

AUTOSPORT



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BRANDS HATCH RALLYCROSS ACTION ♦ F1 TESTS LATEST
 NATIONAL RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP REVIEW



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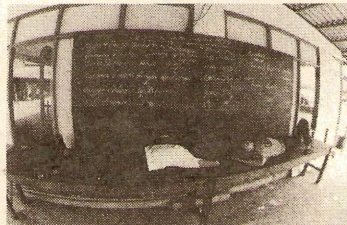
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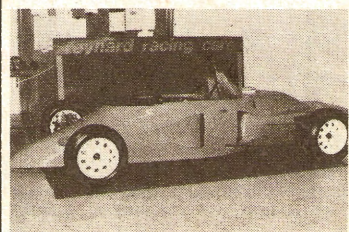
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John Welch won the British Rallycross Grand Prix in his four-wheel drive Ford Escort after a storming drive in the Superfinal. Photo: Jeff Bloxham. Motaquip British Rallycross Grand Prix report: page 12.

NEXT WEEK

Don't miss our bumper Christmas issue — Autosport Award results — Our Christmas quiz to keep you occupied over the festive period — *Armchair Enthusiast* — Ferrari Testarossa road test in colour — Shell Oils Open Championship seasonal review — Bettega Rallsprint — PLUS Nigel Roebuck's expert summary of the 1985 Formula 1 season in our free Grand Prix supplement complete with Ayrton Senna interview.*

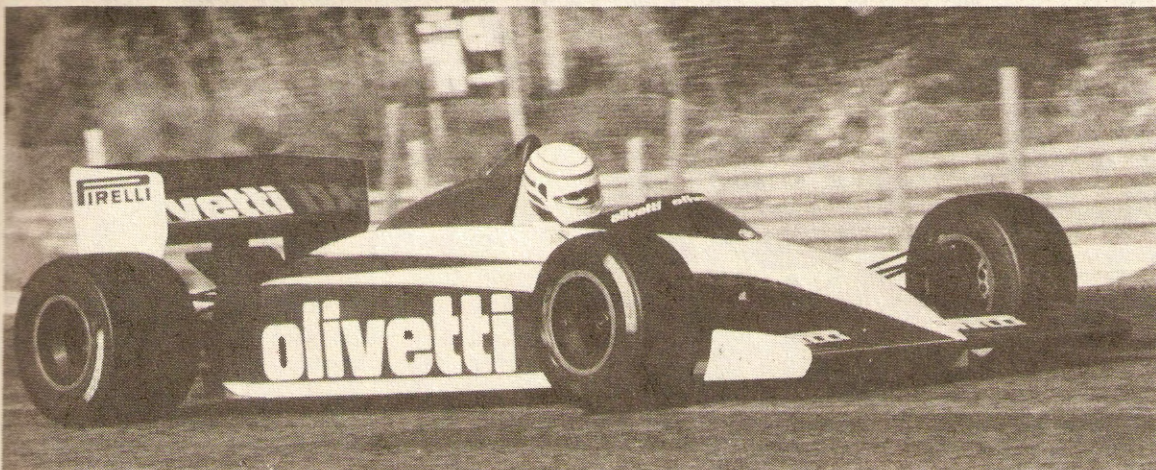
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Riccardo Patrese, stunningly quick at Ricard a fortnight ago, is now confirmed as de Angelis's Brabham team mate for 1986.

Patrese and de Angelis confirmed at Brabham

On Monday Brabham sponsors Olivetti confirmed in Italy that the team's drivers in 1986 will be Elio de Angelis and Riccardo Patrese. This came as no surprise, for their names have been tied to the team since before Monza. However, official confirmation has been a long time coming.

Elio and Riccardo — together with Willy T Ribbs! — have been at Estoril this week to continue testing of this year's BT54. It is not expected that the radical new BT55 will be seen before the Rio tests in January.

Gordon Murray is indeed proceeding down a new route with the latest car.

Apart from being its being phenomenally low — the top of the rear bodywork is but 25 ins from the ground! — we learned at the beginning of this week that the Weismann transverse gearbox will have seven forward speeds! Qualifying speed trap figures are going to be something else in 1986 . . .

Spanish GP set for Jerez track

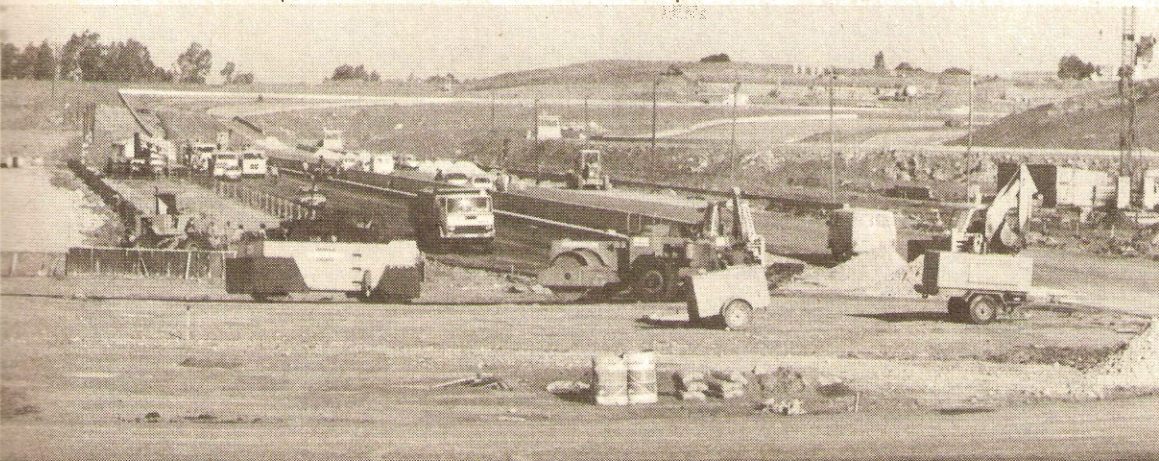


A new Grand Prix circuit takes shape — the Formula 1 teams will be at Jerez next April.

In 1986 the Spanish Grand Prix returns to the World Championship, to be run on a new circuit, outside the city of Jerez. Last week it was clear that work on the track was some way from complete (despite the fact that a race meeting was scheduled for the weekend!), but no doubt the presence of Bernie Ecclestone's Learjet on Thursday spurred everyone on a little . . .

The setting of the Jerez circuit is beautiful, in the foothills of a low range of mountains, but our impressions of the track itself were that it will be very slow, with few overtaking spots. The estimated Formula 1 lap time for the 2.621-mile circuit is 1m51s, which works out an average of 83.84mph — about the same as the Detroit street circuit.

As at Donington, it appears that no Armco Barrier will be used, just a fair amount of run-off, catch fencing and concrete walls. The circuit owners estimate that the cars will get up to around 165mph at the fastest point of the circuit — and a little under 40 at the slowest.



Brunner no to Ferrari?

Gustav Brunner, we understand, is the latest Formula 1 designer to turn down an offer from Ferrari. The British-based Austrian, who has worked for RAM Automotive since leaving ATS more than a year ago, visited Maranello a month ago, and was apparently there again at the end of last week.

However, it seems that Brunner has decided against a move to Italy — as also, in recent months, have Alan Jenkins (Penske), Adrian Newby (March) and, we believe, Tony Cicale (formerly with Newman/Haas Racing, and now with Patrick Racing). Where will Ferrari turn next?



Hytten — F1 chance?

Italy's new F1 team

Arno International is to be a new entrant in both Grand Prix and Formula 3000 racing in 1986.

Based in Florence, and previously involved in the Italian F3 championship as entrants and constructors, Arno announced their ambitious plans at the beginning of this week. Initially the team will field an F3000 March 86B for Mario Hytten, and the Swiss driver will test the F1 car in June with a view to a race debut at Monza.

After originally courting Reynard to build both the F3000 and F1 cars, Arno have commissioned their F1 chassis from Henri Julien's French 'AGS' concern.

Arno International is owned by Piero Mancini, who also owns Motori Moderni, and the F1 car will naturally be powered by the Carlo Chiti-designed V6 turbo.

Backing for the F1 programme comes from the Jolly Club under Roberto Angelini while the entire project will be managed by former F2 racer Carlo Giorgio.

Giorgio was in England on Monday completing his F3000 purchases, which will probably include an 85B as a back-up car. "I will be the only driver, and we will have two cars" said Hytten over the weekend. "I cannot quite believe what has happened; it is an incredible opportunity for me. I have to bring sponsorship for the F3000 programme, which will be from Swiss and Saudi sources, but nothing for Formula 1. I was talking to other people like Onyx and Murray Taylor about F3000, but this opportunity — which included Formula 1 — was too good to miss."

Piquet sets early pace in Estoril F1 testing

Eight formula 1 teams are down in Estoril this week for testing, and on Monday Nelson Piquet's Williams-Honda set the fastest time, followed by World Champion Alain Prost in the McLaren-TAG. Both lapped within Ayrton Senna's 1985 pole position time at the Portuguese Grand Prix (1m 21.007s).

Strong winds on Monday morning kept speeds down, but the afternoon was calmer, Piquet setting his time quite soon after lunch. The Williams-Honda then broke its transmission, and Nelson was through for the day. Later in the afternoon the Brabham-BMW of Riccardo Patrese blew up.

One or two teams are taking the opportunity to test different drivers in their cars. Alessandro Nannini is in Estoril for Minardi, and Toleman intend to try Paulo Barilla and 'Poppy' Laurrari later in the week. Mike Thackwell is standing in for Nigel Mansell (still suffering with his rib injuries) a Williams, and we understand that Willy T. Ribbs is due to have a run in a Brabham-BMW.

Monday's times were as follows:

Piquet (Williams).....	1-20.72
Prost (McLaren).....	1-20.82
Senna (Lotus).....	1-21.19
Patrese (Brabham).....	1-21.41
Fabi (Toleman).....	1-21.45
DeAngelis (Brabham).....	1-21.92
Laffite (Ligier).....	1-22.34
Thackwell (Williams).....	1-22.65
Johansson (Ferrari).....	1-23.39
Martini (Minardi).....	1-28.77
Nannini (Minardi).....	1-29.93



After his first Williams test at Ricard, Nelson set the pace at Estoril on Monday.

Argentina pulls out

The Argentine Grand Prix, tentatively on the last 1986 World Championship schedule as the opening round, will not take place. In the absence of a race sponsor — and an Argentine driver to pull in the crowds — the organisers apparently cannot afford to go ahead. Rio, on March 23, will almost certainly launch the championship next year.

Sportscar World series

At the beginning of this week FISA announced the calendar for the newly-named Sportscar World Championship in 1986. Dates are as follows:

Apr 06.....	Mugello
Apr 20.....	Monza (D)
May 05.....	Silverstone
May 31/June 01.....	Le Mans 24 Hours
Jun 29.....	Norising (D)
Jun 20.....	Brands Hatch (D)
Aug 03.....	Mosport*
Aug.....	Nurburgring
Sep 14.....	Spa
Oct 05.....	Fuji
Nov 23.....	Surfers Paradise
Dec 07.....	Selangor (D)

In the schedule 'D' indicates drivers' championship only rounds, while Mosport is asterixed as its race is conditional upon a satisfactory track inspection by FISA.



Ligier wants Arnoux for 1986 — but is he too expensive?

Ligier: who joins Laffite?

Never far away from controversy Guy Ligier is currently refereeing a three-way French battle for a place alongside Jacques Laffite in his Grand Prix team next year.

Philippe Streiff, who did an admirable job replacing Andrea de Cesaris in the final races of this season, was joined at the recent Paul Ricard test day by Philippe Alliot, while René Arnoux was also seen in the pit lane with Ligier. In the French press Ligier has stated that Arnoux is the man he wants, but the former Ferrari driver will have to find his own wages. Alliot has reputedly offered

to bring ten million French Francs to secure the position for himself, and this would appear to leave Streiff as very much the outsider at the moment.

When Ligier withdrew from the South African GP Streiff drove for Tyrrell, and it is widely believed that he would join Martin Brundle on a permanent basis in 1986 if there were no places for him with Ligier. "There is not much I can say at the moment but if Ken Tyrrell offered me a contract tomorrow I would sign it," said the cagey Frenchman on Monday adding that, at the moment, he had no firm plans at all.

Nissan confirms Le Mans entries

Following the remarkable success of Kazuyoshi Hoshino's March 85G in the recent, water-logged Mount Fuji 1000 in Japan, Nissan have finally confirmed that two Group C cars will be entered for the Le Mans 24 Hours on May 31, 1986.

An official announcement from the HQ of the company's International Division in Tokyo contains no further information, but it is thought that the cars will be run at Le Mans on behalf of Nissan by the Hoshino Racing and Hasemi Motorsport teams, both of which have enjoyed official factory backing from Nissan for several seasons.

The Hoshino and Hasemi teams ran the two Nissan-supported March 85G development chassis at Fuji, finishing first and fifth respectively. In a subsequent round of the national Group C series, however, both these cars were

destroyed in accidents.

Prior to this disaster, Nissan had ordered three new chassis from March Engineering for the purposes of the 1986 programme, and we understand that these will be March 86G cars with their own, distinctive appearance. The power plant, of course, will be the 3-litre V6 Nissan VG-30 twin-turbo, producing around 700bhp.

The appearance in Europe of factory supported Nissan Group C cars has been eagerly awaited and there is no doubt that this engine will put the cars on the pace of the Porsches, Jaguars and Lancias. A strong performance at Le Mans is expected, and it would not be surprising to see one March-Nissan competing in the traditional Le Mans curtain-raiser, at Silverstone earlier in May.

ETC Audi in secret tests

Spotted testing last week at the little-used and secluded Salzburgring was a Group A spec Audi 200 Turbo in the hands of Belgian European Touring Car regular Alfons Hohenester.

The model, which features a 2.2-litre turbocharged five-cylinder engine, will receive homologation on January 1, which will enable the cars to be run in

next year's ETC series.

Sources at Audi, however, insist that there will be no official factory involvement in racing next year, although the car will be available for privateers. This exciting new development means that competition in the largest class will be greater than ever, with the Audi taking on Rover, Volvo, Ford and Holden...

BARC withdraws Thruxton from F3000 calendar

Although the full 1986 Formula 3000 International calendar will not be confirmed for another week or so, the news that Thruxton will not host a round has been confirmed by the BARC.

On the draft calendar, the Hampshire based club was due to promote the opening round at its traditional Easter meeting — the major Thruxton event of the season. However, the FOCA contract for F3000 events in 1986 calls for a prize fund of US\$150,000 (£101,000 at current rates), and the BARC has decided that the potential loss on such an outlay was too big a risk to take.

The BARC's statement claims that it made a loss on the 1985 race of £35,000 on an £85,000 promotion, and that the early (Mar 31) Easter next year and the attendant difficulty in attracting a large number of spectators would mean an even more excessive loss. "While mindful of the purpose of the club's existence,

to promote motor racing, the Council of the Club feels it would be inappropriate to spend club funds in this way," says a BARC statement.

The BARC ran the first and last European Formula 2 Championship events to be staged in Britain over a 17-year period, and it was this record that earned it a place on the inaugural F3000 calendar when the teams, who find Thruxton's long-weekend nature very expensive, would have preferred to move elsewhere despite the great improvement in facilities.

F3000 is essentially a formula for up-and-coming drivers, but the BARC argues, "There is no well-known name to which to link publicity, and consequently media coverage is limited, especially in Europe."

Perhaps more relevant to the BARC's plight is its view that "We are now in competition in some instances with

foreign governments, and certainly with town councils adjacent to the circuits, who are prepared to fund races out of the public exchequer or some other means. It seems likely that Birmingham may be competing with established motor racing organisers.

"The Council of the BARC is disturbed that a formula which should be so helpful and advantageous to the lesser international circuits, who do so much for the grass roots of motor racing, should price them out of the promotion of top class motor racing. The future holds many difficulties for circuits that do not host a Grand Prix or alternatively are not under written in some other way."

It now looks as though the projected 14-race F3000 series will open at Silverstone on Apr 13. The current draft has 10 rounds in Europe, including a round at Imola, and four in the southern hemisphere.



Brabham — encouraged by Honda.

Honda Indy motor tests

Using one of the Galles Racing March 85Cs, Geoff Brabham last week gave the Honda Indy engine its first test. On the day, Tuesday, the March-Honda ran 25 laps at Laguna Seca with no real problems at all. What is even more impressive is that the Australian put in a lap of 56.00s, which is only two seconds away from Bobby Rahal's qualifying record.

Brabham was very impressed with the engine, reporting that the power was strong right through the rev range. Unfortunately little running was possible after the opening day, thanks to persistent heavy rain in Southern California.

Far-east F3 series in 1986?

MRC's Barry Bland spent a week after the Macau GP visiting new and proposed circuits in Asia with a view to the F3 programme being expanded to include two races in the future.

"There is a lot of interest and a lot of plans being drawn up, but nothing on the immediate horizon," Bland reported last week. Most handy for twinning with Macau would be a proposed venue in the New Territories, and while the Chinese are in favour of the project going ahead, it is still very much in the planning stage. Bland also looked at a couple of street circuit proposals, while interest was shown by representatives of the rather short circuits in Johor (Malaysia) and Pattaya (Thailand) both of which are under construction.

Kremer sportscars under suspension

The Koln, Germany based Kremer Group C team has had its entrant's licence suspended for 12 months as a result of non-payment of a fine imposed on it at Mosport Park in August.

The fine resulted from the action of two of the Kremer mechanics immediately after Manfred Winkelhock's dreadful accident in the team's Porsche 962C. The mechanics rushed to the scene of what later turned out to be a fatal incident, and were dismayed by what they felt was a lack of adequate equipment to remove the driver from the wreck. Apparently they requested permission to take a course doctor's car back

to their pit so as to pick up more cutting equipment, and were refused. They then drove off in the doctor's vehicle, stopping at their pit during the course of a lap driven while the race was still continuing with the competing cars under yellow and in train behind a pace car.

This action resulted in the controversial US \$10,000 fine imposed by the stewards of the meeting. Non-payment of the fine has apparently now been brought to FISA's attention by the Canadian national body and FISA has removed the Kremer brother's licence.

The team has filed notice of appeal against the decision.



Now reaping the rewards of a highly successful sportscar racing season which brought him his first World Championship title, Derek Bell is pictured with the coveted Driver of the Year Trophy presented to him by the Guild of Motoring Writers in London last week.

Labatts sponsor Fabi

Canadian Bertrand Fabi, European, Benelux and British Formula Ford 2000 Champion, is to be sponsored by Labatt Brewery of Canada for his British Formula 3 programme next year.

Currently there is no news about which team Fabi will drive for, although the

strong tip is Dick Bennetts's West Surrey Racing.

Fabi will act as Labatt's special representative in the province of Quebec, and Canada's most profitable brewery has indicated that it hopes to continue the sponsorship arrangement in years to come.

BBW shaping strong Starion Group A attack

"I wish I could tell you that we are running two cars in Britain and three in Europe," commented David Brodie when we spoke to him on Monday, "but at present we do not have a contract for next year. We are working flat out developing the cars and have made a full commitment for '86 with the Starion."

Next year's Starion will be a considerably revised version from that raced in

the RAC Trimoco British Saloon Car Championship this year and will feature new suspension to accommodate the larger wheels which will be homologated on January 1. The BBW team have recently taken on former Ford and Lola employee Mike Smith to work on the design and Brodie is hopeful that next year he will be able to beat Andy Rouse's Ford Sierra Turbo.

Stars in Racing Car Show

Some of the 'star cars' to be shown at the Racing Car Show at the Alexandra Palace Pavilion in London (Jan 9-12) will include Alain Prost's Marlboro McLaren MP4/2B, an Olivetti Brabham BT54 and a Toleman-Hart TG185. Group C will be represented by a Rothmans Porsche, the Spice Tiga and the Ecosse, while an F3000 Bridgestone Ralt will be shown alongside the Marlboro F3 Championship winning car, Mauricio Gugelmin's Ralt RT30.

For the Historic enthusiast, there will be Jackie Stewart's CanAm Lola T260, an F1 ground-effect Arrows A2, and Graham Hill's World Championship

winning BRM. The rallyist will be able to see Computervision's MG Metro 6R4 fresh from its success in the recent Lombard RAC Rally, and kart racing will be featured by Martin Hines's championship winning Zip. Dennis Pridle's latest dragster will also be among this impressive line up, together with a selection of other cars yet to be announced.

Special priced, pre-show tickets and presentation packs are available at £2.50 for adults and £1.00 for children under 14 from Focus Investments, Wells House, 80-82 Upper Street, Islington, London N1 0NU (tel: 01-359 3525).

Watson and Hobbs sign for BMW GTP programme

John Watson and David Hobbs have secured lucrative contracts to race the all-new BMW GTP sportscar in the 1986 IMSA GT Championship in the USA.

As rumoured for several weeks, the two British drivers will head a two-car

Watson — fulltime racer again.



team entered for BMW North America by John McLaughlin of McLaren North America. No official announcement has been made, but the second car is certain to be raced by two young Americans, Davy Jones, the former F3 driver now

Hobbs — IMSA front runner?

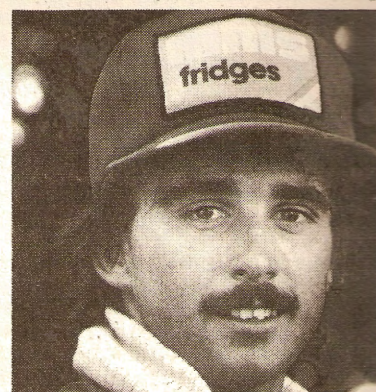


racing SuperVee, and John Andretti, Mario's nephew.

The BMW GTP, based on a modified March chassis design and powered by a long-stroke, 2.1-litre version of the four-cylinder F1 engine, made a very promising debut earlier this month when Hobbs qualified it on the front row for the IMSA finale at Daytona. Co-driven by Jones and Andretti, the new car dropped out early in the race with gear selection problems, but the team was very happy with the performance of what was basically a development prototype.

The Detroit based McLaren team is now pressing ahead with a major engineering programme for the definitive 1986 BMW GTP. New bodywork for the side-radiator layout will be wind-tunnel tested in the USA before Christmas and Hobbs, who has already driven most of the development mileage, is expected to be testing the revised car in January.

The team will have two cars at the 1986 series opener, the Daytona 24 Hours, and plans to run a full series of 18 races.



Radisich — full F3 season.

Radisich back to F3

Paul Radisich, the young New Zealander who created such an impression in British F3 early in 1984, is set to return to these shores next season, for a full assault on the premier national championship. The 22-year-old Kiwi put Murray Taylor's Ralt RT3 on the pole at Thruxton in only his second F3 race, but sadly his finances ran dry.

Now, with the support of a consortium of Auckland businessmen, Radisich is on his way back, resolved to finish the job properly. He has the talent. Paul will again join his countryman Taylor's Silverstone-based team, and will be equipped with a new Ralt-VW.

"Paul proved his ability with us at the start of '84," said Murray on Monday, "and we intend to take it up again from where we finished two years ago." Radisich is confidently expected to be a leading title contender.

