. Further details may be gained by ringing Bedford 46960 where there is a 24 hour answering service.

Rallycross drivers unite

After the rallycross last Sunday over a score of drivers, together with several other interested parties, attended a meeting at which the British Rallycross Driver's Association was formerly founded.

A Steering Committee was formed until an E.G.M. is held in early Spring. Nick Jesty was confirmed as chairman, with David Potter secretary, Brian Harper treasurer, Dick Griffiths PRO and two area representatives — Colin Richards from London and Pete Lewis from "bloody miles away."

An application for affiliation to the RAC is to be made. Trevor Reeves, Hugh Wheldon, and Mick Bird and Andy Thwaite from the BTRDA were present but few Escort drivers

were. John Taylor stated that he did not really see the point, suggesting that the organisers should be responsible for promotion etc., and that such organisations rarely worked.

However the BRDA have several ideas on promotion which they wish to discuss with promoters while other aims include making their members aware of proposed changes in the regulations, particularly with respect to the major changes at the end of 1976. It has often been the subject of much comment that Swedish rallycrosses attract crowds of 10,000 plus and it is felt that more could be done to achieve figures of even half that size in the UK.



Derek Lawrence (right) in expansive mood when receiving his first prize for the APG FF 2000 series from APG Chairman Peter Fatharly (left). Mr Fatharly also presented prizes to second and third men Bernard Vermilio and Ian Taylor, plus a special award to Jeremy Rossiter — some ballast for his underweight car.

APG increase awards

At their very pleasant prize giving party on Thursday last, the Allied Polymer Group announced that they will offer increased prize money for their 1976 FF2000 championship.

In the past season there were seventeen rounds each carrying £200 worth of prize money, but next year the number of rounds increases to 20, and each carries £250 prize money. It is envisaged that there will

also be non-championship races.

Announcing this, Mr Peter Fatharly, the Group chairman, said: "We have been delighted with the Formula's first season. It started with understandably small grids but they built up as the season progressed and, equally important, the quality of racing was extremely high both from the point of view of drivers and spectators. From what we hear, there is little doubt that there will be many more cars entered in 1976 which should make racing even more competitive."

APG also announced the continuation of the Allied Polymer Group Silverstone Driver of the Day and Driver of Year awards, which have been so successful and popular during the past two seasons.

Dates of the APG FF2000 series are: March 14, Brands Hatch; March 21, Mallory Park; March 28, Snetterton; April 4, Thruxton; April 16, Oulton Park; April 19, Brands Hatch; April 25, Silverstone; May 2, Brands Hatch; May 8/9, Silverstone; May 30, Brands Hatch; May 31, Snetterton; June 6, Silverstone; June 27, Mallory Park; July 4, Silverstone; August 1, Snetterton; August 30, Brands Hatch; September 11, Castle Combe; September 18, Oulton Park; September 26, Cadwell Park; October 10, Mallory Park.

England's title

As a result of last Sunday's Ilkley & District MC production car trial, John England of the Ilkley club, is the first winner of the Association of Northern Car Club's trials championship.

England, in his VW, tied on a maximum of 40 marks (best four results from six events), with Barry Parker from Liverpool in his Mini, but takes the title on fifth score.

Third, on 39 marks, is John Pape, the Sprite driver from Sheffield.

Gold and sparse 'Pod

The last drag meet of the season was an invitation only affair, and with many potential entries at the Custom Car show, the field was one of the smallest of recent years. This obviously affected the quality of the racing, and with the weather traditional 'Podwintertime, few were sorry to call it a day after a couple of hours into night racing.

Four funny cars were on hand though, and between them they put on a good show, with plenty of drama and problems thrown in to upset the usual outcome. Roland Pratt and Allan Herridge were first out, with Herridge's car sounding decidedly off-song as it fired up.

Through the burn-out something was obviously wrong for the big Milodon engine just wouldn't rev and soon Herridge cut it. It later transpired that the magneto had slipped round after having been earlier backed off to ease starting in the cold air. So Roland had a good run to the final, but he lost traction in the mid-range and shut off. His time was announced as 7.07s, but even he didn't believe it, and it must have been caused by a piece of paper blowing through the lights at the finish and stopping the clocks early.