Forini in F3000 86B

Italian F3 champion Franco Forini will contest a full F3000 International programme with Pierluigi Corbari's March-equipped team next season. The moustachioed Swiss, who did an excellent job in the Forti team's Volkswagen-powered Dallara this year, signed for Corbari's Milanese equipe last week. His team-mate has yet to be nominated.

Patrick nets Cicale

Tony Cicale, who recently left Newman/Haas Racing after several years of working with Mario Andretti, has joined Patrick Racing for 1986. In the last few weeks he had offers from both the Truesports team and, it is believed, from Ferrari, who are currently searching for someone to design their Indy car.

Although Cicale liked the idea of working with Bobby Rahal at Truesports, this team — like Newman/Haas wanted him to attend all the CART events as a race engineer. Tony prefers to concentrate on his work as an aerodynamicist, attending races only occasionally, and this Patrick Racing were prepared to accept. Their drivers next year are Emerson Fittipaldi and Kevin Cogan.

Two Mercedes Saubers for Le Mans

The Swiss sportscar constructor, Peter Sauber, will be back at Le Mans next year with two improved versions of the Sauber C-12 Group C car, sponsored by Kourou aftershave and Yves St Laurent, the Paris fashion house.

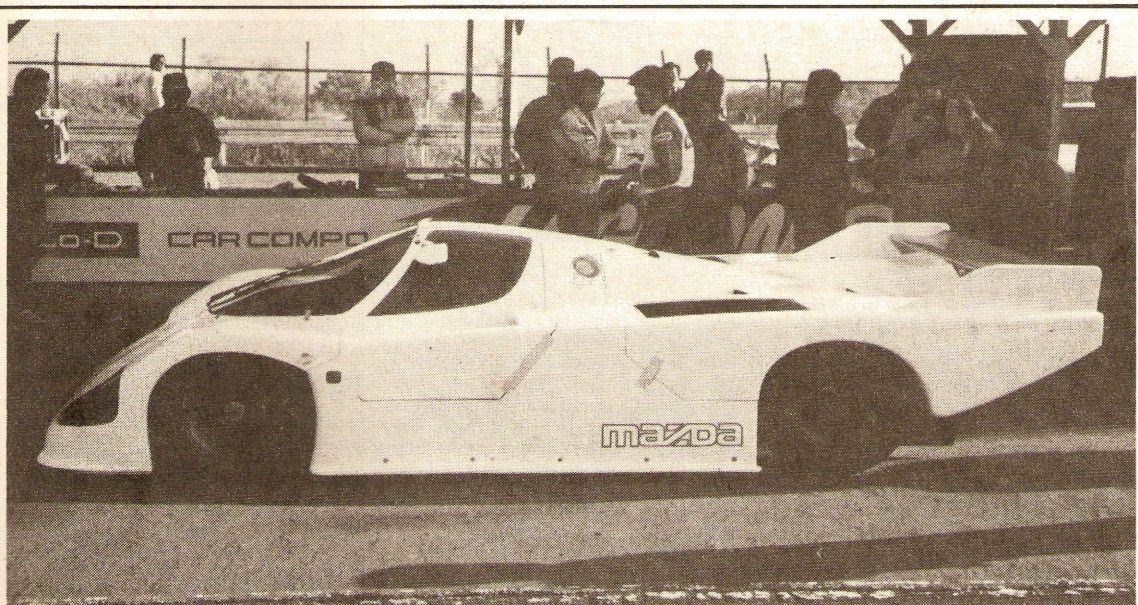
Like the development chassis, which was extremely impressive at Le Mans this

year until John Nielsen's spectacular accident during qualifying, the 1986 cars will be powered by specially prepared versions of the 5-litre Mercedes V8 normal induction engine, built for Sauber by his compatriot, Henri Mader.

The Sauber team is also hoping to field one car in several more rounds of the

1986 Sportscar World Championship, and certainly in all the European rounds of the Teams series.

The team owner is talking with several drivers, including Nielsen, although the Dane is also considering an offer from TWR Jaguar for whom he drove the season-closing events.



New Mazda C-Car tests at Fuji

Pictured during its first shakedown trial late last month at Fuji International Speedway is the all-new Mazda 757C, the Japanese company's latest Group C racing sportscar. The 757C, which will form the basis of the factory Mazdaspeed team's 1986 programme, was designed in England by Nigel Stroud on a new monocoque made from aluminium honeycomb with carbon fibre upper structures. The engine, which drives through a Porsche 956-type gearbox, is the triple-rotor Mazda and initially the new car will be entered in the Group C2 category. However, Mazdaspeed plans to fit the latest version of the turbocharged C1 powerplant as soon as it is ready. Although much of the running gear has originated in the UK, where the build project has been coordinated by Stroud and Alan Docking, the chassis and bodywork were built in Japan, where the car was assembled. Development of the Mazda 757C continues apace and as usual Mazdaspeed entries outside Japan are expected to include the Silverstone and Le Mans rounds of the 1986 Sportscar World Championship.

Camel Light success for new Argo JM19 GTP model

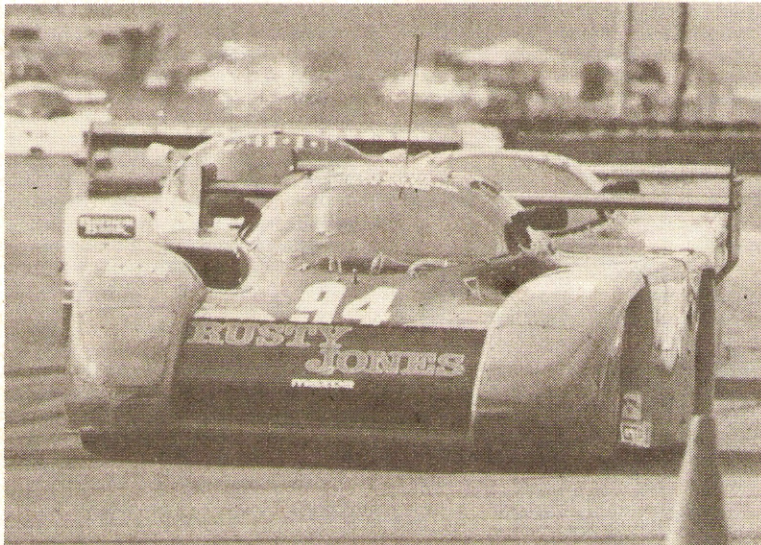
Anglia Cars, winners of this year's IMSA GTP 'Camel Lights' manufacturers championship through their Argo JM16 models, had four of Jo Marquart's new JM19 chassis out for the first time at the Daytona finale on December 1.

Jim Downing and John Maffucci, first and second respectively in the 700kgs chassis division of the big sportscar series, gave their shared car a superb debut, being quickest in both qualifying sessions and winning the class comfortably after a trouble-free run.

Downing, a long-time expert with the 2.6-litre Mazda 13B rotary engines, was delighted with the JM19's initial performance in Florida. Having run his JM16 at the 24 Hours event in March, a direct comparison between the chassis was easily made. Jim found the slippery new car to be some 14mph faster in a straight line (using gear ratio calculations rather than a speed trap) and nearly 5secs quicker on lap times.

A second new Argo, that of Kelly Marsh, Don Marsh and Ron Pawley, was running second in class when the fuel pump failed, while the version of Jim Fowells and Ray Mummy were lying fourth when 'Doc' Mummy had the misfortune to collide heavily with a Chevrolet Corvette which spun in front of him. Despite the impact, the tub of the Argo was undamaged.

Frank Rubino's JM19, due to be shared by David Kennedy, failed to run due to a gremlin in the plumbing of the



The Rusty Jones team's Argo-Mazda JM19 on its debut at Daytona.

Japanese engine. With a spare installed however, it went very well in testing at Moroso (née West Palm Beach) the following week.

Marquart himself and Nick Jordan were present to engineer the Watton-built cars at Daytona and their immediate competitiveness has prompted a lot of customer interest. In Europe, former rallycross champion turned Group C2

sponsored driver Martin Schanche has ordered a new Argo (to take a Ford turbo engine) for 1986, and others are expected to join the Norwegian's on the grids.

The honeycomb JM19, which is also suitable for domestic Thundersports events, costs £55,000 as a rolling chassis. Installation kits are available for Mazda, Buick V6 Ford Cosworth DFV/DFL and Ford BD-series engines, among others.

BRIEFLY

■ At Phoenix last week A J Foyt tested one of his March 85Cs, with turbocharged Chevrolet V6 'stock block' in the back. The Texan plans to try one next year at Indianapolis, where, under USAC rules, stock block motors are allowed to run 57ins of boost (ten more than pure 'racing' engines such as the Cosworth DFX).

■ The Confederation of Australian Motor Sport (CAMS) has confirmed recent rumours to the effect that it will be running a separate championship for under 2-litre saloon cars next year. The decision was apparently taken as the small classes were finding it a problem to qualify alongside the big cars. The move should therefore increase participation, while leaving the regular saloon runners without the problem of overtaking the baby class cars . . .

■ Australian Touring Car Champion Jim Richards has sold his series winning BMW to Garry Rogers and is looking to the New Zealand Nissan/Mobil series with a choice of two cars: a brand new 635 and a new 325i.

■ Although they appear to have no car for the largest ETC class next year, BMW are keen to run their new 325i in the middle class, where it should be a very competitive proposition.

■ An entirely new racing circuit is under construction in the Malaysian state of Johor, near the city of Pasir Gudang. Just 1.93 miles in length, and therefore too short to stage FIA World series track events, the Johor circuit is an £850,000 project financed, like Shah Alam which hosted a Group C event earlier this month, by the State Economic Development Corporation. The plans have been inspected by FISA's John Corsmit and is due for its first major race in April, 1986.

Surfers goes Group A

Surfers Paradise racing circuit has announced plans for a major touring car event for Easter next year. There is expected to be something in the region of A\$80,000 (£40,000) prize money and the progressive Surfers management hopes

to attract all the leading touring car racers.

At the same time Surfers is set to increase the length of the circuit to bring it up to FISA-approved standards for a World Endurance event next year.

Hodgetts to Toyota

Following Terry Drury's announcement that he is planning to field a strong team of RS Escort Turbos in next year's RAC British Saloon Car Championship, comes word of a new team featuring this year's Trimoco runner up Chris Hodgetts.

The effervescent Redditch driver has switched allegiance from Ford to Toyota and will campaign one of the rapid little 16-valve Corolla GTs with sponsorship from Team Toyota GB and Duckhams Oils.

Hodgetts has campaigned his Brooklyn Ford Escort RS1600i with some notable successes and despite being offered a chance to drive one of Ford's exciting middle class Escort Turbos has decided to stay in the baby class and return to Toyota, with whom he won his class in the series in 1980 and 1981.

At Snetterton earlier this year Chris had a run in Tony Crudgington's Corolla and was favourably impressed with the car which has won the baby class in the European Touring Car championship for two years running . . .

The car will be prepared by Dave Lampitt and Tony Hunt who have worked with Chris in the Brooklyn Escort team. A new company, Chris Hodgetts Motorsport has been set up to run the car from premises at Pershore, Worcestershire. Jim Whitehouse will build the engines and the team hopes to be ready for testing in late January.

■ Swiss sports car driver Jean-Pierre Frey has bought one of the San Remo Racing March 85Bs and apparently intends to use it as the basis of his own F3000 construction.

■ Bertram Schafer has bought the little used Eric Lang/Ekstroem team's F3000 March 85B. The top German F3 entrant intends to use the car to give his young driver Alfrid Heger some testing miles before possibly buying a new chassis prior to the start of the 1986 season.

■ Brian Murphy's German-based Bayern Motorsport will be fielding two new Reynards in next year's German F3 championship powered by Speiss VW engines.

■ Gil Baird has bought one of the Eddie Jordan Racing Ralt RT30s, which he is expected to run for Sports 2000 Champion Sean Walker in F3 next year.

■ Esso FF series regular Gary Ward has bought one of Murray Taylor's F3 Ralts for use in the B class of the 1986 British F3 Championship.

■ The last of the major French Volant awards has now been decided. The *Volant Avia* has been won by 21-year-old student Herve Guignard who will be joining Jean-Noel Lanctuit in the Avia F3 team for '86.

■ Watch out for BBC TV's *A Question of Sport* programme today and next week. Tonight Patrick Tambay will be answering David Coleman's questions, while next Thursday will see Derek Bell in the hot seat.

MIKE NEEDELL

It is our regretted duty to report the death from cancer of Mike Needell, 37-year-old brother of Tiff, in Johannesburg last week.

A computer engineer with IBM, he had lived in South Africa since 1972, when he drove to that country from Britain with three friends in a Land-Rover. He took up motor racing in 1976 when he bought his brother's FF1600 Crosslé 25F and, after a few events in the UK, shipped it to his new home and established himself as a leading contender in the national series, shining in particular on the Killarney circuit. Subsequently he had a number of races in Formula Atlantic.

Mike's tragic illness cost him an eye three years ago, but he came back to racing and has recently been very competitive in the Sigma single-seater series with a Mazda-powered March 832.

We are deeply saddened by the news and offer our condolences to Mike's widow, Avril, to his one-year-old son Clifford, to Tiff and the rest of the family.

Moffatt in ETC Holden

Peter Brock gave everyone a shock on Monday when he announced that his co-driver for 1986 would be none other than Alan Moffatt.

It was thought that Moffatt had concluded a deal to run Ford Sierra Turbos in next year's Australian Touring Car Championship, but this news now means that the Australian veteran, who took a year out in '85 after Mazda withdrew from racing, will be seen in Europe as partner to Brock in his European Touring Car programme.

Brock, who will be sponsored by Mobil once more, also announced his international racing plans which will take in the Nissan Sport 500 events at Wellington and Pukekohe, before moving on to the ETC rounds at Monza, Donington, Hockenheim, Spa and Silverstone. From there the team will return to Australia for the Castrol 500 at Sandown and the James Hardie 1000 at Bathurst. The year will end with the Group A races at Fuji and Macau.

An uncertain future?

It is sad to see that Thruxton will now be leaving the select group of British circuits running FIA championship events, which will henceforth be staged only at Brands Hatch, Donington Park and Silverstone.

The news that the organising British Automobile Racing Club has decided to scrap its Formula 3000 fixture (see *P&P*) is not unexpected. We have to say that, in our view, it is the correct decision, for the club has already spent £35,000 of its funds on Formula 3000, and stood to lose even more had it proceeded with its fixture at Easter in 1986.

The club is also correct in its assessment of the reasons for its difficulty. The fact is that the commercial aspect of International motor racing has been changing at a pace which the BARC and Thruxton, for a variety of reasons, have been unable to match. The top end of the sport's single-seater market, polarized into Formula 1 and Formula 3000, now comes very, very expensive. Only circuits with a genuinely high financial turnover or with exceptional backing can afford to put on these events, and Thruxton is not among them, nor ever will be.

The decision of the BARC Council, then, recognises the reality of the club's situation and, once taken, probably brings relief to the administrators who have struggled for years to turn the annual International at Thruxton into a commercially viable fixture. What the club's statement lacks, however, is any firm indication as to where it, and its circuit, go from here.

Like the BARC itself, *AUTOSPORT* hopes with sincerity that Thruxton, which has been the subject of many improvements

in recent years, will continue to be used in the best possible interests of motor racing in Britain. However, we are astonished to read in the statement the words, "It is hoped that new ideas will emerge early in 1986."

It seems that the BARC has been shocked by the need to abandon its International fixture and has been unable as yet to identify new objectives. Let us remind the BARC, whose future prosperity we strongly desire, that for many years its rationale has been to promote the sport of motor racing. There is, simply, no need to be dismayed, nor to adopt a negative attitude.

We accept that, on the face of it, the loss of the circuit's prime event appears to be a setback, but this surely is a matter of priorities. What is needed now is the will to consolidate, for the BARC to recognise the many advantages it does enjoy, and to build on them for the future. There is ample scope at Thruxton for the club to set fresh targets, catering as never before for the needs of its members and indeed for the health of British motor racing activity.

Certainly, it will take ingenuity to create circumstances under which such a programme, dealing with motor racing at National level and below, will achieve its objectives while producing income sufficient to finance expansion. But we believe that the BARC, given strong and decisive leadership, can possess that ingenuity, and can be big enough to identify more accessible targets.

Surely the BARC is not, as its statements suggests, merely waiting for something to turn up?

CORRESPONDENCE

THE EDITOR IS NOT BOUND TO AGREE WITH THE OPINIONS OF READERS

RAC response

I have taken great interest in comments made by both participating drivers and yourselves (*Comment, Dec 05*) concerning the traditional format of the RAC Rally. At the risk of being considered parochial I would like to make the following comments:

a) Why should events be tailored to suit the competing vehicles? Surely, to my simplistic mind, it should be the other way round.

b) The World Rally Championship's appeal is surely in its variety. The RAC is blind, the Swedish has snow and ice, the Safari is the safari. Why should there be some standard format as suggested by yourselves?

c) I am concerned that you, as a respected British Motor sport weekly should suggest that "warnings" such as those issued by Jean Todt should be heeded without commenting as to whether manufacturers through their appointed motorsport supremos should make such comments. My interpretation is that M Todt has a crucial say in whether an event is included in the World Championship or not. This is plainly absurd, if it is the case, and I can only hope that the strength of his comments are not related to losing his three car team to two driver errors and one badly built engine.

d) I am bemused as to how you measure "success of the occasion". You cannot seriously consider this year's event anything other than an unqualified

success (the event's two fastest drivers came first and second!), and this I feel is directly attributable to the rally's length and demanding schedule. You suggest that progress towards a set of detailed hazard notes would improve the rally's appeal. I agree, but you then undermine this by suggesting this innovation in conjunction with a shorter event, which in my opinion is a contradiction. More information will increase safety margins and should therefore *remove* the need to reduce the events length!

I was pleased to see that Tony Ambrose felt that Timo Salonen's and Mark Alen's moanings were not worth serious comment (*Correspondence, Dec 05*) and hope that Deputy Clerk of the Course, Dave Whittock and the RAC-MSA are not unduly influenced by the driver's comments or the lack of positive support reflected in the overall tone of your editorial and serve up more of the same next year.

NEVILLE ANDREWS
BRISTOL, AVON

More of the same

I must express concern at the current situation of World Championship Rallying. The sport now appears to have reached the situation that Grand Prix racing reached some 10 years ago with requests to modify the events to suit the requirements of the vehicles. The purpose of rallying has been — and should still be — to challenge men and machinery with varying conditions. Some events

lend themselves to pace notes and recess, others do not and I feel the RAC would lose much of its appeal and character if pace notes were introduced, as the cars would then follow more of a 'racing line'.

In the short term, I agree that events may need to make changes to bring about compliance with the Group B supercars (only nine in evidence on this year's RAC), but in the longer term I feel that the rules must change to bring the vehicles closer to reality.

The current Group B cars are technical masterpieces, but if they continue to develop at the current rate World Championship rallying will be reduced to 30 vehicle supercar invitation events and the sport will suffer.

AR WALMSLEY
TOWCESTER, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

As long as independent parties are in the position to influence the World series, notice must be taken when opinions are expressed, particularly if there is a strong lobby against the event. The most important thing is that this country retains its World Championship counter — Ed.

Getting it right?

Thank you the BBC for last week's excellent footage of the Lombard RAC Rally, a sure sign that the sport is being taken seriously at Television Centre at last. The action was imaginatively filmed and brought the atmosphere of this year's most exciting event right into our houses.

But, it must be said that the reporting

by William Woollard and Brian Jones was lamentable. Woollard harped on *ad nauseum*, and without much understanding, about the drivers's views on the length of the event, while Jones's commentary was often inaccurate. Variable pronunciation of drivers's names was inexcusable and certain facts should have been laid before him if he was to bring any credibility to his efforts. May I point out that Ingvar Carlsson did not win the Acropolis Rally and Hannu Mikkola did not retire on the 1979 RAC Rally — he won it!

I understand that the BBC are to increase their rallying coverage in 1986, presumably this will include the Lombard RAC Rally. Please Mr Producer — get it right . . .

RICHARD TOOGOOD
LONDON SW19

The Helpful Line

Your publication has rightfully praised the RAC and all the helpers and marshals who made the event this year a successful one. However, I would like to express thanks to people who manned the 'Help Line' telephones, who were inundated with calls and at every opportunity were polite, helpful and informative. I have spoken to several people who used the service, as well as myself, and all were full of praise for the staff.

CHARLES EVESON
BANBURY, OXFORDSHIRE

Two safety suggestions

I feel that your reporter at the Nov 10 Brands Hatch meeting (*Sportscard*, Nov 14) was somewhat harsh on the drivers in the Winter Warmers GT race regarding their conduct at the race stoppage.

To my mind the confusion was caused by two factors:

1) The ludicrous regulation calling for a stationary black flag at marshals posts, which must be the most invisible choice possible.

2) The practice of halting the cars on the start-finish line, thereby confronting the later runners with a blocked track.

The solution would seem to be two-fold. First, the adoption next season of, at the very least, waved red flags at every flag and fire post. Better still would be installing repeater red lights around the track controlled by the main startline light, giving instant warning to drivers.

Second, allow cars to slow along top straight, filter them off the track down the service-road before Paddock Hill Bend, thus ensuring that all runners have the maximum amount of time and space in which to stop.

With race stoppages now seeming to be a regular event at meetings, I can only hope that it will not take an accident and/or injury before something is done about improving the methods used.

DAVID WRIGHT
CLIFFE, KENT

Vigilant and safe

I write in reply to the letter from Patrick Dyson published in *Correspondence* (Nov 14) when he strongly criticised Ayrton Senna's driving in Adelaide.

For sure, he made a few mistakes, but only after driving superbly during the year as a whole. He has always been a vigilant and safe driver who has kept out of trouble. True he was off-form down under, but just a little bit, and even a good driver is entitled to an off day.

Mr Dyson has penalised him beyond all belief. To compare him with Alliot and Martini is unfair. I should not wonder that the critical Mr Dyson also supports Andrea de Cesaris. Indeed he probably wears a hat advertising the fact...

DEREK CAMPBELL
SEVENOAKS, KENT

10

Ten years ago this week (AUTOSPORT, December 11, 1975) the big question was whether or not James Hunt would sign for Marlboro McLaren. Although many Fleet St dailies had already featured the news, a lingering doubt still remained.

Definite though, was Frank Williams' acquisition of the Hesketh 308C and the disbanded team's designer, Harvey Postlethwaite. A factor in Harvey's decision was apparently Williams' tie-up with oil millionaire, Walter Wolf. AUTOSPORT predicted Frank's best GP season and the man himself was optimistic too, involving himself in negotiations with Jacky Ickx and Monaco F3 winner, Renzo Zorzi. Of the latter Frank said: "In about six months or so, he'll do something that will benefit Formula 1 greatly." Well, we're still waiting and as things turned out, Frank's trump card was actually his young, former Lola designer, one Patrick Head.

Nigel Roebuck recalled some poignant memories from the career of the late Jochen Rindt (below). The Austrian was viewed by many as the quickest driver of his day and Nigel related his dramatic last lap victory at Monaco in '70. On that final lap, Rindt smashed the lap record

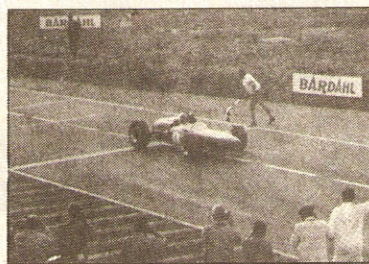


with an incredible time 1sec quicker than Stewart's pole time and 3secs better than Rindt's own time, tears flowing down his cheeks as he went to meet Princess Grace.

Elsewhere in the magazine, ironically, Pete Lyons reviewed compatriot Niki Lauda's first championship winning year, Rindt of course never having lived to realise his ambition.

20

Twenty years ago this week (AUTOSPORT, December 10, 1965) we carried a number of reports from all round the globe. There was the Macau Grand Prix, the Angolan Grand Prix and action from the Rand Grand Prix at Kyalami. Yes, we were intercontinental in those days too! The Macau event saw plenty of action around the streets of the Guia circuit, culminating in a multiple pile-up at the Mecl Hairpin on the 59th lap. It was a 230 mile race in those days... The red flag had to be brought out and victory went to John Macdonald (no, not him) in a Formula Junior, although local man Albert Poon made the early pace in a Lotus 23. Albert incidentally was racing around the Guia track again this



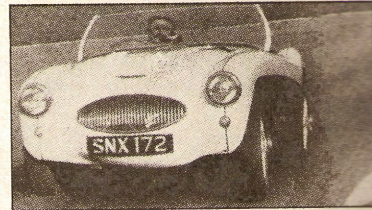
year...

The 7th Angola Grand Prix was held round the streets of Luanda and was won by none other than David Piper in a Ferrari 365P2 against some pretty good opposition which included Denny Hulme, Herbert Muller and 'Jo the furious' Schlesler in an enormous Cobra. Also about was Rolf Stommelen. The 1.98 mile Luanda circuit ran around the 'palms and trottoirs' and it all seemed to be rather good fun. Cars were delayed on boats and practice began at 5am, which was, it transpired, the most convenient time to close the roads...

At Kyalami Jack Brabham (above) won the Rand Grand Prix, the first major race for the new 3-litre F1 cars against a high quality international field.

Back in England, John Bolster had found something to warm the cockles of his heart in the news from France that a 1908 Panhard GP car had been unearthed in an 'Ali Baba's cave' in Paris...

30



Thirty years ago this week (AUTOSPORT, December 9, 1955), Stirling Moss ended all speculation as to his plans for 1956, when his father, Alfred, issued a letter stating that after careful consideration and consultation with the motoring press (*Then as Now?* last week), he had signed for Maserati as their number one driver. Much as he wanted to drive for a British team, Stirling felt that his best chance lay with the Italian marque, however, he had negotiated a clause in his contract whereby he would be allowed to take part in British cars in six sportscar events during the course of the year.

Our North American correspondent sent news from the Great American Mountain Rallye, which Stewart Blodgett/John Baugh won in their Triumph TR2 after a combination of rally sections and autotests. The award for the most courageous entrant went to 75-year-old Martha Schweighofer who navigated for her son in his Porsche, finishing well up the order.

Two rapid, open-topped sportscars that represented the state-of-the-art on either side of the Atlantic were put through their paces by our staff: the Austin Healey 100S (above) and the Chevrolet Corvette (below). Both returned top speeds of around 120-125mph, but the American car was capable of reaching 60mph a little more swiftly thanks to its larger engine.



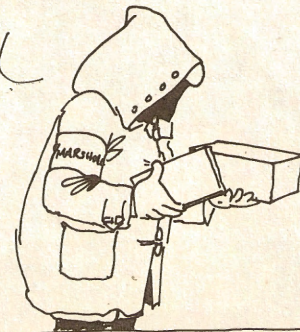
CATCHPOLE

BARRY FOLEY

RIGHT, THIS IS THE DAY I'VE BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO - I'VE SAVED UP ALL THE...



...FEES AND EXPENSES I'VE BEEN PAID FOR MARSHALLING AT EVENTS THIS YEAR AND NOW I'M GOING TO BLOW THE WHOLE DAMN LOT ON ONE GIANT...



....BOTTLE OF TIZER.





Having lost control at the foot of Pilgrims Drop, Arnesson watches as the field streams by, led by Alamaki and Mavropoulos, with Welch in fifth place.

Tried and tested winner

Fantastic, thrilling, exciting and even amazing are words that simply could not do justice to the fourth Motaquip British Rallycross Grand Prix run at Brands Hatch last weekend. A British driver was quickest overall as Saturday qualifying drew to a close and amazingly it was also a British driver, the same one in fact, who crossed the line first in the most important race of the weekend to clinch the GP crown. That man was none other than the one whose car had been track tested in these very pages just a few days ago, STP and Sealink backed driver John Welch.

An excellent start to the proceedings saw John snatching the prize for being faster during Saturday's heats away from former GP winner Olle Arnesson in the last race of the afternoon, but that gave only an inkling of the sort of determination that was driving Welch towards becoming the first British competitor to win the Rallycross GP.

QUALIFYING

Surprisingly, European Rallycross Champion Matti Alamaki was missing, due to a prior commitment in Germany, but the Finn was able to compete in the Sunday GP meeting after being granted a 'by' from the organisers. Two Austrian drivers made the trip over, namely Andy Bentza, with a Quattro whose engine was giving serious cause for concern as it refused to run on all five cylinders, and Herbert Breiteneder in the interesting Lotus Esprit turbo. Francois Monten appeared for his first taste of the Brands GP track, Piet Dam arrived with his familiar BMW and Seppo Niittymaki had again made the long journey down from Finland with the mighty 700bhp twin-turbo 4WD Porsche.

Hoping to be able to win the event for a second consecutive year, Norwegian Martin Schanche was being made a might too confident. The winner of the first ever Motaquip British Rallycross GP, Swede Rolf Nilsson had some 700bhp on call in his four-wheel drive Porsche and was looking to get a bit further than he did last year, while a host of turbocharged 4WD Beetles from Europe again made up the entry. One notable omission, though, was Arild Martinsen with the unique 4WD turbo 16 valve Lotus Sunbeam, his entry having been withdrawn at the last minute, as had that of fellow Norwegian

and Quattro driver Kjetil Bolneset.

There was plenty of interest among the British entry, with Trevor Hopkins at last able to give his new Ford Escort its debut outing. The car was now devoid of major sponsorship, save for the Ford, Avon and Hopkin Plant Hire badges, and it is hoped that the British champion will be able to attract some form of support before the start of next season. Another new car was the interesting (and unique, in the sport) four-wheel drive Fiesta of grass track racer Mike Jennings. Many sleepless nights had been put in by the team the week prior to the event and once the machine has been fully sorted it

Welch's weekend wasn't all fun, a split oil pipe enlivening things on Saturday . . .



should prove quite a challenge to the regular front runners. The car employs a form of four-wheel steering, which could not be exploited to the full on this occasion due to problems caused by a broken wishbone on the rear suspension.

Another new Fiesta was the rear-wheel drive car of former Chevette driver Garry Baker. The car had gone very well in testing the days before the event but was not destined to shine. John Welch had undertaken a complete rebuild on his turbo engine and was looking forward to an enjoyable meeting, as was Ulster driver Fred Patterson, who appeared in an ex-George Warren Escort, his Porsche having recently been sold.

Things did not go too well on the day though for the former national hunt jockey. While lining up for practice, Patterson's engine suddenly blew back through the inlet trumpets, and the engine bay went up in flames. Some very quick work by the marshals saved the car from serious damage, but a number of injection pipes had been burnt and as the job or repair was deemed to be a rather major one Patterson became one of the very first retirements. Moments later, trouble struck northern Fiesta driver Colin Rowley when his engine lost oil pressure, so he too was out.

Monten had a few exploratory laps and proclaimed that he was pleased with the way he was getting to know the circuit but was sure that he could go somewhat faster. Someone else who thought he could do better was Dimi Mavropoulos.

Confident that his recent engine problems with frequent head gasket failure were now solved, Dimi was happy with the power from the 20-valve engine but found that third gear was far too low for the track. So, after first practice, out came the 'box and in went another one, but the clutch then refused to function properly. That was removed and on inspection found to be faulty, but the team soon realised that they did not have a spare with them. All was not lost though, for Arnesson sportingly came to the rescue, and although Mavropoulos missed the first runs he just made it in time for his second race and promptly won it with the fifth fastest time of the day to easily qualify from the GP meeting.

Meanwhile, there was a surprise in store for the big boys as the smaller engined cars began to dominate the early proceedings, the lesser power output of the Metros in particular proving rather more suitable on the very slippery circuit. The track did eventually begin to dry out, but not before a number of the Clubmen had made their mark. As the action started, Michael Shield opened the scoring by winning race 1 from Bill Stewart, and Dave Pritchard got the better of Kevin Pease to take race 2. Making it three in a row to the Metros, Roy Clarke won race 3 as Dave Ward moved his MG variant past Barry Willmott's Fiesta for second spot.

Tony Bardy gave the Mini its first win of the day in the next race as he led home Vic Moyce and Brian Johnson, Paul Bullivant losing time and dropping down the order when he hit the tyres at Paddock on the opening lap. He eventually made it back up to fourth spot. Some of the bigger engined cars were finding the power a bit of an embarrassment in the slippery conditions, especially Warwick Barnes with the V8 engined TR7 and Tony Proctor in the big Capri. The latter, however, went much better as the track dried out and produced an improved second run time that was much improved to at least join the list of Sunday qualifiers, while Barnes was posted as one of the reserves.

Race five went to Trevor Reeves in the 2-litre Fiesta, Rob Gibson chasing him for much of the way. But a spin for the Porsche driver towards the end of the race at Druids dropped him out of an eventual fourth behind John Pearson and Erling Jensen. Hopkins was out in this one, but trouble with a pipe coming adrift on the turbocharger prevented Trevor from really having a go. A half-successful repair for Hopkins' second run saw the 4WD turbo Escort in the lead momentarily before giving best to a hard-charging Seppo Niittymaki. However, the latter was deemed to be charging a mite too hard and found himself promptly excluded for having put Dave Illingworth's Fiesta into the wall coming off the start-line at the beginning of race. None to happy about the decision, Niittymaki threatened to protest, but he had made it through to Sunday's racing anyway.

Back to the first heats though, and now it was time for a Quattro to get on the act as Monten took victory from John Smith in his 4WD Porsche. However, all of the 4WD cars were subject to the 5% penalty rule, as has been normal in British rallycross, so the driver that was first across the finish line was not necessarily the eventual winner, as in this case where Monten and Smith both subsequently dropped two places in the order, promoting the Fiestas of Ronnie White and Illingworth.

Up until now, Reeves and Pritchard had been the fastest drivers, but Schanche comfortably won race 6, and even with the penalty, the Norwegian proved so far ahead that he still managed to set a

new BTD. Dam followed Schanche home in a distant second place, but the Dutchman was not seen again as his BMW's rear suspension had broken after a tussle with Nilsson's Porsche, with had itself retired with a broken wheel.

The final two races of the first heats went to Michael Nordstrom (4WD VW Beetle turbo) and Arnesson respectively as British hopes took a slight tumble when Welch was penalised for an alleged jump start. Both the winners were extremely quick, Nordstrom getting to within 0.1sec of Schanche's time and Arnesson bettering it by 4.5secs! Drivers with problems at this point included Mark Lloyd, who pulled off with gearbox problems, John Cross, who had lost oil pressure when an oil pipe had come adrift, and Belgian Wim van Herck with electrical problems on his Volvo. Jensen's Rover had broken a rear suspension link, but this was quickly repaired, as was Lloyd's gearbox. Cross, however, was not so lucky, his engine obviously suffered because moments after the start of his second run a con rod punched a hole in the side of the block.

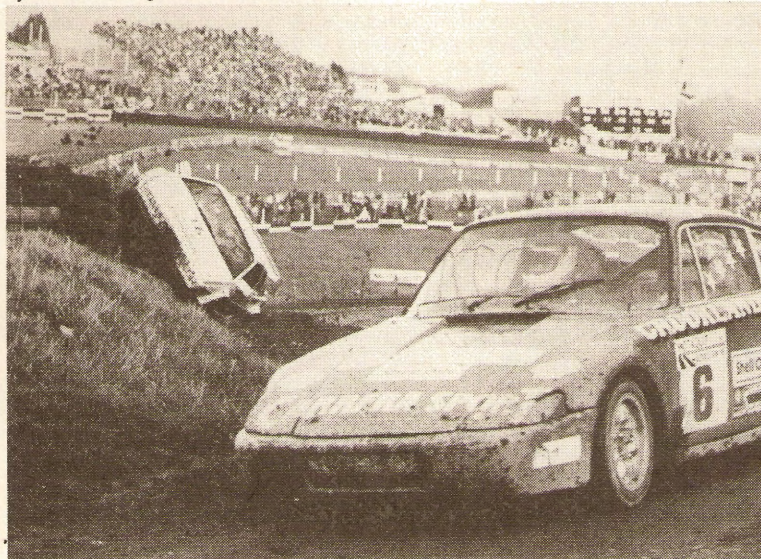
The action continued throughout the second runs, Pritchard improving to finish an excellent fourth fastest overall, a great effort in a 1500cc car, and Barry Crump too moved up the order with a good win over the ever present Bardy. There was trouble for Reeves though, the Fiesta driver pulling off with a defunct gearox. Mark Rennison was very lucky to qualify for the Sunday event after spending a frustrating day trying to find traction.

Brietneder was really going well and as the second runs began to draw to a close things really started to heat up; Schanche stared to get things wrong; Niittymaki and had Illingworth off and was excluded; and Hopkions started to get it all together — all in the same race! The latter was, at this point, quite enthusiastic about the potential of his new car, and looking forward to the future with interest. By now, Thor Holm's VW Beetle had expired with a suspect broken flywheel and Nick Martin had suffered broken steering after hitting the tyres.

Right at the start of the last race, Kjell Aaen's Beetle rammed the wall hard coming off the start and with the car stranded in the middle of the track the race was stopped. On the re-run, Welch repeated his flying start and the crowd suddenly became aware that, after two laps, the Brit looked on target for eating Arnesson's best. Cheered on, John flung the STP Escort towards the chequered flag, eventually stopping the clock on 3m19.6s, 1.7secs better than the Swede and going down in history as the first British driver to ever lead the order as qualifying for Sunday's GP closed. There were certainly a lot of smiling faces in the STP/Sealink camp that evening, if only



Kjell Breiteneder gets it all wrong coming into Hoppy's Drop. And stays there . . .



their luck would hold out for just one more day!

As always the paddock had been a hive of activity overnight as teams tried to sort out their problems in time for a further three sets of qualifying heats on the Sunday. One person who was none too happy was Bentza, the misfire still not traced — something to do with the injection unit. Proctor had changed the clutch on his Capri, van Herck's problem had been traced to the intercooler and cured, and in the Hopkins camp, their previous day's aggro with the turbo pipe was resolved. Illingworth's Fiesta looked 100% fit again after its off into the armco, and in the Reeves pits a new gearbox had been fitted. Unfortunately, when Trevor fired up the Fiesta, the flywheel was found to be loose so the mechanics promptly descended on the car again and all was well in time for practice.

Mild panic broke out around Welch's machine when the hydraulics for the four-wheel drive transmission suddenly failed, but this too was quickly traced to a wire trapped and shorting to earth somewhere in the car's computer electrics. "At least it proves that the hydraulics do assist the car!" exclaimed designer Mike Endean. The main concern on Dennis Atkinson's mind, as on the mind of most other two-wheel drive competitors, was how to get grip on the very greasy surface, now made worse by overnight rain "I'm thinking of investing some money in some tyres" quipped the Cumbrian driver as practice closed.

Just as they had the day before, the small cars went very well during early qualifying, with Pritchard picking up where he had left off by winning the first race on a time of 3m 38.4s. The Metro driver's performance was so good, in

fact, that the time stood as the best for the rest of the first runs, ahead of the 4WD brigade and all! There was big trouble for Proctor in race 2 when the gearbox cried enough. That one went to Will Gallop from Geoff Reynolds but 10sec for a jump start demoted the Saab driver well down the order, Nordstrom then taking first place on the road on race 3 rom fellow Beetle driver Wahlund.

Starting his bid for a second GP victory, Arnesson comfortably won his first heat, from Alamaki, Mavropoulos, and Monten; while Niittymaki was also well in there with a win in race 4. The session ended with an exciting dice between Schanche and Welch, the two Xtrac drivers side by side on numerous occasions, sliding this way and that as Martin held on to win. At this stage the order was Pritchard, Schanche, Welch and Nordstrom.

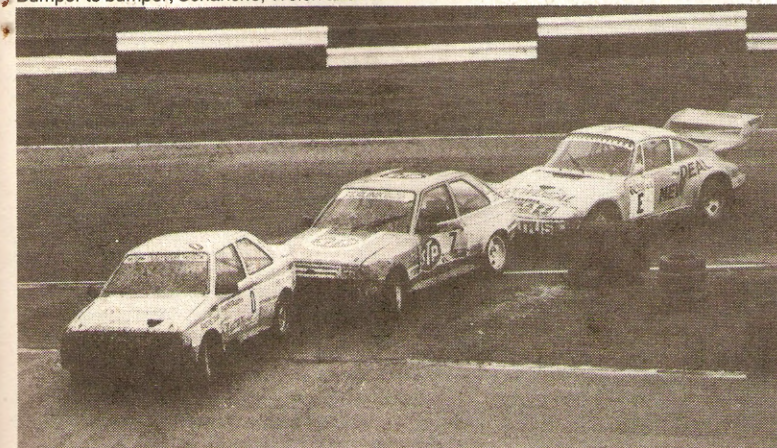
On the opening lap of the next heats there was drama at the esses, as Brian Johnson put his Metro into the tyres and Roy Clark followed suit. Bill Stewart took over the lead but this was to be short lived as Reynolds soon shot past followed by Bob Smith.

Pritchard came racing through from the back of the grid in race 8 to challenge Dave Illingworth as they raced up the hill into Druids, the Metro driver then taking the lead but failing to improve on his first run time. Gallop had to be content with second spot this time from Shield.

With a number of the 4WD cars being placed towards the back of the grid in the heats, a few of the starts were rather hectic affairs. Race 9 saw John Smith charging up the grass in a bid to be first away, but his enthusiasm (and the slippery track) got the better of him down at the esses and the Porsche driver spun. Austria's Herbert Breiteneder squeezed by to take the win, thus improving on his first run time and Thomas Kraft was second with the cheeky Mini of Nigel Humphrys third. With Ivan Moakes a non-starter in the next heat due to his engine having seized. Hopkins made a very good start but, as many had done, tried a little too hard to go round the outside at Paddock, slid out wide and slipped right down the order. He was soon putting the pressure on again, as he got used to his new mount, to work his way back up to fourth place behind eventual winner Mavropoulos, Reeves, and Bardy, who was putting up a sterling performance. With the 5% penalty added to Dimi's time, Reeves became the new leader in those heats, although the Fiesta pilot was still well down on Pritchard's first run time.

All of this was soon to change, as Schanche lowered the day's best to 3m 36.4s, but Arnesson then promptly reduced this to 3m 33.3s in the last race of the second heats. Welch was pressing

Bumper to bumper; Schanche, Welch and Alamaki in the final. Schanche was to retire.



The track was very slippery throughout, with the exit of Druids often like this!



►► Nordstrom hard in this one for third spot when an oil pipe to the turbocharger melted and caught fire, the British driver quickly pulling off before any serious damage could occur. Some rapid work on the very hot turbo soon had Welch on the move again and Mark Rennison, his miserable outing continuing when he was caught up in someone else's incident, and Seppo Niittymaki was another to fail to score a time.

For those who had yet to qualify it all rested on the third and final runs. There were an awful lot of do-or-die attempts in this one, which made for some pretty exciting racing and certainly entertained the massive crowd, which looked well up on last year. Pritchard didn't manage a time on his run after being sent into a spin by Ray Houghton down at the esses but his earlier performances had been so good that the Metro driver was still safely through into the GP race as the fastest 2WD competitor. It just went to show that you didn't need lots of money and a powerful car to make the grade, though for many if certainly helped!

As Pease and Gallop has a small argument down at the slippery esses, Clark slipped his Mototrend Metro through into the lead and raced away to a well deserved place on the front row of the 'B' race, the Leeds driver just failing to make the top nine GP finalists. Atkinson finally got it all together to win his last race of the weekend, but it was far too late now to have made the finals despite managing ninth fastest. Race 16 saw Dimi having a small spin as Niittymaki made no mistakes to manage a 3m 38.2s, fourth fastest, once the rest of the big boys had taken their turns. Hopkins seemed set for a good run as he headed into an immediate lead at the start of race 17, but Arnesson arrived on the scene travelling at a hell of a rate as Trevor turned in for the first corner and promptly took the British Champion straight off, earning himself an exclusion in the process. Both retired with punctures as Mark Lloyd made his way through to take the lead and eventually win from Ron Hudson, Gibson (who was actually the cause of Hopkins' puncture, his Porsche having just clipped the Escort) and Ian Smith.

The first corner was by now seeing some sort of incident in each race and there was no exception in the final qualifying event. Alamaki, in trouble with gearbox problems, made a very tardy start but Welch came flying off the middle of the front row to dive straight into the lead from Piet Dam. Meanwhile, Schanche ran into the back of Nordstrom's Beetle with such force that not only was the suspension damaged but the engine was also visibly pushed out of line in the former champion's car. This certainly made the Xtrac handle strangely and Martin was an instant retirement. Then, just as Welch looked ready to take victory, the leader tried to clear the green with his hand as he took Druids for the last time but only succeeded in promptly spinning the car and Dam rushed by to win and set the fastest time of the third runs. Quick reactions lost Welch little time and he was still second quickest.

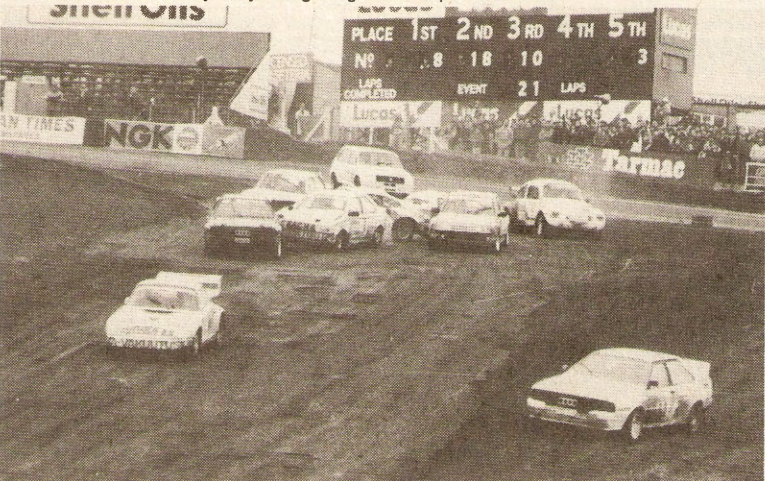
The B final had Clark on pole position but Dimi, in the only 4WD car in the race, came storming through to take an immediate lead and subsequent victory. He had been denied that honour last year but nothing could stop the Quattro driver this time, as he headed for that last remaining place at the back of the GP grid. Gallop produced a good run for second ahead of Pease's ASK Fiesta and Barty did well to demote Reeves to fifth before the chequered flag came out, although to be fair the Dove Group/



The Grand Finalists dive into Paddock for the first time, with Arnesson leading from Welch with Alamaki trying to go round the outside, forcing Welch to strike the leader. And then . . .