Owen Hayward was next against Tony Froome in the dangerous rear-engined car that fully lived up to its reputation by coming close to rolling over sideways as it smoked the tyres furiously. Behind the smoke screen Hayward was nearly on the fence on the spectator side of the track as he too sought some grip, but as usual he held it and clocked a strong 7.8s at 180 mph. Now came some juggling for Nobby Hills, team manager of the two Houndog cars.

The dragster also driven by Hayward in Top Fuel was without any tyres, and he intended swapping the funny car ones over as soon as the final was run to come out against Ron Picardo — more of which later. But both finalists had trouble in the funny car final as they burnt out. First Hayward had a header fire from an over-rich mixture, with burning nitro covering the track—plus his blower belt had broken. Pratt meanwhile had heard a noise and shut off, a dowel pin having dropped

out of the block into the clutch scattershield. While Pratt and crew worked feverishly to get the clutch can off and retrieve the dowel, the other funny car was towed away, and the tyres pulled off for the dragster. Alan Herridge took this chance for a last run in the car that has made his name — the 'Stardust' funny, before taking over the Chaderton Vega next year. But he went through a damp patch and crossed lanes violently, shutting off and rolling through untimed.

Back to the dragsters. Picardo had put in a good solo run of 7.4s in the venerable 'Firefly', while Hayward had beaten — just — Gerry Andrews in the Stones' blown Chevy rail, Andrews having left well and almost made it with an 8.35s/170 mph only to get caught with Hayward's 8.25s/207mph charge, Andrews engine unfortunately expiring at the finish with a couple of rods breaking. Few expected anything but a walk-over in the final, but Ron Picardo made a perfect start, and Owen Hayward just boiled the tyres all the way after him losing with an 8.1 at 206mph to 8.35s at 170mph — Picardo's first win and the first for Firefly in many a long month.

Back went the tyres to the funny car after this run, and after what seemed an eternity with Pratt also finished and ready, the Houndog crew appeared again with the funny car — the crowd waiting patiently in the freezing cold. Again the odds were heavily against Pratt although

with less horsepower he had something in his favour on the slick track. But he left first and hard, having a car length on Hayward, that was already closing in the first few yards as the giant engine under Hayward's bonnet showed its strength. Then an explosion of sparks poured from beneath the car, which rolled to a stop almost immediately, the clutch now a collection of white-hot fragments on the track. The start line crew was at the car almost before Pratt had finished his run at 7.5s/182mph for his first funny car win this year, but Hayward was OK, the can having held fast despite looking very second hand, only the bottom edge having pulled away from the block.

Gary Goggin was back with his Pro Stock Camaro, the shifting fault having been traced on his gearbox, but not the leak, so overnight the other box went in. His only run on Saturday against Tony Dickson had been on a damp track with a win of 11.4s to 11.8s, and he backed this up with a 10.2s to 10.7s on Sunday morning, with Tony Dickson taking the third best run with a hole-shot 10.62s/131mph to 10.57s/138mph, Gary's car hanging on the bumper all the way but not quite making it. That finished 'Saturdays' race, then Glen Jarvis took his promising 351 Ford Falcon up into Pro Stock and gave Tony Dickson a good run with an 11.2s to 10.8s — the Ford only having a couple of meetings under its belt and running stronger every time. Goggin ran a bye of 10.17s, then backed this up with a 10.12s/137mph win over Dickson, who slept on the line with a 10.72 at 128mph.

Tony Dickson's Camaro loses our fractionally to Gary Goggin during one of their many runs.



Super saloons almost on

A six round series for Super Saloons, sponsored once again by Tricentrol is on the stocks. Despite the promoters' unwillingness to hold a series next year, it seems that both Silverstone and MCD have agreed to hold races at their circuits and the decision now rests with the RAC's Race Committee who have to ratify it. Circuits already suggested include Brands, Mallory Park, Silverstone and Castle Combe, and now it's up to Tricentrol's Tony Mayes to work out a calendar. The prize money for the championship would remain about the same, but Tricentrol have suggested that they would like to see all competitors come away with something at the end.

When we suggested that the series was only underway with MCD if Gerry Marshall undertook never to win a race by more than two seconds, Mayes told us that both John Turner and Mick Hill had intimated that they would build new cars for the series, and that Scotsmen Doug Niven and Bill Dryden already had new cars on the stocks with which to give Marshall a hard time. A suggestion that Ian Richardson should pay a forfeit every time he didn't turn up, met with the response that "it might not be a bad idea."

Now the whole idea is in the hands of the RAC, whose committee members gave it the death kiss in the first place.

Jopp loses

Peter Jopp's appeal concerning the weybridge at the Radio One round at Mallory Park on October 12, was not upheld by the RAC at last week's tribunal hearing. Jopp's Mini 1275 GT was said to have been underweight, and he appealed against the decision on a weybridge technicality. Although his appeal fee was forfeited, no order was made as to costs.

Franklin news

Seen taking his wife's "shopping" MGB GT to fifth place in the standard MG race at Brands last Sunday was the reigning Guyson/BARC hillclimb champion, David Franklin. He has now sold his Huntsman Garages Ensign-Holbay LNF373 and has acquired, as yet undisclosed, sponsorship for 1976. This means that David will almost certainly join the two litre brigade next year with a March the most likely chassis. Although he had not yet decided what engine to use this will surely add up to a really competitive combination and enable David to follow up a very successful 1975 season in which he also challenged hard for the lead of the RAC Sprint championship.

2CV 'Cross series

A series of five two day events will comprise the all-new 2CV 'Cross series next year. Although sponsors are still being negotiated by Citroen, and thus prize money details are not available, regulations and organisation are very well advanced and dates are already announced.

The (wide) world of 2CV 'Cross first came to Britain this year with an International round at Camberley (Blackbushe) and a non-championship event at Clitheroe, Lancashire. With many interested Britons, and an amusing time for all, the continuation of the racing is obviously in with a very good chance of succeeding. Citroen, with their powers of promotion and French style organisation, will obviously put on a very good series. The five rounds will be organised by clubs paid by Citroen, and the company will then take gate receipts and programme profits.

Of the five rounds announced, two are internationals counting towards a 27 round series run throughout Europe. The response on the Continent is something akin to that of — dare we say it — Renault 5 racing, and there are around 800 of those around Europe. The two International rounds, which will doubtless have French, Swiss and Belgian participation, are at Camberley on June 19/20, and Southend on September 4/5. The other rounds are at Taunton on May 29/30, Wolverhampton on July 3/4 and Blackpool on August 21/22. Regulations are already agreed upon by the RAC, and would-be competitors may write to Bernadette Piot at 2CV 'Cross, Citroen Cars, Mill Street, Slough, Berkshire to be put on the mailing list for future communications. Further details are expected in the second week of January.

Oceanair go B sports

Oceanair, an airfreight company based at Heathrow and with particular interests in the Middle East, are the welcome sponsor for the BARC's B sports Clubmans series. The eight circuit, 16 race series will be the company's first venture into motor racing, and they will be presenting awards as per the BARC's prize structure outlined a couple of weeks ago. Oceanair were introduced to world of motor racing by Mike Keegan of British Air Ferries, and will definitely be feeling the temperature in this, their first year in motor racing.

With a sponsor being found for the Clubmans series, this now leaves just one series run by the BARC still to be sponsored, the modsports championship.

Cowell's eventful night

In spite of a couple of wrong slots on two selectives plus an excursion up a bank on the third, Ted Cowell still came home a comfortable winner of last Saturday night's Welsh Marches Rally run by Herefordshire MC. Partnered by a different navigator — yet again — he and John McKerrill dropped 32m 39s on the 150 miles of very slippery roads to beat Bob Bennett and Stuart Harrold in their Escort GT by some three and a half minutes.

Three selectives were tackled in the course of the night and John Griffiths and Jim Bowie were going like the wind and leading at halfway in their Escort. They were fastest by over half a minute on the first, two seconds better than the field on the second but then rolled out on the event prior to the third.

Initial leader, up to the sixth TC, was the Porsche 911S of H Farrington and Andrew Bodman and they continued to challenge strongly until the rear suspension sagged at the end of the third selective and they were down to fourth behind the best

Hereford crew John Tolson and Mike Turner, who finished on 39m 3s.

Farrington and Bodman, on 43m 23s had a mere 18 seconds in hand over Mike Cakebread and Graham Evans in their Escort in fifth spot and they were exactly a minute up on Howard Davies and Rodney Jones. This crew were second on the first selective, third on the second and had a real 'flyer' of a time on the third but they had lost time earlier with a broken throttle.