With Arnesson (right) and Alamaki clear, the rest of the field are forced to contend with first Welch, then Schanche and finally Niittymaki getting off line to push Dam wide.



Castrol driver was struggling through the race with only third gear at his disposal. Clark managed sixth from Reynolds and Ulsterman Ronnie White, while the Esprit of Breiteneder completed the list of runners, Shield having retired.

THE GRAND PRIX

Now to the Grand Prix itself, and what a race it turned out to be . . . There on the front row of the grid was Briton John Welch, yet it was Arnesson who made the best start to lead into Paddock. With John safely in second spot, Alamaki tried to go up round the outside of the Xtrac driver, swung across to try to take the line and promptly sent Welch flying off the track at well in excess of 100mph. Brakes locked up, the Escort glanced the Armco, shot through a pile of tyres and into a very surprised and subsequently very irate Arnesson. But despite all of the incidents the racing continued and Welch then started his meteoric recovery up through the field. By lap 3 the Brit was up into second spot and fighting tooth and nail with Schanche for the lead, the latter going like the wind and seething with rage after being collected by all and sundry. All was not well with the ex-European champion's car though and a massive cheer went up from the crowd when Welch was suddenly out in the clear and on his way to victory, Schanche pulling up with, amongst other things, deranged steering. John himself could hardly believe it as he took the chequered flag to win.

The new European Rallycross Champion Matti Alamaki followed Welch home in second place ahead of Seppo Niittymaki and VW driver Orjan Wahlund. Fifth was Piet Dam in the BMW while the B final winner Mavropoulos, who had been as high as second overall at one point after an excellent start, took sixth ahead of another hero of the meeting, Dave Pritchard in the little 2WD 1500cc Metro. Mikael Nordstrom, Arnesson and Schanche all failed to complete the course.

Arnesson certainly didn't feel like joining in the celebrations and promptly went over to tell the winner so in no uncertain terms. Welch was unperturbed. He hadn't started the first corner incident and, to come back from such a disastrous start to take the Grand Prix was almost like a fairy-tale ending for someone who later admitted he hadn't really fancied his chances of an outright win. There's nothing like being modest!

This RACMSA organised event had been yet another success and one wonders where things could possibly go from here after such a terrific final. The BBC cameras recorded the action for screening on Saturday 21 Dec, be sure not to miss it!

BRANDS HATCH

Dec 07/08

Motocross British Rallycross Grand Prix

- 1, John Welch (1.9 Ford Escort 4WD turbo), 5m56.0s;
- 2, Matti Alamaki (3.2 4WD Porsche 930 twin-turbo), 6m01.9s;
- 3, Seppo Niittymaki (3.3 4WD Porsche 930 twin-turbo), 6m02.7s;
- 4, Orjan Wahlund (2.1 4WD VW Beetle turbo), 6m03.4s;
- 5, Piet Dam (2.1 4WD BMW 320i turbo), 6m06.6s;
- 6, Dimi Mavropoulos (2.2 Audi Quattro), 6m07.7s;
- 7, Dave Pritchard (1.5 BL Metro), 6m32.3s;
- 8, Mikael Nordstrom (2.1 4WD VW Beetle), retired, lap 3;
- 9, Martin Schanche (1.9 Ford Escort 4WD turbo), retired, lap 3;
- 10, Olle Arnesson (2.2 Audi Quattro), retired, lap 1.

- B final:** 1, Mavropoulos, 6m05.6s; 2, Will Gollop (2.2 Saab 99), 6m13.0s; 3, Kevin Pease (1.6 Ford Fiesta), 6m24.9s; 4, Tony Barty (1.5 BL Mini tc), 6m25.8s; 5, Trevor Reeves (2.0 Ford Fiesta), 6m31.2s; 6, Roy Clark (1.5 BL Metro), 6m32.7s; 7, Geoff Reynolds (1.6 Ford Fiesta), 6m33.8s; 8, Herbert Breiteneder (2.1 Lotus Esprit turbo), 6m39.4s; 10, Michael Shield (1.5 BL Metro), retired, lap 3.

Exciting start to 1986 is promised for WRC

The promise of a bumper World Rally Championship in 1986 is underlined as some seven manufacturers hurry on with their preparations for the opening confrontation, the Monte Carlo Rally, which starts on Saturday January 18.

In many ways the pressure will be on Peugeot this time, more than ever, because as winners last year — and the current champions — they face determined opposition from Audi, Lancia, and Austin Rover. And the organisers will boast a supporting cast which includes Citroën, giving their BX its world debut; Volkswagen; and Mazda (with a couple of four-wheel drive Familia 323s).

Defending French honour from the factory will be Timo Salonen, and newcomer Juha Kankkunen — joined for the occasion by Bruno Saby and Michele Mouton — two men who have little experience of the rally, a weak link which may also hamper British hopes, with Tony Pond and Malcolm Wilson both running Metros for the first time. So attention will focus on the specialists from Audi and Lancia, with the Italians probably favourites after their Lombard RAC Rally double.

Markku Alen will spearhead the operation, with Henri Toivonen again looking for an opportunity. Both men will be only too well aware of Walter Rohrl's threat, however, and although Hannu Mikkola has been having a lean time in the last year or so, he is perfectly capable of bouncing back.



Lancia are already tipped as favourites for the Monte Carlo Rally, following their RAC success.

The event starts, as usual, from various points around Europe, but the first gathering of competitors will be in Aix les Bains, before the opening batch of six special stages, and another halt in the town. Only on Monday morning do the cars head south, with the long haul towards Monte Carlo, where the convoy

should arrive on Tuesday afternoon.

Following last year's revisions, Wednesday is again free, with the re-start from in front of the Casino for the Final Run scheduled for Thursday morning; and comprising two laps in the mountains with 11 stages featuring, and the finish due on Friday morning.

FISA plan for Gp S

At a meeting of the FISA Technical Commission in Paris last Friday, important steps were taken in the formulation of Group S, the formula which will take over from the current Group B regulations in 1988. Priority was given to establishing firm parameters for engines, and in this respect the manufacturers now have definite guidelines.

For turbocharged units, the limitations will be 1200cc and four cylinders, while for conventional, atmospheric engines, a 2-litre, six cylinder restriction will apply. If the turbos ultimately produce in excess of 300bhp, then new restrictions will be applied, a move which has the backing of the constructors.

Next month a working group — formed from FISA representatives and manufacturers — starts work on restrictor and intercooler investigations, and the definitive Group S regulations are expected in March for the next FISA Executive meeting. The regulations will be brought into force in 1988 — all evolution Group B cars immediately being outlawed — and Group S, or Special Rally Cars as they will be titled, can expect to have a minimum five year stability.

Pond for Bologna

Tony Pond breaks from his recce for Monte Carlo this weekend to drive a MG Metro 6R4 on the Bettega Memorial Rally in Bologna. After the defeat by Lancia in the British forests, Pond will be anxious to turn the tables on his Finnish friends in front of the Italian fans.

Afterwards, however, he will rejoin partner Rob Arthur on the Monte's special stages where Malcolm Wilson and Nigel Harris are also making their notes. In the background, Marc Duez has already completed some tyre testing with Michelin although more winter testing is anticipated.

Meanwhile, Per Eklund is this week starting tyre tests for the second round of the series, the Swedish International, where he will have his first run in the Clarion backed 6R4. Speaking on Monday, John Davenport of ARG explained that it was still his intention to have both Pond and Wilson chasing honours in Monte Carlo and Sweden, before the two concentrate on Portugal, which follows hard on the heels of the winter counters.

D-day for Whittock

Dave Whittock is to make a decision this week about his future with the RAC MSA and the RAC Rally. Having planned the route of this year's controversial event, the west country co-driver would be keen to repeat the exercise in his home town of Bath next year.

But he is also being tempted by an offer to co-drive Per Eklund in his new Metro 6R4 in 1986 and, if that offer includes the Lombard RAC Rally, the rally may have to find another routemaster.

Gumpert goes as Audi plan World series attack

Sweeping changes which will affect Audi's rallying future were made at board meetings last week, when Audi Sport boss Roland Gumpert was replaced, and a decision to tackle at least six events in the 1986 World Championship was made. The Ingolstadt based company has decided to register for the World series, intending to start three events with both Walter Rohrl and Hannu Mikkola in Sport Quattro S1s; a further three rallies with just one of the drivers; and the possibility of expanding the programme to include events outside Europe if the first half of the year brings success.

Gumpert was recently involved in a major scandal during the Ivory Coast Rally, when allegations raged that the team had swapped cars, leaving the German operation in disarray. Audi personnel denied that any changes were anticipated during their time on the Lombard RAC Rally, but it now appears that the new boss, Herwart Kreiner, has attended a number of events, including the British international, and the appointment was expected.

As with his predecessors, Herr Kreiner has little experience of rallying (his first appearance coming on San Remo), and he also comes from the engineering

discipline of the company. For the last nine years he has been responsible for developing production prototypes, and development work in extreme conditions. He was chosen by Dr Ferdinand Piech as the man most suitable, to take charge of the operation. With the company not expecting to field a sustained championship challenge in 1986 — he may find time to understand the enormity of his task, as a rival to some of the established motor sport directors, including Cesare Fiorio and Jean Todt.

Kreiner's first event in charge will be the Monte Carlo, when both Mikkola and Rohrl will be there, using cars fitted with the manual six speed gearboxes although, after that, the programme remains undecided.

The Portuguese and Acropolis events are possible, while Mikkola could fairly be expected to start both the 1000 Lakes and the RAC; and Rohrl must surely return to San Remo. In addition to the premier appearances, the team will make, at most, three appearances in America, with a run up Pikes Peak and an outing on the Olympus Rally expected.

There will be no official programme in Germany and any decisions on advancing the mid engine prototype for possible use in the Group S (Special Rally Car

class), has been delayed until FISA finalise the technical regulations. That announcement could be made tomorrow (Friday), at the FISA's Executive meeting in Paris.

Moving on...

Roland Gumpert's period in charge of Audi Sport brought the company its greatest successes in rallying, with four world titles during his three year office. His predecessors, including Walter Treser, and Reinhard Rhode, lasted relatively short periods with the Sport department, both being moved out after troubled times.

The last couple of years have also had their difficult moments, not the least of which being the decision to proceed with a further evolution version of the Sport Quattro. Gumpert's new position in the company, described by Audi personnel as "promotion", is as Senior Manager of Engineering Development (Foreign Operations), based still at Ingolstadt.

It seems that there will still be some travelling involved in Gumpert's new job, and an Audi spokesman detailed that if the company progressed with projects in South Africa, China, or even the USSR, then Gumpert could find himself involved.

Top entry for Paris — Dakar announced

At a press conference in Paris last week, preliminary details of the 1986 Paris-Dakar even were revealed by organiser Thierry Sabine, who again promised a tough competition, pitching professionals against amateurs. Some 500 competitors are expected, with cars, bikes, and trucks leaving Paris on January 1, for the 15,000km route which will take them to Dakar by January 22.

Top of the entry list must be last year's winners, Mitsubishi, which will again have Andrew Cowan/Johnstone Syer, teamed up with Patrick Zanirulli/Jean da Silva, running lighter, more powerful Pajeros. Opposition will include Team Jacky Ickx, which will have two Porsche 959s for Ickx and Rene Metge; the Marreau brothers in a Lada Niva; and Henri Pescarolo who is back with another highly sophisticated range Rover.

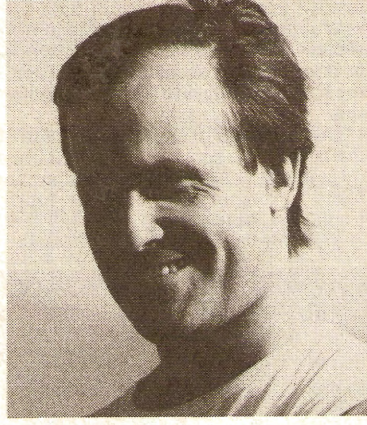
Last year the official Opel team of conventional Manta 400s surprised everyone with their speed in the desert, but this time two of the prototype 4WD Kadetts will be run for the same drivers — Guy Colsoul and Erwin Weber.

Sabine's policy is to test both car and driver, so certain sections of January's rally are particularly tough. The familiar run south to Tamanrasset will feature as will the Raid Santos Cartier from Agadez, while later in the run into Guinea, there are new challenges.

"During the reconnaissance," explained Sabine last weekend, "we discovered that there was no longer a defined track from Mali to Guinea, so competitors will have to drive through thick bush, sometimes in grass 2m high, which hide enormous potholes." It seems that Sabine had to use a chainsaw to get through, and it is still not clear how competitors are expected to negotiate this particular hazard...



The Mitsubishi team will field revised Pajeros (above), for their defence of the 1985 success with Andrew Cowan (below left) and Patrick Zanirulli (below right) at the wheel.



RAC MSA unveil new British Junior Rally Team

Following their recent evaluation session, the RAC MSA have announced the names of the five young drivers who are to be invited to join the British Junior Rally Team for 1986.

Most are virtually unknown at National level but the RAC MSA are not concerned about this. "We have chosen the drivers who we felt showed potential for the future," explained Chris Belton last week, "and they will certainly gain from the experience of the other members of the team who are staying on."

The programme for the coming season has still to be decided and the five drivers — Scotland's Neale Dougan, who finished a close second to Callum Guy in the choice of driver for the Volkswagen Junior Team; Norfolk's David Young; Nova Cup driver, Graham Holden; Sean Lockyer, who has driven a Group N Golf GTI in the National series this year and Keith Morris, who nearly won the Group A category on the Granite City Rally earlier this year — have yet to learn whether they will be competing for FISA's Junior Team Challenge.

The 'old hands' who will also be given



Holden — best known newcomer?

support next year are Mark Lovell, David Llewellyn, Andrew Wood, Simon Davison and Stuart Nicholls, the RAC MSA still clinging to drivers who have left their privateer days behind and have taken up full contracts with works teams — in the case of Llewellyn, Wood and, probably, Lovell.

Buffum — take nine

John Buffum took his Audi Quattro to a convincing start to finish win on the Pony Express Rally, based at Carson City, and thus clinched his ninth SCCA PRO Rally title. Second on the day, and five points behind Buffum in the series, was his great rival, Rod Millen, one of the real characters of the recent RAC Rally.

Next year's series has been trimmed to seven events with the removal of the Olympus Rally — formerly the SCCA's official candidate for a place in the World Championship — and an increased prize fund, expected to be around \$135,000, has been promised by the organising club. Of that fund, \$50,000 has been guaranteed by the SCCA, the rest being the responsibility of individual organisers (*Special Stage*, November 21).

SCCA PRO Rally Championship 1986

Jun 7/8.....	Susquehannock Trail
Jul 26/27.....	Arkansas Traveller
Aug 23/24.....	Rallye Michigan
Sep 13/14.....	Budweiser Forest
Oct 4/5.....	Ojibwe Rally
Oct 25/26.....	Press-on-Regardless
Dec 6-7.....	Carson City



Sundstrom — another chance?

Mikael to stay?

Before the Lombard RAC Rally, Peugeot Talbot boss, Des O'Dell, indicated that Mikael Sundstrom's future with the Coventry team might depend on his RAC result. Having crashed out of the event when on the way to an excellent result, the young Finn was disturbed by the possibilities but, it seems, he may still get another chance on the 1986 Open series.

"We were worried about the reaction after our crash," explained Paul White, Sundstrom's co-driver, "but everyone has been fantastic. It was a silly accident and it wasn't really down to either the car or the driver."

With O'Dell on holiday, any decision about a driver for next season is still to be made although the field still seems wide open.

Ford on target

"We are fairly pleased with the recent progress," explained a Ford spokesman on Monday as he revealed that motor clubs are being given guided tours of the RS200 production line at Reliant's Shenstone plant.

In recent weeks, the company has been worried at the lack of completed cars to roll from the line but now, with 25 completed and a reasonable total apparently being produced each week, the company expect to meet their January 31 homologation deadline.

Extra personnel are being taken on to further boost production. The commitment to a Swedish Rally debut — with Swedes, Stig Blomqvist and Kalle Grunzel at the wheel — remains but the production will not stand any hitch during the Christmas period...

Metros for Sheik

Two unique MG Metros are currently under preparation at Pace Engineering in readiness for next year's Middle East Championship.

It seems that Sheik Mansoor has bought the cars for his new team and thereason that they are unique is that they are the first to be produced in left hand drive form.



Group A will form a major part of next year's Esso Scottish Rally Championship as the series moves toward gaining increased credibility.

Esso Scottish GpA boost

With increased support from Esso, next year's Scottish Rally Championship will place a greater emphasis on Group A than ever before. There will be three categories for contestants in the group next season, with capacity classes of over 1300cc, 1300cc to 1800cc and over 1800cc. This leaves such popular cars as the Talbot Sunbeam ti and the Vauxhall Astra GT/E to fight against each other in the same class. . .

There will be just nine events for competitors to chase a part of the £2,500 prize fund with a couple of changes to this

year's calendar. Following a couple of fairly lean years, the organisers of the Autumn Stages find themselves suspended from the championship for one year although they should return in 1987 subject to a successful observation of next season's event. In their place comes the Kingdom Stages to fill the September slot.

Despite a lack of entries from south of the border, the series will retain its open format next season and registrations are likely to remain open until the fourth event, the Autofit Stages in May. Full details will be available in mid-January

from John Fife, 72 Carfin Street, New Stevenston, Lanarkshire.

Esso Scottish Rally Championship 1986

Feb 15	.....Ladbroke Snowman Rally
Mar 23	.....Datamart Valentine Rally
Apr 19	.....Sonat Granite City Rally
May 17	.....Autofit Stages
Jun 7/10	.....Lloyds Bowmaker Scottish Rally
Jul 26/27	.....Hackle Rally
Aug 16	.....Andrews Border Rally
Sep 20	.....Kingdom Stages
Oct 25	.....Trossachs Rally



Dennis Moody — with EARS backing — in typical tarmac series action on Epynt.

EARS for MN

Next year's *Motoring News* tarmac rally championship will be supported by EARS, taking over from 1985 sponsors, Janspeed. And the format will have a rather strange look about it with two Virgo rallies to drag crews over the icy wastes of Epynt during the season!

For the past few years, the Port Talbot MC event has opened the series, despite being in the previous year and the championship organisers have now opted to change this anomaly. However, rather than drop the event for a season, the rally has been included twice in one year.

Thus, the 1986 championship will feature eight events with five to count as drivers chase a massive £4500 prize fund,

one of the largest at club level. For drivers without the fully developed tarmac racers, there is now a road rally class for such vehicles.

Full details of the series are available from EARS, The Wharfe, Buxton Road, Macclesfield, Cheshire.

EARS/Motoring News Tarmac Championship 1986

Dec 29 (1985)	.....Zenith Motorsport Virgo Rally
Feb 02	.....Hoopers/Brunel Longleat Stages
Mar 15/16	.....Zanussi West Cork Rally
May 17/18	.....Waves Circuit of Kerry
Aug 10	.....Merlin Fireplaces Epynt Stages
Sep 20/21	.....Castrol Wexford Stages
Oct 18 or 19	.....Hytech Cheviot Stages
Dec 28	.....Zenith Motorsport Virgo Rally

Toyota head for Qatar

The Qatar Rally of 1986 has already begun receiving entry applications and, among the early nominations is a two car entry from Team Toyota Europe.

The Cologne based team have supported the series for some time and last weekend's Dubai Rally was won by Mohammed Bin Sulayem in a factory supplied Celica Turbo. The works entry in Qatar should feature the team's two World Championship drivers, Bjorn Waldegard and Lars-Erik Torph.

Virgo Rally filling up

Roger Moran, Brian Price and Geoff Kitney are among the early entries for the Schreider Zenith Motorsport Virgo Rally, run on Epynt at the end of the year and counting for next season's EARS/*Motoring News* Rally Championship and the Welsh Tarmac series, supported by the event sponsors.

Port Talbot MC have yet to attract the leading names from this year's championship to their festive season thrash but are expecting to field a quality entry as the places fill up.



Paris-Dakar atmosphere.

Pumps for the Sahel

The Paris-Dakar has come under heavy criticism, both in France and in some of the countries it traverse, as being a rich man's sport racing through the drought-stricken Sahel band of the sub-Sahara without a thought for the drama around it.

Thierry Sabine this year has announced that he is doing something to help, and typically of Sabine, there are no half measures. Announcing a five-year drive to get water pumps for the Sahel, he mentioned, that in the past, his organisation has given trucks and other aid to the striken countries, but said that in the best spirit of charity, he had not announced it.

Now he has launched "Paris-Dakar, Pari du Coeur", a play on words meaning, "A challenge to the heart-strings". Organised by the Mayor of Le Touquet, where Sabine runs a sand dune motocross event, it is intended to drum up support from across France and eventually Europe. The aim is "a pump from every community in France".

Sabine's organisation, TSO, has contributed the first of the FF50,000 (£4,000), irrigation pumps, and there are also cheaper solar and pedal driven units being collected. Sabine promises follow-up by people who, like him, know the countries, to ensure they are correctly installed, and maintained.

McMahon injured

During practice for the Dubai Rally, Tony McMahon was seriously injured and spent several days in intensive care. His driver, Mandu Khayat, rolled his Group 4 Celica and, due to the immense impact, McMahon suffered a fractured skull and needed many stitches in the head wound.

He is now back in a British hospital and we wish him well for a full recovery, although we understand that it is likely to be some time before he is fully fit again.

BRIEFLY

■ Ronnie McCartney was in Scotland at the weekend for the Galloway Hills Rally and he was seen trying to buy Murray Grierson's Escort RS prior to the rally. It seems he left empty handed, but the possibility of a deal being struck is not yet ruled out. . .

■ Just to keep the oldies happy, Mike Hill is offering awards for the over 40s on next year's Welsh Championship. The owner of the Four Alls — an 18th century inn at Market Drayton — is offering dinner for two at his establishment to the most successful driver over 40 on each event. . .



Canada's rising star and an heir to Gilles Villeneuve? Bertrand Fabi has made a big impact in his first year of racing in Europe.

The star of David

The storyline is familiar: a young motor racing hopeful takes a huge risk and borrows heavily from a local bank. Quickly he wins two championships and justifies his gamble. Thirteen years have passed since Niki Lauda walked into the bank for £35,000 to fund a March F1 rent-a-drive. 1985 saw Bertrand Fabi repeat the move, but this time to fund his British and European FF2000 campaigns. Such is inflation. No matter, Fabi too has justified his enormous self confidence and incredibly has mopped up the British and European FF2000 titles in his first year outside Canada. Considering the strength of the European single-seater scene, the 24-year-old from Sherbrooke is clearly bound for greater things.

February 1985 was decision time for Bertrand Fabi. Having completed a handful of school FF1600 races and the 10-race Canadian Tires FF2000 series, 'Bert' was pondering his next move. The '84 Canadian races had been done with a Van Diemen RF84 with which Fabi usually finished third or fourth. For the end of season run-off, however, he had been offered the loan of sponsor/mentor, and Canadian Reynard importer, Raymond David's Reynard 84SF. "Raymond had been discussing things with Richard Spenard (the other half of

the Spenard David Racing School), and Richard reckoned I'd go well in the car. We were sitting in a restaurant the night before the race when Raymond suddenly offered the car to me for Sunday." In his first drive in a Reynard, Fabi had the car on pole position within 12 laps and promptly won the run-off and with it the label of Canadian Champion.