Best of the semi-experts were Steve Haines and John Kiff in their Midget who finished ninth on 46m 06s, a healthy five minutes ahead of David Williams and Neil Perry in their Escort TC. The novice award went to S. G. Deakins and A Boddy in an Escort on 59m 33s.

The team award went to Bill Bengry and his son Theo. Bill, accompanied by John Lunn, were seventh in their Mazda, on 44m 49s, while Theo, with Bill Pardoe, finished twelfth in their Simca Rallye on 48m 11s.

Whittaker beats fog

Slippery conditions throughout with fog and light rain as added hazards gave 108 starters an unpleasant night in Cumbria, Lancashire and North Yorkshire last Saturday night on the Clitheroe and District MC's Hall Trophy rally. But the event was won by one of the top crews from the area, Geoff Whittaker/Jeff Hignett in their Escort TC who led for most of the night.

In the first half several fancied crews ran into problems. Roy Redman/Don Davidson put a rod through the side of their Clan Crusader after only eight miles and two crews went off on the same corner around TC8. Peter Kirk/Stephen Bye damaged the steering on their ex-works RS1800 when they went off the road and Vince Girardier/Jack Coulthard also left the road in their Ascona. An unusual substitution took place at the half-way halt with the permission of the organisers. Tony Brunskill arrived at petrol in his Avenger GT with navigator Nigel Hunter very sick. Spectating was Dave Orrick who was persuaded to take over Hunter's place and at nine minutes notice he plotted the second half and helped Brunskill to finish tenth.

In second place were Brian Harper/Robin Jackson in their Cooper S on 37.09 penalties while the RS1600 of Pete Edwards/Gordon Capstick was third on 40.01. Trevor Roberts/Ian Grindrod brought their Cooper S into fourth place on 41.03 to clinch the team award for Mini Sport of Padiham who were sponsors of the event.

David Scaife/John Millington were fifth in their Escort on 47.04 and D. Calvert/D. Morton in their Taunus were sixth on 48.20. Best of the semi experts were C. Brenham/N. Hughes (RS2000) on 56.5, the top novices, in ancient Rapier, were A. Bailey and J. Brown on 64.9. The best Clitheroe and DMC members were J. Hartley/D. Smalley (Escort) on 60.5 and the mixed crew award went to D. Taylor/Miss S. Cookson in a Mexico on 61.9.

Orgee's Elden

A happy man at the Allied Polymer Group FF2000 prize giving last week was Frank Bradley. With Elden, in which he has an interest, currently running on skeleton staff in the interests of economy, he had taken an order for one of his '76 FF2000 cars. The man who had ordered was Bristol resident Roger Orgee, who this year ran a Royale with little success. He's sold the Royale which will be converted to Formula Ford specification, and intends to stay on the FF2000 scene with the Elden. Sponsors may well include Modern Engineering, who have helped him out this year, and possibly Platform One, the nightclub.

Meek provides the answer

The appeal by Chris Meek against his exclusion from the results of the production sports car race held at Snetterton on October 5 was upheld last week. However, the RAC said that fresh evidence had since come to light, and deplored the fact that it was not available at the circuit. This concerned the fact that Meek did not offer any evidence at the circuit itself, and when the car was found to be 15 pounds underweight, Meek subsequently produced a 17 pound fire extinguisher which had been taken out of the car to be fitted to another car in another race. His challenge against the weybridge was dismissed, and his appeal fee returned.

● Included in the BT&RDA Silver Star Championship for the first time, the Birmingham University MC eleventh Welsh Mermaid Rally will start from Builth Wells on January 24. Three selectives will be included in the 190 miles route and regs are available from Colin Strong, Flat 2, Oakdale, Thornhill Road, Streetley, West Midlands. Entry fee is £7 and 130 crews will be allowed to start.

Hughes banks on loan

Ian Hughes and Arthur Davies scored their first road rally victory in a borrowed car last weekend when they beat a field of 48 on the Mother of Wales Rally run by Bury AC on a 150 tour of Anglesey.

The winners, in an RS 2000, dropped 250.42 penalties to beat Colin Mack and Dave Thomas in their Avenger GT on 270.56 penalties while Roland Young, driving with a little in reserve — he was hoping to sell the car on Sunday — was third with Brian Goff in their Twin Cam on 281.53 penalties.

Two selectives were included in the first half, one was cancelled and on the other most of the top crews were within a few seconds of each other.