Impressed by Fabi's performance, Raymond David offered Bert the chance to go to England and contest the BBC Grandstand Trophy series at the end of 1984. Armed with a Madgwick 84SF, the

Canadian was immediately quick but not, how shall we say, orthodox. Many wondered whether he had left his brain on the other side of the Atlantic. Bert actually found the British scene very different. "First of all, I went to England to watch a race and saw people weaving, blocking and so forth. I thought 'Jesus, maybe I've got to be really hard to go well over here,' which was not completely wrong..."

Was the racing not as hard in Canada? "No, no, not at all. You race and if the guy's quicker you let him pass and you try and take him again. There are two completely different philosophies and I'm not saying which one is right. My approach in England, though, was perhaps too much the other way. When I had my first accident, at Brand Hatch, I was going for third in the wet, and I just didn't have the experience. I was too wound up."

Nevertheless, heartened by his trip to England, Bert visited David's Insurance offices in Montreal to discuss 1985. "He said: 'Bert, you have a choice. Either we do another season in Canada or you find the difference to finance Britain and Europe.' I knew in my mind what I wanted to do and so I went to the bank for

\$50,000. The guy asked me how I was going to repay him and I said I didn't have the faintest idea but I'd manage somehow. This didn't seem to impress him too much, but eventually he reluctantly agreed to give me the money so long as I could provide some signatories. My father, brother and a couple of friends guaranteed the money and we got everything together by Feb 15—a bit late really."

Once the budget was available, Bertrand signed with Penistone Racing to drive the ubiquitous Reynard 84SF and quickly got down to business. "My whole approach was different this year, I was really serious, jogging and training and keeping off alcohol entirely. Some people joke about it, but I think it makes a difference. It works for me anyway."

Although no motor racing spring chicken at 24, Bert's experience was nowhere near that of chief rivals such as Dave Coyne, John Pratt and Martin Donnelly. "I'd always wanted to race since I was young, but really I was inspired by Gilles Villeneuve. Obviously, he was worshipped in Canada and I saw him win at Montreal in '78, and that really moved me. I was 17 then, but of course in Canada you can't race before you are 21."

To those who watched him carefully in the '84 Grandstand series, Fabi seemed an altogether different driver this year. Gone was the ragged seat-of-the-pants stuff, replaced by a smooth flowing style. Consistency became his watchword and Fabi was always a top four regular. The third round of the Racing Displays championship at Silverstone saw him a close second behind Dave Coyne's Van Diemen, also setting fastest lap. It was now that the Canadian had one of the strokes of fortune that is so vital to any driver no matter how talented. Basically, the new Van Diemen RF85 flattered only to deceive at the start of the year, as cold weather disguised a chassis balance problem which overheated the tyres as the season grew older and warmer. Pratt and Coyne were already RF85 mounted and arch rival Martin Donnelly switched to the car when they waltzed away with five of the season's early races. Mean-

"I was inspired by Gilles Villeneuve, he was worshipped in Canada."

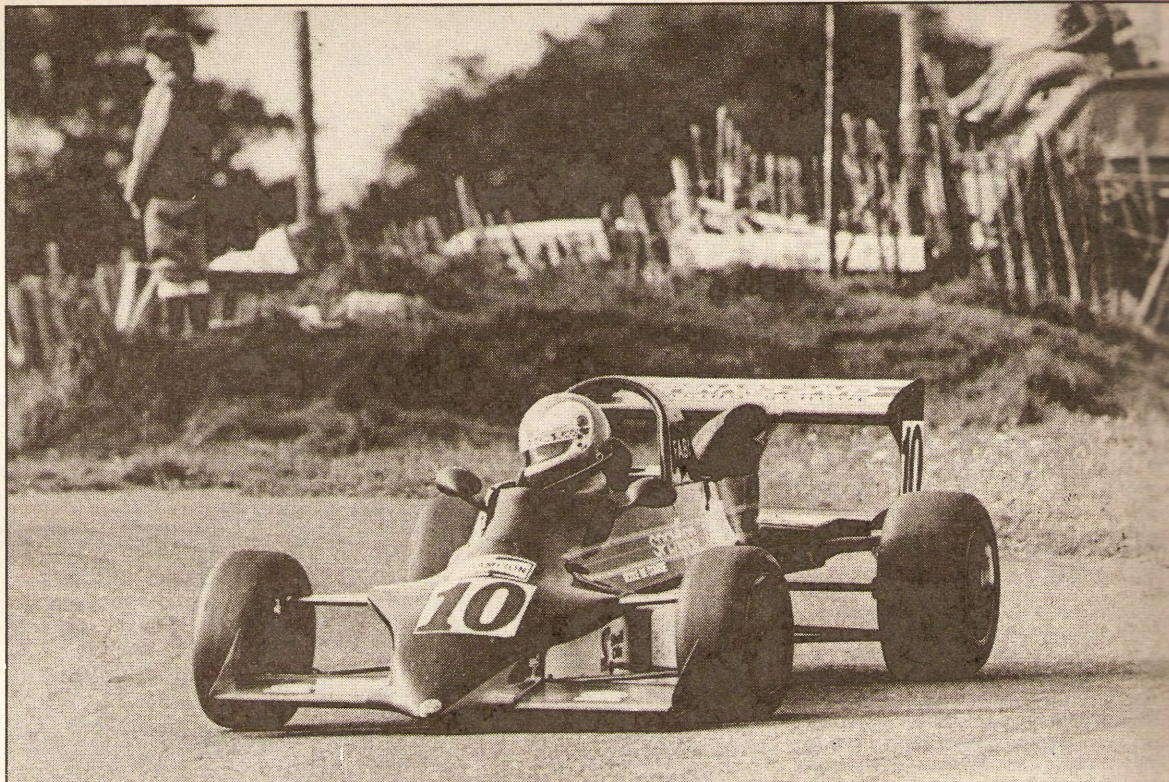
while, Penistone and the Richard Dutton team notably kept faith with the 84SF Reynard, Bert hitting a purple patch mid season where he claimed six victories on the trot in Britain and Europe.

There are those who use the fact that his main opposition found themselves in the wrong car at the wrong time to devalue Fabi's achievement this year. 'If you look at the times, you will see that no FF2000 lap records were broken this year,' they will add, to strengthen their argument. Fabi disagrees strongly and points out that for the first time drivers were restricted to one set of tyres per meeting in the Racing Displays championship. "With teams unable to throw new rubber at the cars for the race, is it surprising that records have not been broken?" How does Fabi rate his rivals? "Obviously, Dave Coyne and John Pratt are very strong, but if they had been in Reynards I reckon they would still have crashed as often. That I think is Dave's problem, and possibly John's too, they crash too much." What about Martin Donnelly? "He is very quick, but perhaps

he doesn't think enough. The number of pole positions he had this year is significant, but Rushen Green used a qualifying strategy which we didn't do at Penistone. In practice they had special gearing with a natural first.

"For the race you sacrifice your first for a low starting gear, and we always practised with our race gearing. I didn't even realise until someone asked me why don't we gear the car for qualifying. I said 'Do what?' You see it's all down to experience and that's just what I didn't have."

As the season progressed, the Racing Displays title chase became a two-horse race between Fabi and Donnelly (now back in a Reynard 84SF after a brief flirtation with the Van Diemen). With three rounds remaining, Donnelly could only steal the series should he win all three, also claiming pole position and fastest lap. The Irishman set about the task determinedly, achieving his goal at Donington. The penultimate round at Oulton Park saw the pair share the front row once more, and the title race controversially decided in Fabi's favour when they collided at the first corner. So long as Martin did not finish the race, Bert was champion, and so people were not slow to point the accusing finger at the Canadian. Bert himself was quite fortunate to escape from the heavy shunt, which totally destroyed his now Richard Dutton-run Reynard. Stewards and observers lay the blame at Donnelly's door, although Bert had gone incredibly deep into the corner. A grin of anticipation and even deeper intensity in the not un-Villeneuve like piercing eyes greeted mention of the subject. Would Fabi have been able to turn in to Old Hall that late, and had he driven the corner with a shunt in mind? "If you're asking whether I deliberately provoked an accident, the answer is no. What I did do was take a tactical approach. I knew that Martin had to win the race and obviously he must finish. By driving aggressively I thought Donnelly would have to lift off or else turn in a bit early and be slow out. In fact he did neither and just acted as if I wasn't there. If I'm honest though, I would probably have had a bit of a moment turning in and possibly lost a couple of places. It was a shame that we couldn't fight it out on the track but it wasn't premeditated. I'm sure Martin would have been just as hard if the situation had been reversed."



Fabi was in scintillating form in midseason, winning six consecutive races in Britain and on the Continent.

The shunt apart, the other controversy surrounding Oulton Park again involved the Canadian. After winning 10 races in Britain and Europe with Trevor Hegarty's Penistone team, Fabi sensationally defected to Grantham-based rival Richard Dutton for the two remaining rounds of the Racing Displays championship. Why? "It was a very difficult decision for me. At first everything was fine, but after one or two things began to bother me though. Trevor seemed to become a little complacent—a couple of niggly things started to go wrong which shouldn't happen with a top team; I had a misfire here, an oil line come adrift there, and I felt that things that should have been replaced were not. Phil my mechanic, knew it, but could not act without Trevor's authority so this led to bad feelings between Phil and me too."

Whenever there is a problem with preparation involving a top team it must

obviously lead to questions about the budget. Was it there? And what was the contract with Penistone? "We didn't have a contract as such. We didn't really know how the British scene worked with regard to testing, and so on, but we had £65,000 for 27 races which should have been enough. Alright, maybe it wasn't the top budget, but if it wasn't sufficient, Trevor should have told us at the beginning of the year."

To outsiders, Fabi's move perhaps seemed a panic measure after a disastrous time at Donington at round 18. What was the problem? "I was really worried. In testing I could not better 1m40.5s with my car and yet when I drove Dutton's car I got down to 1m39.6s within six laps. I asked for a different rear roll bar because I was in big trouble, but in morning practice the problem was still there. Luckily Adrian Reynard came and found the problem and I managed to

come second to Martin. Of course, if I did the same at Oulton and Thruxton I would lose the championship and I couldn't take the risk. I had already spoken to Richard Dutton but he couldn't run me

"I haven't found the F3 transition too difficult."

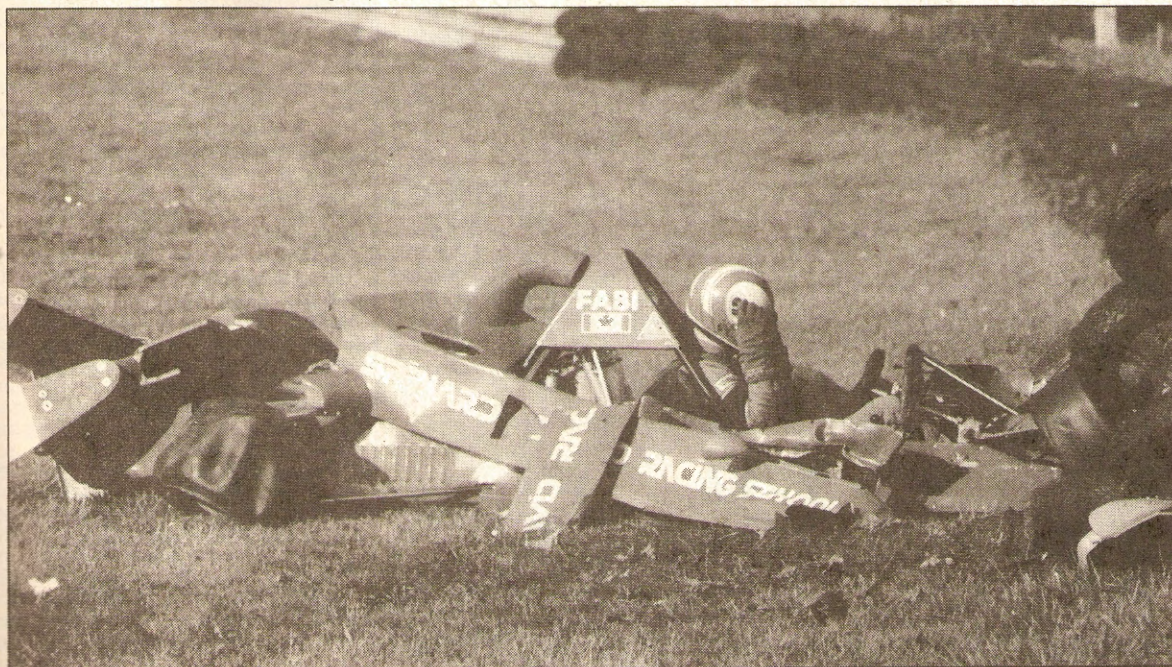
previously as he had a commitment to Danny Candia. Also, I was expected to win the championship and Richard was taking a bit of a risk. Had I lost, it wouldn't have looked too good for him.

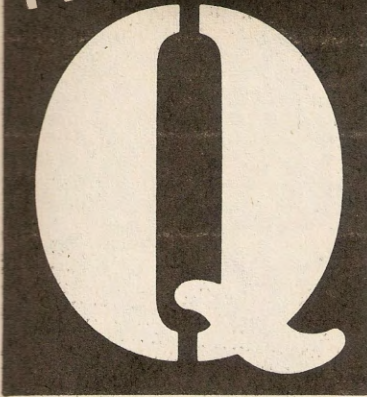
For 1986, Bertrand will remain in Britain, moving up to the British Formula 3 championship. He recently had his first Formula 3 test session, a brief outing at Silverstone on a Friday afternoon, having arrived jet-lagged late morning. In no time at all, a 54.2s Club circuit lap was posted on the pit board and Fabi greatly impressed the watching Adrian Reynard. Although nothing is yet settled, Fabi has recently secured backing from the Canadian Labatts brewery and is typically optimistic about his chances for next year. "I have had a year's experience on the British circuits and now all I must do is put together the right chassis-engine combination. I haven't found the F3 transition too difficult and am looking forward to the start of next year."

Honest and genuine, Bertrand Fabi is a true 'nice guy', always obliging, but in deference to the well-known motor racing cliché about nice guys coming second, he doesn't carry it too far. Make no mistake, he knows how to look after number one. If aggression is needed there is plenty on tap and the man is nothing if not decisive. He knows what he wants and how to get it. He recently took off for Italy to try and secure a sponsorship deal with one of idol Gilles Villeneuve's former backers, commenting cheerfully: "I'm not there yet but I'm making progress!"

He is certainly right there. . .

The decisive moment in the 1985 Racing Displays FF2000 championship. Donnelly is out and Fabi (with a headache) is the new champion . . .





Spreading the net

Hauling a grid of Group C sportscars halfway across the world — even a small grid — is a major operation on its own, and Chris Parsons of OSCAR was smiling broadly as soon as he knew for sure that all the cars and equipment had arrived safely in Malaysia for the inaugural Selangor 800. Almost all the hardware had come from the abortive trip to Japan, but Parsons and his efficient team had also organised the export from Europe of a party of key organisational personnel. They came to Shah Alam so as to provide much-needed motor racing expertise to the organisers, the Race Officials Club, who were totally inexperienced in running a World series event.

As expected, all these people encountered frustrations during their working week in Kuala Lumpur, but they came away full of praise for the enthusiasm and commitment of the ROC officials, and for their obvious willingness to learn.

Pierre Aumonier, the President of the FISA Endurance Commission, acted as Clerk of the Course, and brought with him several of his colleagues from Silverstone. Vic Sparkes had a familiar role as Deputy Clerk of the Course and Mike Eyre, who attends these sportscar events normally as part of the TWR Jaguar team, was there as Chief Timekeeper with a lot of equipment and three assistants from his regular team in the UK. Scrutineering was the province of Mike Garton and the pit road marshalling was supervised by David Graham from Brands Hatch.

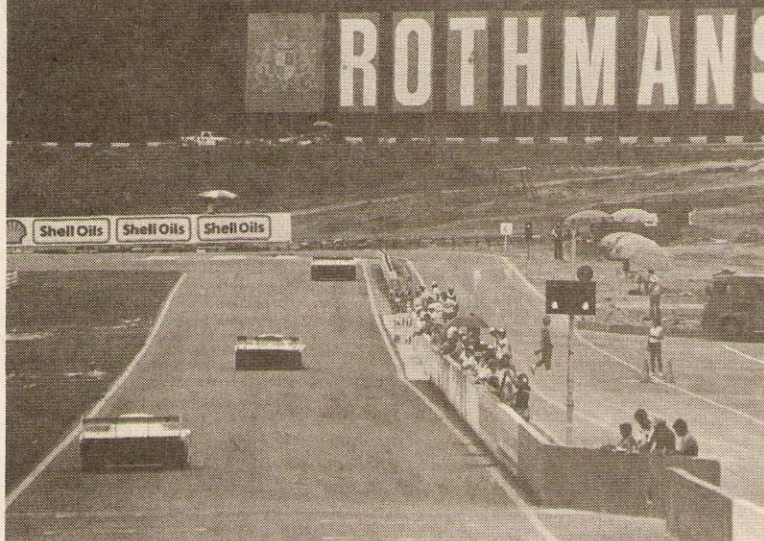
Porsche laid on the fully-equipped 928S rescue vehicle normally used in Germany by the ONS, which deeply impressed the Malaysians until it refused to start. I assume this recalcitrance, which persisted through until race day, was caused by an electrical short circuit because, just before the end of the race, the car, quietly and unobtrusively, caught fire... Driver Herbert Ling was not amused.

Your actual medical centre at Shah Alam bore a strong resemblance to a disused railwayman's hut, but the organisers laid on an impressive temporary facility for the event. Canada's Dr Hugh Scully was the Chief Medical Officer, assisted by David Cranston from the UK and by the factory Porsche team doctor, Georg Huber.

Bringing relief to many of the drivers, Dr Huber worked very hard on race day. In the Porsche pits, he had the off-shift works drivers stripped and sitting with their limbs in iced water buckets as soon as they were out of the car, and ran through an elaborate checklist to make



Above: Never stinting in his efforts for Jaguar, Mike Thackwell urges James Weaver to give the local Arthur Daly a nice little earner. Below: Shah Alam with its understated (!) Rothmans backing.

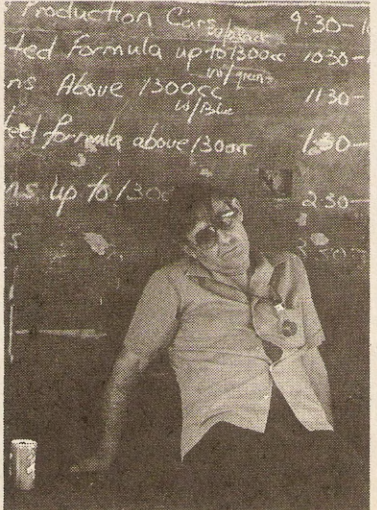


sure that they were fit enough to put back into the fray when the time came.

In addition, whenever he was able Dr Huber would go off in search of new patients, enquiring in every pit as to the wellbeing of the drivers. Whenever he found one who was distressed by the heat, he would whisk him off to the Porsche pit for the cold treatment.

ROC officials at Shah Alam, among them the efficient Secretary of the Meeting, Jeff Amin, will have learned a great deal from these expert Europeans. The first untimed practice session started over two hours late, mainly because the

Chief Scrute — excitement too much!



telephone links were not installed in time, and this led many of the visitors to open a book on the exact time the race would start on Sunday. Such was the improvement in efficiency during the week, though, that no one came close, because the rolling grid crossed the startline just two seconds early. And no — the CoC had not placed a bet.

There were many instances of visitors being frustrated by the lack of urgency shown by the locals but, in the end, there was no deeply felt criticism of the organisation itself save for the flag marshalling, which was inconsistent and Sultry Selangor was exhausting for the drivers.



By QUENTIN SPURRING

is some cases non-existent. Having something else to complain about had something to do with the tolerance shown by the drivers towards the inevitable organisational shortcomings. It was the circuit itself that came in for the harshest words, and mostly they were directed at John Corsmit, the newly re-elected President of the FISA Safety Commission who, along with John Roxburgh, acted as a FISA Steward for the meeting.

Doubtless Mr Corsmit came to regret his decision to do this job in Malaysia, and wished he had stayed at home in Holland. One or two of the drivers were sharply critical of his role in approving the circuit, and they were quoted at length in the Malaysian national press.

Adverse publicity of this kind was the last thing the Shah Alam organisers wanted, and it was a great pity, because they had worked long and hard ever since the day when the ROC, through the Automobile Association of Malaysia (the national sporting body), had applied for the date. After all, they relied almost exclusively on the direction of the FISA circuit inspector as they set about the task of bringing an old track up to modern standards.

Youthful readers may not realise that motor racing is long established in Malaysia. Events used to be held on a track just outside Kuala Lumpur named after the country's first Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahmann, who negotiated the British departure in 1957. When this road course was abandoned, buried beneath the new concrete of the satellite city of Pataling Jaya, the present track was constructed at a place called Batu Tiga.

In Malay, this means 'third mile', and the circuit is three miles from the mouth of the Klang River. It is located about 20 miles to the north-west of Kuala Lumpur, on the main highway up to Banting on the Straits of Malacca. It is easily accessible from both 'KL' and 'PJ', and near the impressive international airport.

Now the circuit is called Shah Alam, like the new town that was recently built nearby. These are two of the 16 names of the Sultan of the State of Selangor, the owner of the land on which both the new town and the track have been built, one of whose numerous palaces overlooks the track.

Actually completed in 1968, the circuit was first conceived as part of a giant sports complex, although the only other elements of this project that are now in use are squash courts and a spectacular, and very exclusive, private club.

In recent years, little effort had been made to promote anything more ambitious than local motorcycle races and a few car events there, although the idea of a major international fixture began to take root when the ROC attracted a number of European drivers to take part in a sportscar event in late 1984.

Liking what they saw, government ministers were receptive when ROC officials suggested that it was time Malaysia got into the mainstream of Asian motorsport activity. Malaysians are looking at tourism as a means of boosting a fluctuating economy, and ultimately both federal and state tourist board finance was made available for the Selangor 800 project.

Once the date was secured from FISA (as a result of the cancellation of the Australian fixture), and Championship status unexpectedly granted, more backing was secured from a number of Malaysian based organisations, such as the local Rothmans International and Shell distributors, the MAS state airline, the MISC shipping line, the Merlin Hotel Group and Edoran Otomobil Nasional.

the distributor of the Proton Saga motor car which is built in a huge, modern factory a few miles from the circuit.

Very substantial promotion, therefore, was guaranteed as part of the Selangor 800 package, and this was in strong contrast with, say, last year's inaugural Sandown Park 1000 in Melbourne, a fixture prematurely dead mainly through lack of adequate publicity. It was therefore doubly unfortunate that an element as fundamental as the Shah Alam circuit itself should cause controversy immediately souring the relationship between the drivers and these eager new race organisers in Malaysia.

Every way you look at it, the ROC could only follow the guidance of Mr Corsmit, and it is he who must accept responsibility for the various shortcomings. The drivers felt that the circuit as a whole was too narrow, that two particular sections were almost laughably micky-mouse, that the pits exit was dangerous, that the run-off areas were too rough, and that there was a serious lack of proper kerbing on many of the apexes.

You might think that, feeling this way, the drivers should have declined to take part. In that case, you would underestimate their professionalism. In fact, they accepted that little could be done to improve conditions prior to the race, and confined themselves to hurling their anger at Mr Corsmit, in particular about the run-off areas (one of which so seriously damaged the Joest team's Porsche that it could not be raced) and the lack of kerbing (which caused Hans Stuck to spin when he had to put a wheel over the edge so as to avoid a backmarker).

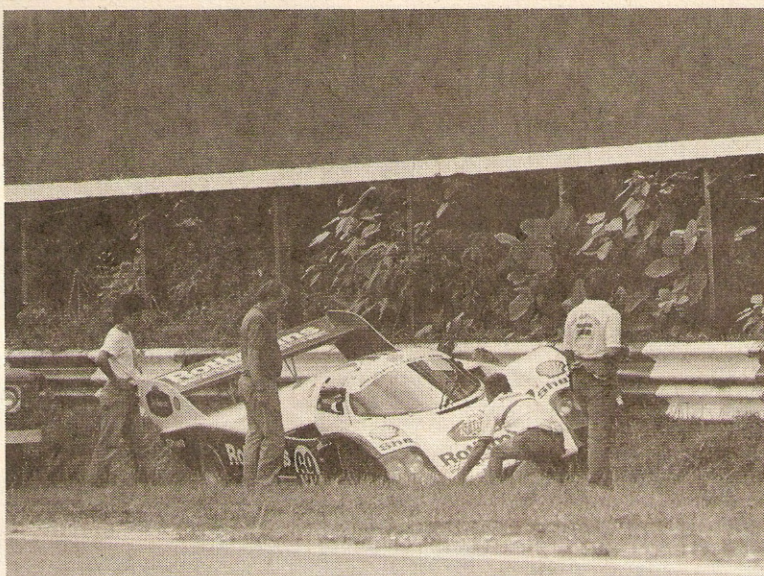
Once they had expressed their anger, to a man they simply knuckled down to the job in hand. Such an attitude is seen only among drivers sympathetic to the practical needs of the event in question and the championship itself, and you can only admire them for it. I am sure it was fully appreciated by the ROC and the race promoters, and I am told that, next year, Shah Alam will not only have proper kerbs over its entire length and smooth run-offs, but will also be widened where necessary.

Undoubtedly, the Malaysians intend that their new fixture becomes an established part of the sportscar racing calendar, even though the 1985 race must have lost money. In this respect, it is fortunate that the Selangor 800 is state-funded, for the promoters will surely have realised that they must share responsibility for the small size of the crowd. The fact is that the ticket prices were far too high, particularly in view of the small Group C grid.

Bearing in mind that this was a first effort, the ROC officials and all other Malaysians involved in the organisation did a commendable job spoiled only by the inevitable teething problems. At the end of the day, the most serious drawback of the Selangor 800 was that only 16 cars took part, and that is a problem for FISA and OSCAR to solve.

Everybody, it seems, wants these far-flung events to continue, but they will not unless OSCAR gives the promoters a substantial field to shout about.

Money — but of course! — is at the root of the problem, a fact fully realised by at least one onlooker at Shah Alam, namely Mr David Williams, the new Executive Chairman of the Surfers Paradise circuit in Queensland. Mr Williams is a hard-nosed businessman with his feet firmly on the ground, and he has successfully applied for a 1986 Sportscar World Championship date. As he flew home to Brisbane from Kuala Lumpur, he must have been thinking hard, because the financial results of



In practice James Weaver discovered one of the track's drawbacks: it was slippery off-line.

Sandown and Shah Alam will have been uppermost in his mind.

It was difficult for the sportscar teams to persuade Mr Williams that, instead of Sandown, he should be thinking of Adelaide. Yet he cannot have failed to realise that a well supported World series sportscar race in Australia would have great potential.

No one pretends that it will be easy to provide Mr Williams with 30 or so good C-cars, but it can be done, given immediate action. The answer seems to be the much-discussed formation of a far-eastern mini-series within the World Championship, with substantial sponsorship, and including the three races at Fuji, Shah Alam and Surfers, with perhaps one other — at the new Pattaya circuit in Thailand, maybe?

Each of the circuits needs a strong field, and would get one if the sponsorship was right. There would be no need for an overall mini-series sponsor to pick up the entire financial burden because, if each circuit promoter knew that the other races were to get proper backing, he would be sure of getting a big field and could negotiate his own sponsorship.

This is fine in theory, but the concept relies heavily on the cooperation of the Japanese. It is not difficult to envisage 20 or more cars coming from Europe but, to succeed, a Pacific mini-series would also need 10 or more coming from Japan. There is never a shortage of entries at Fuji, where the European contingent is actually outnumbered, but OSCAR will need to convince the Nissan, Toyota and



The Jaguar team celebrate second place. Below: The Cosmik March, Group C2 winning ADA Gebhardt and Rothmans Porsche sweep past the Malaysian backdrop and the Sultan's Palace.



Mazda teams that they should leave the security of their own shores, so as to do two or three more end-of-season races but a few hours flying time away.

Obviously, the cautious Japanese, wanting to enter the World series arena but fearful of losing face, should jump at a chance to increase their participation without needing to take the big, expensive and very public incursion into Europe. I would have thought that this was a useful step forward for them appealing to their sense of logic and falling neatly into line with their cautious approach, which FISA and OSCAR now find increasingly frustrating.

No one could deny that a representative selection of cars from Japan would ensure the success of events like Shah Alam and Surfers Paradise, and it is now up to OSCAR to work very hard to get them there. A positive response by the Japanese to this ingenious idea of a mini-series would make it much easier for the event promoters to secure the sponsorship which would also bring good cars from Europe, and thus for the Sportscar World Championship to put on the kind of spectacle of which we all know it is capable.

In case you were wondering, I stand firmly in support of the Sportscar World Championship travelling far afield, and especially to the east. The part of the world under discussion is emerging fast as an important centre of motorsports activity and has secured several events of real international significance, among them the Australian Grand Prix, the Macau Grand Prix, the James Hardie 1000 at Bathurst and the Mount Fuji 1000. It is essential that sportscar racing builds on its far-eastern foothold at Fuji so as to establish itself as a genuine worldwide motor racing discipline.

Growth in this area of the world has been strong in the past few years and could accelerate spectacularly in the immediate future. This has deep implications for the sport and industry of motor racing, centred, as it is, on Europe. I believe that many more far-east and down-under events will soon be included in World Championships administered by FISA, and that this will bring far-reaching changes to the ways in which the industry conducts its affairs. It will also create an environment in which the established European manufacturers and teams will come under increasing pressure from the Japanese.

How the European establishment will react to this competition will be all-important to its future prosperity. In the case of sportscar racing, there is another factor, which is the new potential of touring car racing created by the extensive adoption of Group A as the national class in many countries, among them Japan, Australia and New Zealand. Already looking over its shoulder at the emerging FIA Group A series in Europe, which can already rival it for spectator appeal and therefore commercial success, the Sportscar World Championship must now establish itself in what has become arguably the biggest growth area in motor racing.

The creation of a new and vast resource of public demand for motor racing holds very exciting possibilities, for Group C as much as for any other category. The series has already allowed Sandown to slip through its fingers, and both FISA and OSCAR must be wary that the same does not happen to Shah Alam and Surfers Paradise. If, by arriving with few cars, the sportscar racing circus lets down these much-needed race promoters next year, it might be a very long time before replacements are found. It is time to stop theorising about that mini-series, and make it happen.



Mark Lovell, seen here on the opening event of the 1985 campaign, drove steadily to ensure maximum return for his efforts. The big Nissan came up with the goods one event early ...

Lovell's careful campaign

Ask Mark Lovell or Peter Davis to reflect on their championship season and they will tell you that everything went according to plan. They were successful where they expected to be, struggled where they knew they would, and clinched the Shell Oils/AUTOSPORT RAC National Championship on the round that they intended.

That may all sound like the words of people judging with the benefit of hindsight, but they really do believe their theory. It was a planned campaign, only a couple of hitches getting in the way. But they still had to work hard for the title, the Nissan team requiring a completely professional back up service to ensure success . . .

The turning point of Mark Lovell's championship year was undoubtedly the Marlboro Russek Rally in July. Not only did it mark the Axbridge driver's first rally win of his career but it also set up the final four rounds with points to spare. By season's end, Lovell had taken maximum points on no fewer than four of the nine events, only having been beaten by non-registered drivers who were either tarmac specialists — where the big Nissan is always at a disadvantage — or by factory entries in Group B supercars.

But, had Bob Freeborough not realised in time that the championship was not going to come without a serious effort, the whole exercise might have been floundering by the mid-season period. Problems with the Gotti wheel rims that were fitted at the start of the season left the initial hopes lying in

tatters, along with the Michelin tyres. Quite simply, the rims were nowhere near strong enough for the punishment in store and the tyres were left airless on even the straightest roads as the rims bent under the strain. The Skip Brown Gwynedd Rally in March saw the problem appear for the first time, the York National a couple of weeks later was little better and, with no replacement rims yet available, the Sonat Granite City might have brought the challenge from the Castrol sponsored car to a grinding halt.

The rims could not take all the blame for the early performances however. While the subject was controversial at the time, hindsight reveals that the Blydenstein Racing based team seriously underestimated the challenge. It was most apparent on the York when the rear

suspension all but fell off the car in Dalby forest, subsequent examination revealing that the shock absorbers had not only done the Gwynedd Rally but had also seen service with David Llewellyn during the 1984 Lombard RAC Rally . . .

Nevertheless, strong words and honest appraisals saw a revitalised approach in time for the Nexus Manx and Lovell's first maximum score of the year was never really threatened, wisely deciding to take a safe third overall rather than risk everything chasing Mike Pattison and Phil Collins in their better suited tarmac racers.

The closing rounds of the series were a frustrating mix of tactical driving and collecting points. The Lindisfarne Rally provided controversy of all kinds as Lovell fell victim to some rallymanship by Willie Rutherford and was then guilty of an error of judgement when trying to regain the advantage. The time spent in the Kielder ditch might have cost the title had he not physically dug the car out. On the next event, however, the title was his. On yet another trip through the vast Kielder complex, a carefully monitored drive to second place behind Rutherford was enough to put any hopes of the title beyond the grasp of the Hexham man. And Willie's misery was complete on the final event of the series when he buried the R-E-D Sierra in the ditch, his only driving error of the year.

Lovell therefore took the title but the surprise performance came from

Rutherford. Making a comeback to the scene after several years, few expected him to be one of the pacesetters but, with the aid of the R-E-D 4x4T, he won two events — the Sonat Granite City and Andrews Cumbria rallies — to push Lovell almost all the way to the finish.

Rutherford missed the opening event in the year when Roger Clark gave the car its four-wheel drive debut but was right there from the York onwards, the Granite City falling easily to his storming drive and only a problem with the drive shafts whipping the oil into a froth on the Manx stopped him bringing an excellent result on the tarmac.

The sad fact, however, seemed to be that the Widnes based team were working at full stretch throughout the season, running Rutherford and Louise Aitken-Walker on the National scene and developing the works RS Turbo for Mark Lovell on the Open Championship — the latter providing some intriguing clashes of interest as Lovell drove both for and against Dave Champion's operation . . .

Willie's enthusiasm for the sport was a welcome addition to the series, bringing memories of some of the classic years from the 1970s. For better or worse, the rising costs of rallying have brought a new professionalism to all levels of rallying and some of the outrageous extra curricular activities have fallen by the wayside.

Unfortunately, Willie was also involved in the only sour note of the year,



Above: Willie Rutherford kicks up the dust in south Wales as he chases an elusive win on the Marlboro Russek while (below), Louise Aitken-Walker tackles the Nexus Manx.

during the Marlboro Lindisfarne Rally. With a broken anti-roll bar (the same problem that robbed him of certain victory on the final stage of the Marlboro Russek), Rutherford manufactured some extra time at one stage start and managed to fix the unit, thus continuing. The act should have been spotted by the marshals but he was allowed to continue, to the annoyance of Lovell who had been led to believe that his rival had retired. Clearly the spirit of the regulations had been broken although there was, and indeed is, some doubt that the letter of the law was infringed. Nevertheless, the organisers decided to apply a time penalty, dropping Rutherford right down the order and guaranteeing fireworks on the next event!

For a time during the year, it seemed that Louise Aitken-Walker might have been the first woman to take the national title. Despite having a battle with the venerable Escort RS, the R-E-D teamster finished an untroubled third overall with several excellent performances throughout the season. Sadly, however, finances became stretched and, after the Mewla Stages in August, she dropped out of the series. Ranged against Lovell and Rutherford, she may not have been able to take the title after all, but it would not have been for the want of trying. Having lost a little enthusiasm over the past couple of years, her move to the Peugeot works team for the Open series has fired her up once more and this talented girl deserves a settled programme in 1986 to maintain the renewed momentum.

The undoubted high spot of the season was another excellent performance on the Marlboro Russek, an event that she thoroughly enjoys and won outright a couple of years ago. This time she took third overall on a day when only 34secs



covered the top three and consolidated her claim to the Queen of the British forests title.

The growing importance of Group A was never more clearly demonstrated by the presence of Simon Davison in fourth overall, a performance that went no small way towards his position with Volkswagen's Junior Rally Team for 1986. This season, however, he has been at the wheel of an elderly Vauxhall Astra GT/E but only failed to score well on the York in an extremely consistent season. On that occasion a burst tyre rolled off the rim at an inopportune moment and the car — overseen throughout the season by the capable hands of Mike Taylor Developments — tipped onto its side and out of the points.

While Willie Rutherford was setting the pace at the head of the field with the four-wheel drive Sierra, a rear-wheel drive version was making steady and, for a time, almost unnoticed progress through the field. Dougie Watson-Clark had stepped into the County Garage run car and, after three non-finishes while the car was settling in, gradually came good from the Manx onwards. With a BDG engine, the big car was a bit short of power at times but always immaculately prepared and tidily driven. With the prospect of a season with one of Ford's RS Cosworths next year, Dougie's efforts have not been in vain and he must be on course for the title in the not too distant future.

Throughout the year, various drivers have put in good individual performances. On the Gwynedd opener, it was Alec Cannon who took top points with the Collins Cars Ascona 400 but faltered afterwards when a good season might have been expected. Chris Mellors was a surprising — and surprised — winner of

▶▶ the York National, with the Escort proving that it is still a force to be reckoned with in certain circumstances. **George Hill** nearly beat him to it, however, with the rear-drive Safety Devices Astra GT/E. This car spent most of 1984 just trying to finish an event but, all of a sudden, it looked like the winner that it was supposed to be. Sadly, lack of funds immediately stepped in and the car has not seen the light of day since.

Bill Lyburn's year got off to a promising start with another elderly Escort, but tailed off later on, while a neatly driven green and white example was catching the eye of several observers. **Pete Slight**s is currently one of the best prospects in national rallying and his Direct Windows sponsored car is a credit to its owner/builder/driver. A limited programme of national events — he

concentrated his 1985 effort on the BTRDA series — kept him out of contention for outright honours but third overall on the Lindisfarne — behind Malcolm Wilson's Ford RS200 and the Mazda RX-7 of Ingvar Carlsson — was no fluke. Watch this space!

Early consistency pushed **Richard York** into the series lead after the third round but his dislike of tarmac and an accident on the Russek put paid to any further aspirations.

A switch from Chevette to Nissan 240RS was enough to bring the Esso Scottish title to **George Marshall** and, after a cut and thrust battle with **Ken Wood** in the big Rover, he showed his mettle on the Granite City Rally with second. Indeed, a string of excellent performances brought him eighth in the series itself and another year could yet add the premier title to his collection.



Allan Edwards struggled again with the 4x4 Escort, this excursion typical of his fortune.



From start to finish Neil Burton was always in charge of the inaugural Skoda Trophy contest.

No stopping Neil

Neil Burton was never headed during the 1985 season and therefore became the first winner of the Skoda Trophy, a creditable performance that saw him enter the spirit of this one-make series with enthusiasm.

Burton's closest rival was **Arthur Priestner**, who drew level after the York National, but faltered later on and could not offer a serious threat over the final events.

In the second half of the series, **Andrew Corner** emerged as a promising driver who should — if he takes up the challenge of Skoda Trophy '86 — collect higher than third, while good scores in the two Kielder based rallies promoted **David Beveridge** to fourth.

Jim Clark scored well on the Gwynedd

Rally at the start of the season but that was his only points score, while **John Crowley** collected a few single points along the way.

Ray Dale, a regular face among the factory team service crew, turned up for the opening event to show how it could be done, but then stayed away to leave the newcomers to it, while **Michael Farmer** and **Andrew Smalley** also joined in the fun on occasions.

It would be fair to say that, for this first year, support was cautious as people viewed the series with slightly amused interest. Now, however, they must take it seriously and an excellent year is in prospect if drivers realise that here is a sensible, cheap way of getting their feet wet...

SKIP BROWN GWYNEDD RALLY, Mar 9

1	Tony Pond/Rob Arthur	MG Metro 6R4	71m46s
2	David Llewellyn/Phil Short	Audi Quattro A2	73m39s
3	Roger Clark/John Robinson	R-E-D 4x4T	76m09s
4	Alec Cannon/Doug Hart	Opel Ascona 400	76m37s
5	Louise Aitken-Walker/Ellen Morgan	Ford Escort RS	76m43s
6	Mark Lovell/Peter Davis	Nissan 240RS	78m09s
7	George Marshall/Lyn Jenkins	Vauxhall Chevette HSR	78m19s
8	Alistair Sutherland/Peter Watts	Opel Ascona 400	78m37s
9	Richard Gough/Eifion Jones	Ford Escort RS	78m58s
10	Ian Hughes/Brian Rainbow	Talbot Sunbeam Lotus	79m04s
Group A: Simon Davison/Dave Nicholson			81m34s
70 starters, 43 finishers			



Nigel Worswick and Stuart Derry survey their Capri on the opening event after the flywheel let go.

YORK NATIONAL RALLY, Mar 30

1	Chris Mellors/Harold White	Ford Escort RS	72m00s
2	George Hill/Ron Varley	Vauxhall Astra RWD	72m28s
3	Bill Lyburn/Allan Hutchinson	Ford Escort RS	72m56s
4	Mark Lovell/Peter Davis	Nissan 240RS	73m42s
5	Richard York/Peter York	Ford Escort RS	74m06s
6	Peter Slight/Lou Naylor	Ford Escort RS	74m11s
7	Warren Philliskirk/Christine Parling	Ford Escort RS	75m10s
8	Willie Rutherford/Bryan Harris	R-E-D 4x4T	75m14s
9	Bill Dobie/Ed Morgan	Opel Manta 400	75m41s
10	Sanjiv Shah/Eiwyn Manuel	Toyota Corolla	77m24s
Group A: Shah/Manuel			
83 starters, 51 finishers			

SONAT GRANITE CITY RALLY, Apr 21

1	Willie Rutherford/Bryan Harris	R-E-D 4x4T	79m51s
2	George Marshall/Lyn Jenkins	Nissan 240RS	80m32s
3	Roger Chilman/Bryan Thomas	Ford Escort RS	81m30s
4	Roy Cathcart/Harold Montgomery	Audi Quattro A1	81m34s
5	Chris Mellors/Harold White	Ford Escort RS	82m46s
6	Louise Aitken-Walker/Ellen Morgan	Ford Escort RS	83m39s
7	Richard York/Peter York	Ford Escort RS	84m04s
8	Clinton Smith/Stuart Dytham	Opel Manta 400	84m34s
9	Tom Muir/George Sharp	Opel Ascona 400	85m37s
10	Jimmy Girvan/Neil Moir	Ford Escort RS	87m49s
Group A: David Gillanders/Graham Neish			
90 starters, 54 finishers			

NEXUS MANX STAGES, May 11

1	Mike Pattison/Nigel Harris	Ford Escort G3	94m44s
2	Phil Collins/Roger Freeman	Opel Ascona 400	94m52s
3	Mark Lovell/Peter Davis	Nissan 240RS	95m50s
4	Tony Higgins/Christina Higgins	Ford Escort RS	97m13s
5	Gary Leece/Geoff Walmesley	Ford Escort RS	97m58s
6	Dennis Moody/Jon Savage	Ford Escort Mk3 RWD	98m24s
7	Peter Wells/Jonty Bolsover	Ford Escort RS	100m08s
8	Louise Aitken-Walker/Ellen Morgan	Ford Escort RS	100m50s
9	John Dodsworth/John Kennedy	Ford Escort RS	101m07s
10	Willie Rutherford/Bryan Harris	R-E-D 4x4T	101m22s
Group A: Stuart Nicholls/Mike Soanes			105m34s
132 starters, 88 finishers			

Dominant visitor? Pentti Airikkala at speed on the last round with *Grandstand's* Steve Rider.





Stars of the show? The Parkinsons were the giant killers with their 1300cc Corsas.