Roy McBurnie and Ray Carlisle, who eventually took fourth in their Avenger GT, were quickest on this selective and the last selective

proved easy meat for the quicker men all of whom cleaned it.

Peter Hughes and Kevin Jones were still well up with the leaders in their Escort until they crashed into a marshal's car but not through reckless driving and Bobby Fisher and Roger Powley were also in contention with their Imp until it began to lose its gears.

Behind McBurnie and Carlisle were Gareth Lloyd and Ron Jones on 370.50 penalties in a Datsun with Clive Manifold and David Taylor sixth in a Cooper S on 391.27 penalties.

Best of the semi-experts were Malcolm Hughes and David Eastwood who dropped 482.20 penalties in their Cooper S and in the novices Keith Cross and Stephen Fish came out on top with 7F 1364.05 penalties.

ANWCC winners

Jim Corner from Nantwich, and Brian Goff from North Wales, are the new winners of the drivers' and navigators' awards in this year's Association of North Western Car Clubs' Rally Championship.

Corner, in his Mexico, scored 119pts to beat last year's winner Colin Mack, who finished on 82pts with his Avenger GT, while Ian Hughes (Escort), was third on 64pts.

Goff, who scored most of his points with Corner, ended up with 127pts, well ahead of David Thomas on 82pts and Arthur Davies on 64pts.

The series, over seven rounds, ends this weekend with the J. J. Brown Memorial Rally, which the Caernarvonshire and Anglesey MC are running from Caernarvon.

● Exotic cars department: at Lydden on Sunday former 1300 Escort driver Graham Dawkins was having his first outing in the ex-Bernard Rode-mark Porsche but after a troubled practice he failed to appear for his runs. Dave Fuell, meanwhile, was not competing but he turned up in a very smart executive Fiat, although it seems unlikely that he will rally-cross it! — we do remember Franz Pickel rallycrossing a Mercedes however.

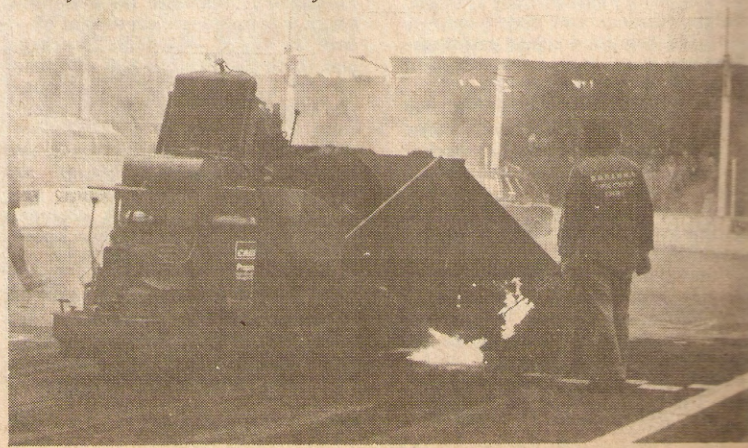
Brands sponsor

A&M Records, who this year have been involved with sponsoring Bill Sydenham's G1 antics with first an Avenger and then a Mazda, and also towards the end of the year Geoff Lees' FF Royale will be sponsoring the "Boxing Day" December 27 meeting at Brands Hatch. This is part of their policy to expand their interests in motor sport and follows quickly on the announcement that rival record company DJM will be backing the BARC FF championship next year. Main event of the day at the A&M meeting will be a £500 Shellsport Escort race for which, we are reliably informed Vern Schuppan will be flying back from Australia specially.

Knockhill on

With many competitors travelling to the new rallycross of venue at Longridge, many drivers would probably like to know of the event the following day taking place at Knockhill. Once again it is a rally-cross to be held on January 2 with racing starting at 1 pm. Entries may be sent to Ken Inglis, 50 Buchanan Gardens, St Andrews, Fife KY16 9LX, tel St Andrews 3203.

December drag meetings are never warm and dry — in fact very few meetings seem to be, and in an effort to get over this problem, Santa Pod Raceway have constructed a monstrous strip-drying machine to burn the water off. This was given another airing on Sunday, but the burners failed to ignite properly, and the incredible machine left a trail of diesel oil from its engine and other slippery liquids in its path, which then had to be cleared off with petrol, brooms and cement dust. Strip manager Dave Watts, who can be seen driving (?) the device in the picture swore that it worked the day before and by God it would work next year!





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