MARLBORO RUSSEK RALLY, Jul 13

1	Mark Lovell/Peter Davis	Nissan 240RS	92m13s
2	Louise Aitken-Walker/Ellen Morgan	Ford Escort RS	92m31s
3	Willie Rutherford/Bryan Harris	R-E-D 4x4T	92m47s
4	Ken Wood/Peter Brown	Rover Vitesse	93m26s
5	Peter Slight/Lou Naylor	Ford Escort RS	93m45s
6	James Sutherland/Jonty Bolsover	Ford Escort RS	95m01s
7	David Mann/Peter Watts	Vauxhall Chevette HSR	97m18s
8	Bob Fowden/Howell Evans	Rover SD1	97m30s
9	Nigel Worswick/Stuart Derry	Ford Capri 3-litre	98m33s
10	Jeffrey George/Ian Rawle	Ford Escort RS	99m13s
Group A: Worswick/Derry			
73 starters, 41 finishers			

SHELL OILS/RALLY RADIO LINK MEWLA STAGES, Aug 24/25

1	Phil Collins/Roger Freeman	Opel Manta 400	84m00s
2	Mark Lovell/Peter Davis	Nissan 240RS	85m27s
3	Gwyndaf Evans/Dave Taylor	Opel Manta 2.3	85m41s
4	Willie Rutherford/Bryan Harris	R-E-D 4x4T	86m44s
5	Glyn Jones/Peter Watts	Opel Manta 400	88m25s
6	Brian Price/Ryland James	Vauxhall Chevette HSR	88m45s
7	Louise Aitken-Walker/Ellen Morgan	Ford Escort RS	89m06s
8	Bill Dobie/Paul Watkins	Opel Manta 400	94m58s
9	Dougie Watson-Clark/Dave Orrick	Ford Sierra BDG	95m05s
10	Ken Wood/Peter Brown	Rover Vitesse	95m21s
Group A: Nigel Worswick/Andrew Bodman			95m37s
102 starters, 78 finishers			

MARLBORO LINDISFARNE RALLY, Sep 7

1	Malcolm Wilson/Nigel Harris	Ford RS200	71m45s
2	Ingvar Carlsson/Benny Melander	Mazda RX-7	74m09s
3	Peter Slight/Lou Naylor	Ford Escort RS	76m04s
4	Bill Lyburn/Allan Hutchinson	Ford Escort RS	76m40s
5	Chris Mellors/Harold White	Ford Escort RS	77m05s
6	Tony Pond/Rob Arthur	MG Metro 6R4	77m36s
7	Kevin O'Kane/Noel Alexander	Talbot Sunbeam BRM	78m56s
8	Dougie Watson-Clark/Dave Orrick	Ford Sierra BDG	79m02s
9	Les Graham/Keith Chipchase	Ford Escort RS	80m34s
10	Richard Mawson/George Tindall	Ford Escort RS	80m43s
Group A: Simon Davison/Dave Nicholson			82m27s
57 starters, 34 finishers			

ANDREWS HEAT FOR HIRE CUMBRIA RALLY, Sep 28

1	Willie Rutherford/Bryan Harris	R-E-D 4x4T	68m35s
2	Mark Lovell/Peter Davis	Nissan 240RS	70m27s
3	Ken Wood/Peter Brown	Rover Vitesse	71m55s
4	Marc Duez/Willy Lux	MG Metro 6R4	72m59s
5	Pentti Airikkala/Ronan McNamee	Vauxhall Astra GT/E	74m21s
6	George Marshall/Lyn Jenkins	Nissan 240RS	75m14s
7	Chris Mellors/Nigel Harris	Ford Escort RS	76m42s
8	John Morton/Walter Ainsworth	Subaru RX	77m52s
9	Bill Dobie/Paul Watkins	Opel Manta 400	77m55s
10	Tony Saddington/Andrew Bodman	Vauxhall Astra 1300	78m42s
Group A: Airikkala/McNamee			
93 starters, 56 finishers			

AUDI SPORT RALLY, Oct 19

1	Tony Pond/Rob Arthur	MG Metro 6R4	80m36s
2	Marc Duez/Willy Lux	MG Metro 6R4	83m50s
3	Mark Lovell/Peter Davis	Nissan 240RS	86m54s
4	Andrew Wood/Mike Nicholson	Opel Manta 400	87m04s
5	Phil Collins/Roger Freeman	Opel Manta 400	87m06s
6	Allan Edwards/Ed Morgan	Ford Escort 4x4	87m48s
7	Pentti Airikkala/Steve Rider	Vauxhall Astra GT/E	87m59s
8	Dougie Watson-Clark/Dave Orrick	Ford Sierra BDG	88m56s
9	Mike Stuart/Brian Goff	Rover Vitesse	89m08s
10	Glyn Jones/Ryland James	Opel Manta 400	89m30s
Group A: Airikkala/Rider			
75 starters, 52 finishers			



Phil Short surveys the damage done by David Llewelin to his Quattro in Wales.

On that Aberdeen based event, it seemed that Ken Wood was about to repeat his emotional 1984 win until the Vitesse differential failed when leading. Wood's year was one long tale of disappointment that should have brought more reward than it did. Fourth on the Russek was his best performance but, on that occasion, luck was on his side as the diff was decidedly porous at the finish with a large piece of metal sticking through the casing. One more stage would have done it . . .

Also on the Granite City, Roy Cath-

cart made good use of Malcolm Wilson's Quattro to net fourth — although a win was not out of the question until he suffered two punctures simultaneously — while David Gillanders brought the huge Volvo Turbo home at the head of the Group A field. Both he and Ken Wood will be Metro 6R4 mounted next season.

Mike Pattison and Phil Collins duelled throughout the Manx Stages in May, fighting for seconds and only the weight of the old Ascona — Phil's Manta

George Hill makes a splash en route to second on the York National in March.



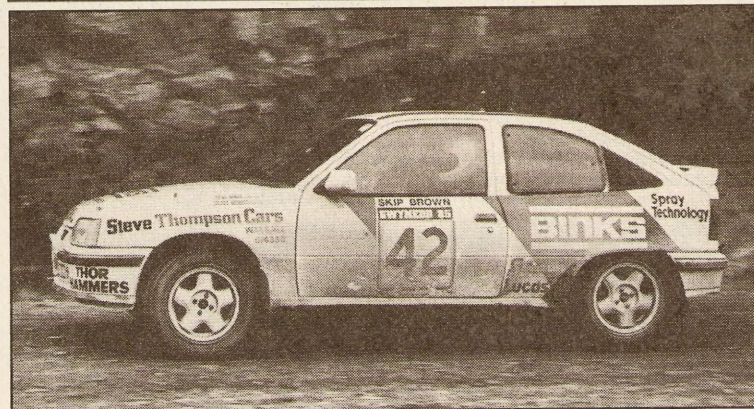
Top of the class

With the increasing emergence of Group A as part of the National Championship, it was no surprise to see contenders in the category doing well in the overall placings on each event. But few would have expected that the Group A champion for 1985 would finish fourth in the overall championship table...

For the past few years, Toyota have held the aces in Group A but, as the factory team struggled for their British crown on the Open series, so the club teams were pushed to keep pace with the growing influence of Vauxhall-Opel. Two Astra GT/Es were at the head of the field, **Stuart Nicholls** making good use of his 1984 Astra Challenge prize to threaten the older example of **Simon Davison**. It would be difficult to split these two drivers on their performances over the year, but experience paid off and Davison it was who lifted the crown, just one non-score on his check sheet.

Despite failing to score on the final three events of the year, Nicholls was a tougher adversary than the statistics would indicate but the undoubted stars of the Group A scene in 1985 were the family team of **Graham and Sue Parkinson**. Having struggled with the less than suitable Vauxhall Nova SR last season, the pairing switched to the improved Nova Sport for 1985 and were immediately the giant killers of the year. Even when Vauxhall had their wrists slapped by the FISA in mid-season for an homologation infringement and the drivers had to switch to the Opel Corsa Sprint, the Parkinsons were untouchable, their only two mistakes being a gentle roll on the Cumbria event and a terminal trip to the ditch in Dovey on the final round. But, by then, it didn't matter and the Group A runner up slot was theirs. It goes without saying that the 1300cc class title went their way long before season's end...

With a late burst of consistency, **Darell Staniforth** made sure of third spot — a position that might have been higher had he not missed the Granite City and failed to score on the Manx, while the ebullient **John Saint** closed to finish fourth as he battled with



Simon Davison (above) was never truly threatened for the Group A series, although his Junior Team compatriot, Stuart Nicholls (centre), looked a likely challenger for a while. Below: All crossed up and nowhere to go? Darell Staniforth throws his Toyota towards third in Group A.

Staniforth for the class award. This time then, it was Vauxhall-Opel 3, Toyota 2.

While these characters were chasing overall positions, some excellent performances came from **Nigel Worswick** in the ex-racing 3-litre Capri. This powerful, but unlikely contender seemed destined for early abandonment when the flywheel let go in the biggest possible way on the Gwynedd and it was the Russek before the car was seen again. On that occasion, however, the thing took the category by storm and gave notice of what might have been. It repeated the feat on the Mewla too and made sure of a little place in the history books.

While Davison and Nicholls seemed to hog the limelight through the year, **Gwyn Thomas** and **Mike Riddick** proved to be no slouches in their Sunbeams, while a promising start by **Sanjiv Shah** in the John Midgley Toyota faltered in mid-season.

As the championship drew to a close — and Davison claimed his title on the Cumbria event, along with Lovell's overall crown — **Pentti Airikkala** joined in the fun with his Telecom Mobile Phones Astra GT/E. There really was no contest on the final two events, therefore, as the 'works' car simply dominated the whole affair. Fifth overall in Cumbria (with fog as thick as your soup) showed the car's potential and woke a few rivals up, while co-driver, **Ronan McNamee**, was booted out for the last event so that *Grandstand's* **Steve Rider** could undergo the stomach wrenching ritual. He actually smiled throughout, as well he might for another Group A win, this time a lowly seventh (!), went the way of the burly Finn.

Next year? It seems that the Group A series will continue to strengthen as the Astra Challenge and Nova Cup winners join in the fun, along with, hopefully, many other young drivers. But watch out for the Volkswagen Junior Team with their four Golf GTIs, Simon Davison defends his title with one and the others better watch out...

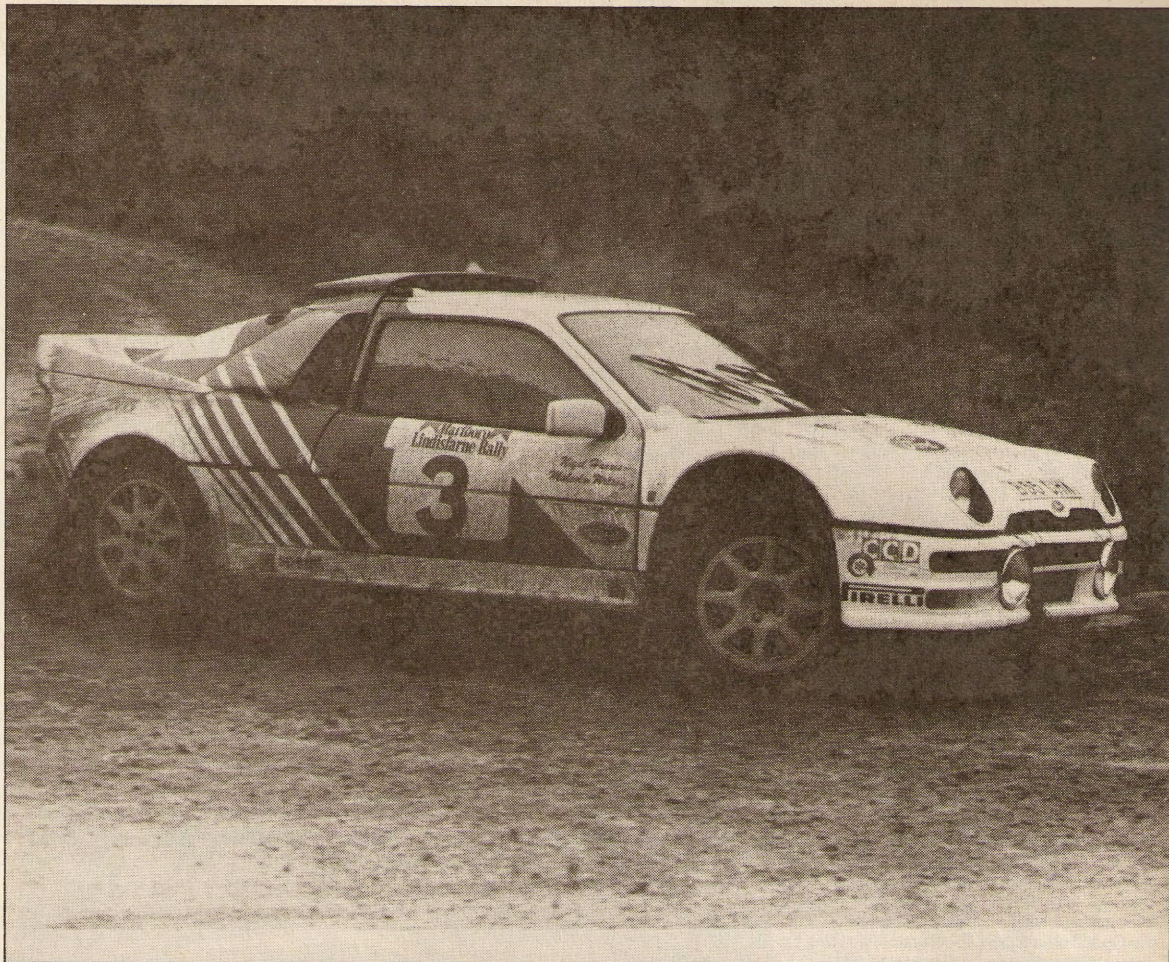


▶▶ blowing its engine on the previous weekend's Welsh International — preventing a hat-trick on wins. But the maestro did manage that feat on the other tarmac extravaganza, the Shell Oils/Rally Radio Link Mewla Stages, with little opposition. He did, however, have to watch out for former road rally driver, **Gwyndaf Evans**, who was only beaten for second place by Lovell in the closing stages.

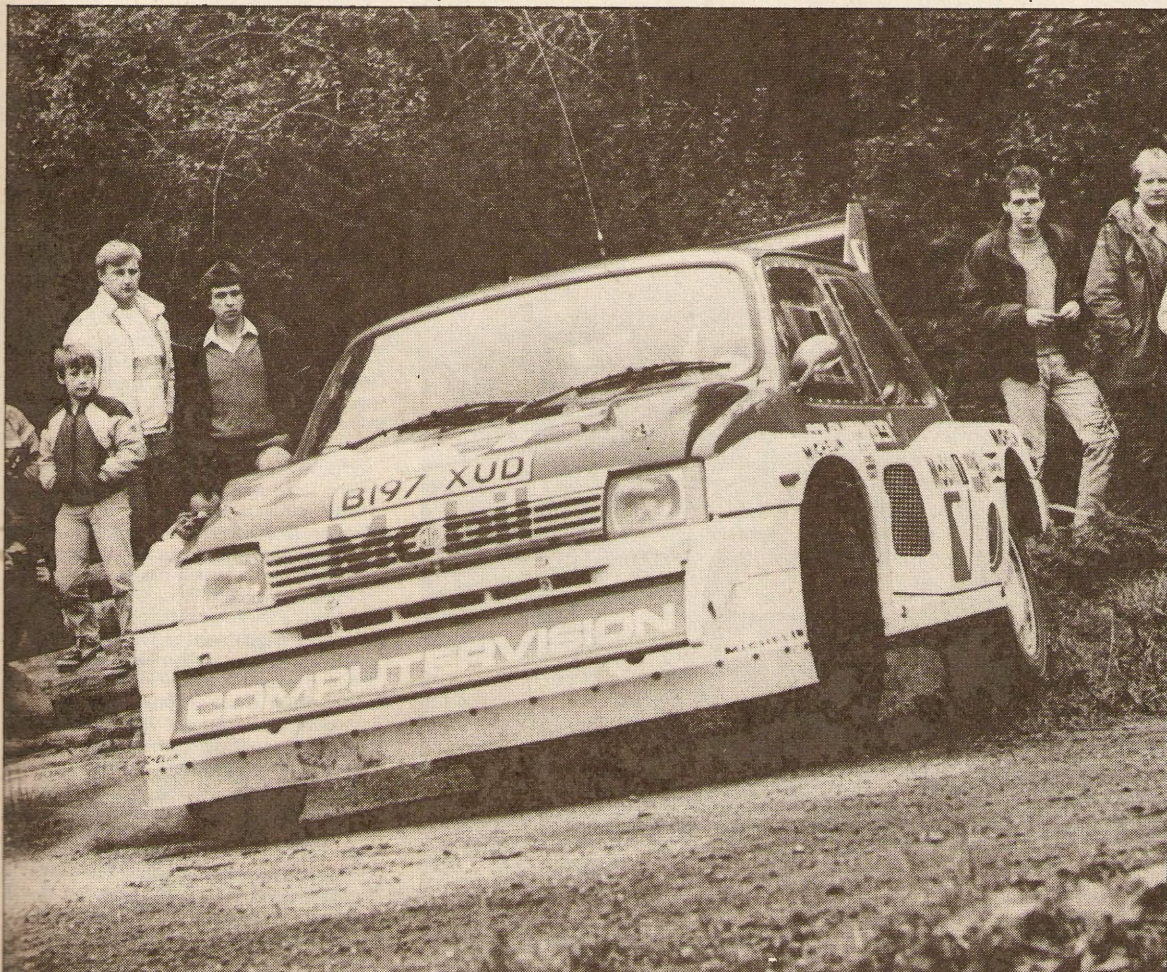
Tony Higgins and **Gary Leece** upheld the Manx honour on their home event, while tarmac ace, **Dennis Moody**, produced his best result of the year with sixth in the rear-drive Mk3 Kingsmead of Bath Escort.

The final three events in the season highlighted the interest that the series attracts from the factory teams. At the start of the year, **Tony Pond** had given the Computervision Metro 6R4 its first win and the team returned for the Lindisfarne in September with the definitive version of the supercar. A disappointing day saw them in trouble with brakes and it cost enough road penalties to drop Pond to sixth overall. Nevertheless, the team could not be accused of cheating on an event where illegal servicing was so obvious that the organisers should have penalised more than just Rutherford...

But there was only one car that really mattered to the fans in Kielder that day. **Malcolm Wilson** was giving the Ford RS200 its World debut and there was a well worn path up the A1 for the occasion. With all sorts of doubts and speculation surrounding Boreham's return to the sport, the car's victory was both unexpected as it was welcome. With a host of star studded observers on hand, the team performed marvellously and, while sceptics still feel that the car was not as quick as it should have been, a win is a win...



The supercars have arrived! Ford sent Malcolm Wilson (above) to the Lindisfarne for the World debut of their RS200 and he rewarded them with a win, while (below) Tony Pond clinched the Gwynedd with the 'old' Metro and then dominated the Audi National with this pukka version.

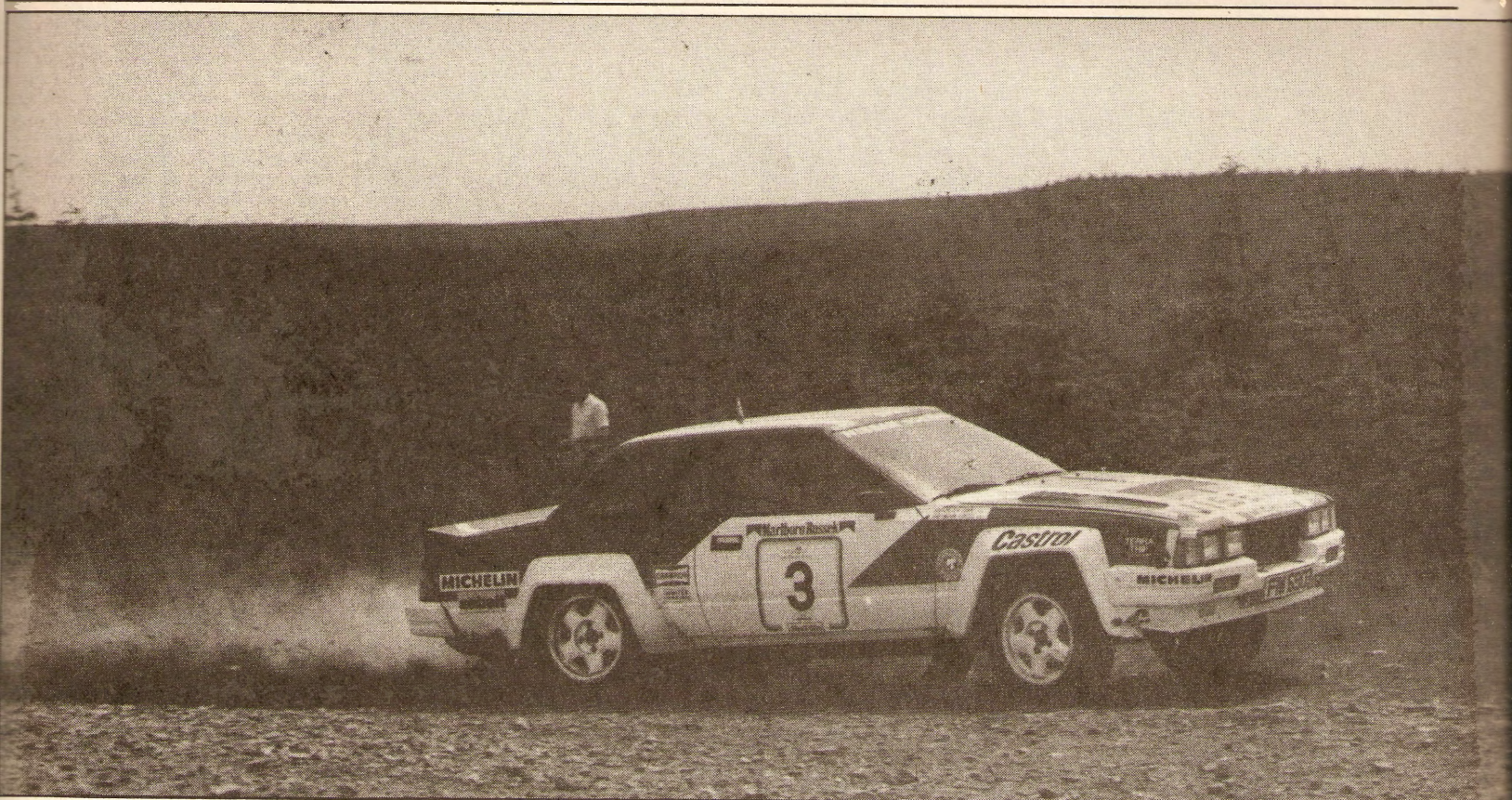


But, with Wilson sliding off the road briefly on the third stage, that honour might have gone to the Mazda RX-7 of **Ingvar Carlsson** who had to settle for second in the appalling weather conditions. His team mate, **Rod Millen**, was in for a fraught day after a puncture but the team learned a lot as they prepared for the Lombard RAC Rally.

In Cumbria a few weeks later Pond was joined by **Marc Duez** and it was the Belgian — on his first drive with the 6R4 — who came out on top, gearbox problems threatening to step in on the foggy night as the company's senior management watched. A valve in Pond's engine had brought his hopes to an end but, on the final round, both he and Duez were unstoppable to record a 1-2 finish in front of the Longbridge workers who were seeing their pride and joy in action for the first time. They must have been impressed.

For Audi, their own rally was a disappointment as last year's National Champion, **David Llewellyn**, rolled on the first stage and ultimately retired with a damaged engine. It was a far cry from the first event in the series when the youngster finished second to Pond and a sad end to his link with the team, Milton Keynes opting not to include Llewellyn in their RAC Rally plans as he was going to Austin Rover for 1986.

This year's series probably marks the end of an era. Almost certainly, future championships will feature an increasing number of Group B machinery and four-wheel drive challengers in particular, Ken Wood's Golden Wonder Metro 6R4 a likely frontrunner. But, despite this, the challenge to the clubman remains as demanding as ever and, with Marlboro expected to take over the mantle as championship sponsor, an already professionally run series will surely move from strength to strength. ■



Above: Lovell's first win of his career came on the Marlboro Russek Rally and it marked a change of fortune for the Axbridge driver (below).



"The season really went according to plan," explains Lovell. "Pete (Davis) and I knew where we would do well, and I knew where we would do well, and I knew where things would be difficult, and drove accordingly. Despite some problems at the start of the season, very little got in the way of the scheme that we had and, although it may sound presumptuous, we knew that we would win the title. That was my sole aim at the start of the season."

One thing that the team did not expect, however, was the challenge they would face, both against reliability and the opposition. It would be fair to say the team underestimated the effort that was required and, in the early part of the year, there were some awful mistakes made.

"The R-E-D 4x4T was much quicker than we had expected," admits Lovell, and it was some time before we realised how much of a threat it would be. The Nissan was not quite right at the start of the season and there was some straight talking after the Granite City."

Indeed, with criticism in the press nearly revving up the Shepreth operation, a whole new approach was seen in

One step forward . . .

As the crews lined up for the Skip Brown Gwynedd Rally at the start of 1985, Mark Lovell was just one of several drivers who were tipped for the title. Driving a Blydenstein prepared Nissan 240RS in Castrol colours, the young man from Axbridge faced his greatest challenge, one that he was determined to win.

Oddly enough, the opening event proved little about the task that lay ahead, for Lovell's eventual rival for the title, Willie Rutherford, was not contesting the first round. It was perhaps a good thing as the Nissan hardly got off to an auspicious start, a string of punctures slowing its progress. Nevertheless, by season's end, little could stop the title being clinched with relative ease. And Lovell knew all along that the result was inevitable . . .

action on the Manx Stages, Bill Blydenstein venturing to the island to join the team and Bob Freeborough now adopting a fully professional approach. The change in attitude immediately produced the goods, Lovell taking a comfortable

"Throughout the year we have only been beaten by works cars . . . or by specialists."

third behind the non-registered tarmac experts, Phil Collins and Mike Pattison. Maximum points for the first time and the start of three such results in succession that would prove the turning point.

"I was a bit disappointed not to win either of the tarmac events this year," confesses Lovell, "but I did manage to take maximum points on them both. The Nissan struggles against some cars be-

cause of its size and weight, and I didn't really feel that it was sensible to risk the championship, just to beat the tarmac experts. Throughout the year, we have only really been beaten by cars with better specifications for the conditions, or by drivers who were considered to be the best suited to each event. Quite honestly, I have been well satisfied with my own performance this year."

Until the Marlboro Russek Rally after the mid-season break, Lovell's mantlepiece was still devoid of an overall win award. Indeed, but for a strike of good fortune when Willie Rutherford broke an anti-roll bar on the final stage in Wales, that award may still have eluded him. But, he made it across the finishing line in first place and the championship balance immediately swung in his favour. Lovell was now a winner at last and his driving showed a new confidence.

"Around that time of the year, I had gone with Terry Kaby to the Canaries for a couple of events. I think that the team were impressed as I managed to stay with Terry on stage times. Certainly, I got full support in every way from that moment.

And I was not too worried that I hadn't won anything before the Russek. Being beaten by works cars with far more horsepower was certainly no disgrace.

"I set my sights on the championship and tried to let nothing get in the way. It might have seemed a boring way to do it, but I had to treat it as a full season and not just a series of events that had to be won."

So what does winning the series mean to Lovell, who now has to settle himself into a drive for 1986?

"Simply taking part in the series probably means as much as winning it . . ."

"Simply taking part in the series probably means as much in the long run as actually winning it. The National Championship attracts a lot of publicity from various sources and, if you are doing well, you get noticed. Being able to say that I won the title will certainly open doors a lot easier now, but I think I have already got a lot out of the year and would have done so, whatever the end result."

Lovell has learned a lot this year about versatility and adapting to different cars. He started off the season with a Ford programme in the RS Turbo and then added the national series with the Nissan as a back up. It took a brave decision by Peter Ashcroft at Ford to allow Lovell to drive for another manufacturer but he appreciates his courage. "It was a very nice moment when Peter agreed to let me do both. I now had irons in two fires which, as it has turned out, was no bad

Simon Davison — Group A Champion

"From the moment we won the first round of the Group A series, we were never under any real threat," was how Simon Davison judged his championship winning season. The title was clinched — just as Mark Lovell claimed the overall award — on a foggy Cumbrian night as any hopes that others might have had of snatching the crown fell by the wayside.

Simon's year had been a carefully controlled approach in an elderly car that had already seen lengthy service in the hands of John Morton. Although an established member of the British Junior Team, Simon knew that speed would not be enough. To guarantee himself the title he had to pace himself and the car through the championship's nine events.

As it was, the second round was his only non-score in the season. "We were doing well until I thought I bent a track control arm. We know now that it was a puncture that had occurred but, by the time we were in the next corner it was too late and over she went . . ."

That aside, the only time that the pairing of Simon and Dave Nicholson let their control of the season waiver was on the Manx Stages in May when they lost out to Stuart Nicholls in the newer version of the Astra GT/E by a mere second.

"Throughout the season," says Davison, "we didn't bother to check every single stage time, only comparing progress when we were going well. I didn't want to put myself under any extra pressure."

Of the nine events, it was probably the Marlboro Russek Rally at mid-season that gave Davison the most hard fought for points. Just to shake out the cobwebs after a lengthy break, Davison tackled a road rally



"From the moment we won the first round, we were never under any real threat."

and broke his hand doing so! With the long stages in Wales, the hand was less than comfortable and, on more than one stage, the youngster admits to ending his drive in tears with the pain, both from the damaged hand and from the blisters on his other hand which was now having to bear the brunt of the effort.

"The Astra has been a super car to drive this year," continues Davison, "but it needed a little more development on tarmac. With front-wheel drive, it was a bit of a handful on the two tarmac rounds this season."

"Also, with no power steering, the beast was difficult to drive in the twisty stuff — but we managed . . ."

Next season, of course, Davison will return to the championship to defend his title as part of the Volkswagen Junior Team, a position gained partly through his result this year.

Naturally, he is delighted at the prospect of driving one of the best Group A cars around at the moment.

"The Astra was good, and well looked after by Mike Taylor Developments, but mine was a secondhand example. Now I have a new car and one that is fully sorted. The whole thing is right from the start."

"Next year is definitely an individual effort. We are part of the team but each has to chase his own position, particularly with a prize drive on the RAC Rally for the best placed driver at the end of the season. Volkswagen have given me a great chance to capitalise on this season and I am very grateful. I am sure that I can do well with the 1800cc model and, if the 16-valve car arrives at mid-season as we are expecting, that should make things even better . . ."

A most consistent year for Simon Davison (above) saw the elderly Astra (below) take a comfortable championship with one round still to run.



thing. The Ford has not had an easy year and to get success from my back up car has kept me at the top."

The differences between the two cars — front-wheel drive on the Escort and rear-drive on the Nissan — produced an interesting balance during the year, although Lovell admits that the Nissan always suffered as he tried to turn the troublesome Ford into a Group A winner.

"The problem of switching from one to another really came to a head before the Audi Sport Rally at the end of the year. Having spent time with the Ford in Scotland, preparing for the Lombard RAC Rally, I then went straight to Shrewsbury to drive the Nissan. The first stage was very interesting. . ."

Lovell, however, mastered the lot and drove another steady rally to take his fourth set of maximum points, untroubled by his season long rival, Willie Rutherford, who crashed out.

"Willie turned out to be a greater threat than we first thought although his last round crash was somewhat inevitable, considering the way that he had been trying. On the Lindisfarne, we both got hot under the collar about things when Willie tried to fool us into thinking that he had retired. When I found out that he was still in the rally, I was really angry and went off into a ditch. It was all very silly really but now it is cleared up between us."

"Really, though, there was little opposition this year. Apart from Willie no-one really stood out as a major challenge. Chris Mellors had a good year, I think, and I feel sorry for Allan Edwards who tried hard. Pete Slights looks a good bet for the future."

But now, Lovell must look to the future himself and his hopes of entering the Open Championship. "I want a proper Group B car for next year which can let me learn about the international series. It will take a year to get into the swing of things and then I shall be all out for the title in 1987. And I shall treat it just the same as this year, planning a careful attack. It may be boring to watch, but it's the way to win championships."

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Mark Lovell/Peter Davis
1985 RAC National Rally Champions
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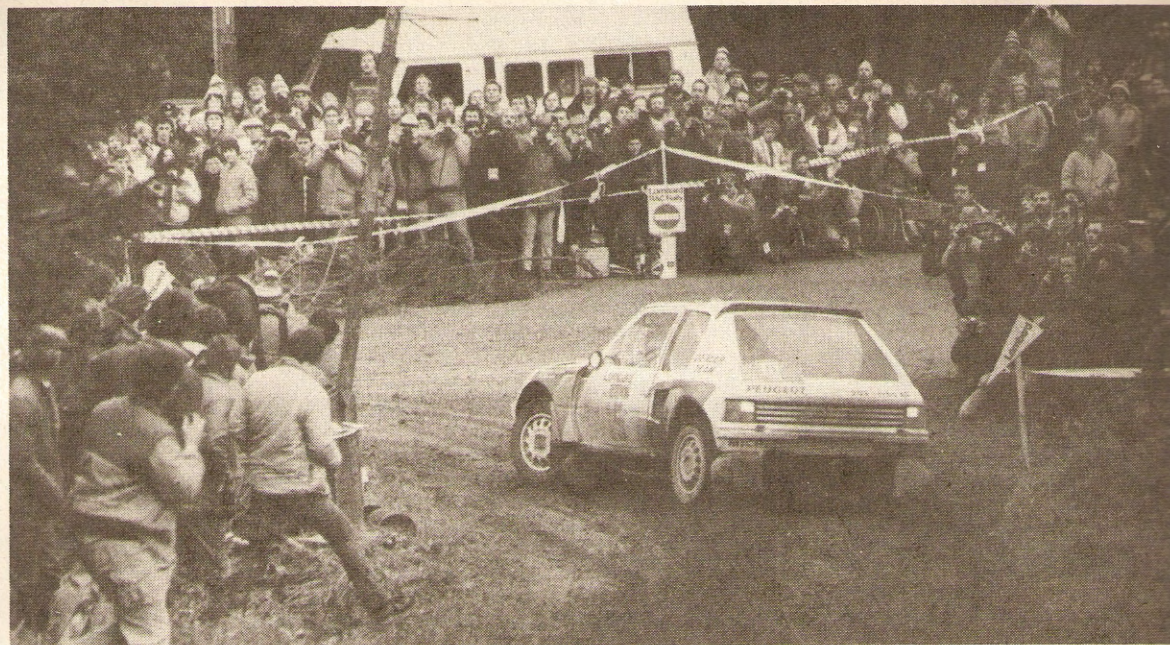
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Best in the world?



As these pictures show, the crowds caused real headaches on the RAC Rally. In Dyfnant (above), they caused the stage to be stopped — can you spot the arrow amid the group on the left? — while (below left) they pushed forward onto the track, having been moved from a safe vantage on the inside by the marshals. But, for Henri Toivonen (right), such worries were dismissed as he celebrates his victory in emotional style . . .



Officer, Gordon Forster, printed his own 'official' passes. Without one of these pieces of card — which could have been copied off at any High Street copying shop — not even accredited pass holders were admitted. If this situation is allowed to continue, chaos will undoubtedly reign and unscrupulous people will gain access to restricted areas. The consequences could prove disastrous to the sport in general . . .

It was also particularly upsetting to note the increase in marshalling inefficiencies. Quite simply, it seems, this band of enthusiasts (who normally are acclaimed far and wide for their abilities and high standards) could not cope with the hordes of spectators lured to the stages by the prospect of a British win on the event. But, no matter how many people turn up, directing the crowds to stand on the outside of bends, behind no more protection than orange dayglo tape, is dangerously ludicrous. To move them there from the much safer inside of the bend is inexcusable. Such tales were rife after the rally and it was incredible to note that, while spectators were hit during the event, no-one was (apparently) seriously hurt.

The attitudes of the marshals in certain areas was less than pleasing. At one service area, just prior to the Hafren stage, the 'Little Hitlers' were in full swing. While the space was limited, and the marshals were rightly keeping access to a minimum, their manners were clearly sitting in the warmth of their homes. Two men were incapable of speaking at less than full volume when vehicles attempted to enter the service

area, and their vocabulary amounted to "Get out", nothing more than that. There were several attempts to enquire where service vehicles might park, all answered in the same manner. Mately's pal, clearly the less eloquent of the two, punctured proceedings with blasts from a whistle while the Lancia Martini mechanics rolled about in mirth at this Marx Brothers comedy.

If only the dynamic duo had taken note of the third member of their party, a female of the species. Undoubtedly the intellectual sort, she achieved far more, and with far less effort, due to the presence of one extra word. "Please . . ."

Considering the above, it might seem that the 1985 Lombard RAC Rally was an appalling shambles. Certain aspects were very disturbing and, hopefully, the future of this unique event in the World series can be saved. But there was much to shout favourably about.

While the vast crowds caused problems for the event in many ways, their presence was most encouraging. Tony Pond and Malcolm Wilson were the great attractions, the mighty Metro dragging people from far and wide to see what the sport was all about. Parties of schoolkids were marched into stages to view the supercars, mums and dads stood on street corners to hold their offsprings' hands and cheer on the team, and garages around the route dressed every Metro they had in Union Jacks. They might not have known anything about the sport — just eavesdropping on their conversations at the stageside would confirm that — but they knew all about the Metro.

And they also were learning fast about

the Lancia as it bounced around the event. This was something really spectacular as the flame spitting supercar screamed over the ice. Also, if you followed the thing down the road at night, the red hot glow from the turbocharger, coupled with huge jets of flame from the exhausts, was an impressive sight for even the most hardened enthusiast. Peugeot and Audi have finally met their match with Lancia and Austin Rover. The kings are dead — long live the kings . . .

Along with the superteams this year, came a vast army of less developed, but no less enthusiastic squads from abroad. The Japanese arrived in their thousands, or so it seems, and Nottingham was filled with representatives from the Land of the Rising Nikon. Among their number was the Suzuki rally team.

An 85 strong group — to look after just two Aska Turbos — set up camp in the host city and began to plan their attack. Among them was Barry 'Whizzo' Williams, who was driving one of the chase cars. During a service meeting prior to the start, one of the inscrutable orientals was writing the chase car crew names on a blackboard and added the name of Bally Williams. Not unnaturally, the British contingent fell about (welcome to the Larry!) and the scribe quickly realised that he had dropped a spherical. With profuse apologies for this terrible error he resisted the temptation to fall onto a short sword. Instead a board rubber was procured and the name rewritten. It now read, Ballie Williams . . .

It wouldn't be the same without them, would it?



Above: The new Granada bears a strong family resemblance to the Sierra. Right: Handling on the limit . . . This is predictable and safe, if perhaps not that enjoyable.



Class beater from Ford?

The new Granada retains the same mechanical configurations, and many of the components, of the old model, but that is about where any carry-over ends. Visually there is — not surprisingly — a strong family resemblance to the Sierra, and even some to the Escort, giving the new car a distinct Ford look, yet also one that matches in leanness and litheness the Renault 25 or the Audi 100. And the old adage that 'what looks right, is right' is true in this instance, since Ford claim a drag factor around the same 0.33 mark, depending on model. Dimensionally, too, it is very close to the superceded car, yet (from the rear in particular) it looks much narrower and higher.

The Granada comes in three versions in the UK (ignoring the 4x4 for the moment): GL, Ghia and top-of-the-range Scorpio. There is a choice, too, of four engines, ranging from a 1.8-litre four to a fuel injected 2.8-litre V6, and two gearbox options, manual or automatic. The subject of this test is the automatic version of the Ghia fitted with the 2.8-litre V6.

This power unit has been around for some time now, and it is an open secret that it will fairly soon be replaced by another, 2.9-litre, engine. However, there's still life in the old girl yet, and tweaks for the Granada included revised camshaft timing and a twin intake lay-out, the results of which are not much more power (still 150bhp at 5800rpm), or indeed much torque (161lb ft), but a much wider spread of torque, peaking lower down at 3000rpm — in fact Ford claim over 90 per cent of maximum torque is developed between 1800rpm and 5100rpm. Another feature of the engine is Ford's highly sophisticated EEC-IV engine management system.

The engine is mounted in the front and drives the rear wheels in traditional manner, unlike the Renault or the Audi. Standard on the V6 Ghia is Ford's A4LD four-speed automatic (the five-speed manual is an option) which, with a 3.36:1 rear axle ratio, gives tremendously tall gearing — no less than 28mph/1000rpm in fourth. Suspension at the front is independent by MacPherson struts, coil

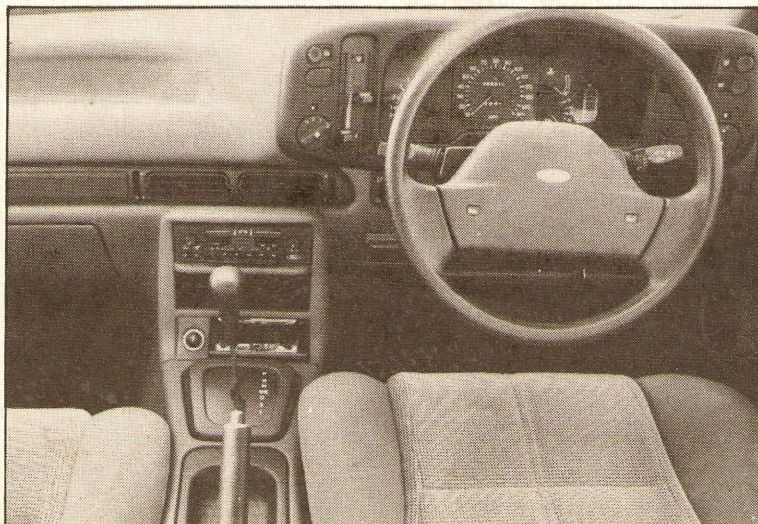
springs and an anti-roll bar, and at the rear by semi-trailing arms, coils and an anti-roll bar again (self-levelling at the back is an option). Steering is by hydraulically assisted rack and pinion, braking by discs all round and, for once, ABS is standard, a factor for which Ford deserve praise. Wheels are a combination pressed steel rim with an alloy steel spider, and tyres are 185/70VR14s.

If you are what is nowadays generically known as 'A Nexecutive', and therefore in line for A Nexecutive car, you could almost be spoiled for choice. There's the class-setting Audi 100 or 200, with or without 'quattro' tags; the sleek and very effective Renault 25; the racy BMW 5 series; the boxy, upright (in both senses) Volvo 760; the bigger Opels or Vauxhalls; the soon-to-be-replaced Rover 3500; or the ageing Jaguar XJ 3.4. Or, of course, the new Ford Granada, known as Scorpio everywhere else in the world. It has, alas, a major problem, which is the Ford tag. The snob appeal of that blue oval is, sadly, somewhat less than that of the brown Audi oval, or BMW's whirling propellers. A pity because the Granada is every bit as good as the opposition, and better than some.

spider, and tyres are 185/70VR14s. Although Ford have worked hard on the low and mid-range torque of the engine, this is still not its strongest feature. Thus, according to *What Car?*, although the maximum speed has increased from 115mph of the old car to 121mph for the new, acceleration hasn't changed much — they recorded 10.9s to

60mph for the old model, 11.2s for the new. What doesn't really help here, of course, is that very high gearing, and this is borne out in practice. Leaving the gear lever in 'D', the on-road performance is acceptable without being exceptional. It won't get left behind at stop-light drag races, but then you also seem to spend a lot more time with your foot flat on the floor than you might expect. There's no quibble about the engine's flexibility — it will pull smoothly from idling without a hiccup or vibration — but it's just not very tractable. At the other extreme, it revs freely and sounds delightful, rather like a muffled version of Capri 2.8i (which, of course, it is), and cruising on motorways at 100mph plus is particularly restful. Talking of cruising on motorways, the 'DE' (for economy) position of the gear lever knocks all accelerative performance on the head. The car feels distinctly sluggish, and there was an odd hesitation when pulling away from a standstill. Thus the only time we used DE was on motorways. . . . However, the Ghia is not a sporty car, and for most owners the performance is only adequate.

Inside the Granada with its clever gearbox gate. Interior space proved more than adequate.



The 'box' itself is good without quite matching the similar Mercedes-Benz item. The gate is so arranged that you can go from 1-2, 2-D, or D-DE in a straight line, but not into N or R, a very good arrangement indeed — if you're in a hurry you don't have to worry about over-shooting the required gear. In action, too, it is smooth most of the time, though kick-down can, at times, cause a distinct thump.

In fact the dynamic properties of the Granada are such that it could probably acceptably more power quite safely. The steering is a bit dead and lifeless, and could do with being rather more direct (a smaller steering wheel could well solve both problems) but is nicely weighted. The roadholding is on a par with others fitted with similar tyre sizes, which means it's above average for the class, but then 'average' in this class is defined by the Audi, the Renault, the BMW and others of that ilk — it's a high average.

The handling is what you might expect
AUTOSPORT, DECEMBER 12, 1985

from a front-engined, rear-wheel drive car with semi-trailing suspension: neutral most of the time, understeer building up as cornering speeds increase, eventually changing to oversteer on the limit. It's all very predicatable and safe and — unlike the BMW — not at all twitchy, but the Granada is not exactly the sort of car you're going to chuck around. It's all very competent without being exactly enjoyable, but it's also the sort of handling that makes the car feel as if it's smaller than it actually is.

The ride wasn't quite as good as I expected, or indeed remembered from pre-launch drives. It copes with the really rough stuff astonishingly well, riding over potholes and major undulations with great aplomb, but small corrugation and minor road works seem to have more effect than you expect, and you feel small bumps, not just hear them. I must confess, however, that once I became used to the ride, I liked it: firm but not harsh, it found an acceptable balance.

Where the new car scores mightily over the old is in the interior. It is, literally, cavernous, and you can fit four six-footers in without any battle for legroom whatsoever. The front seats are superbly comfortable if a little wide, and can be adjusted in all sorts of directions. There is pump-up lumbar support and — more importantly — height adjustment, which means that shorter drivers can raise themselves to give a more commanding view, fairly essential when parking, for example, since the Granada's jelly-mould shape means that the extremities are all but invisible. All the controls too are well placed, the minor ones spread between either side of the instrument pod or on the centre console. There are comparatively few instruments, but of those that are there, most are readable: the exception is the tachometer, a 1/4-quadrant dial to the left of the speedometer, which is a bit awkward.

Considering all the apparent glass area in the roof (visually there is one continuous sweep from one windscreen pillar, round the back, to the other), there are two inconsistencies when it comes to visibility: the rear three-quarter pillars are actually quite hefty, while the front ones are awkwardly placed — on the right hand bends you find yourself peering around them.

The Ghia comes very comprehensively equipped, though the Scorpio is better yet. ABS is the obvious, and most valuable item, but there is also adjustable steering, central door locking (from either front door), seat height adjustment, electric windows fore and aft, glass tilting/sliding sunroof, a radio aerial integral with the rear screen heater,

Granada — pitching into a competitive field.

high-security door locks, pneumatically variable lumbar support, remote/heated door mirrors, a comprehensive ICE system, and a tailgate wash/wipe inter-linked with reverse so that selecting this gear with the wipers working automatically operates the rear wiper as well. . .

All clever stuff. All in all, the new Granada is a very handsome and competitive addition to the businessman's list of potential buys. Smooth, quiet, refined, quick and very well equipped, it gives very little away to the opposition. If only it had four-wheel drive — but, of course, with the 4x4, it does...

FORD GRANADA 2.8i GHIA

£12,706

Specification

Cylinders/capacity	V6, 2792cc
Bore/stroke	93.0/68.5
Valve gear	Pushrod ohv
Fuel system	Bosch K-Jetronic electronic fuel injection
Power/rpm	150bhp (DIN) at 5800rpm
Torque/rpm	161 lb ft (DIN) at 3000rpm
Gear ratios	2.47, 1.47, 1.00, 0.75:1
Final drive	3.36:1
Steering	Hydraulically assisted rack and pinion
Brakes	Discs all round, ABS standard
Wheels	Pressed steel, 14x6J
Tyres	185/70VR14
Suspension (F)	Independent by MacPherson struts, coil springs, anti-roll bar
Suspension (R)	Independent by semi-trailing arms, coil springs, anti-roll bar

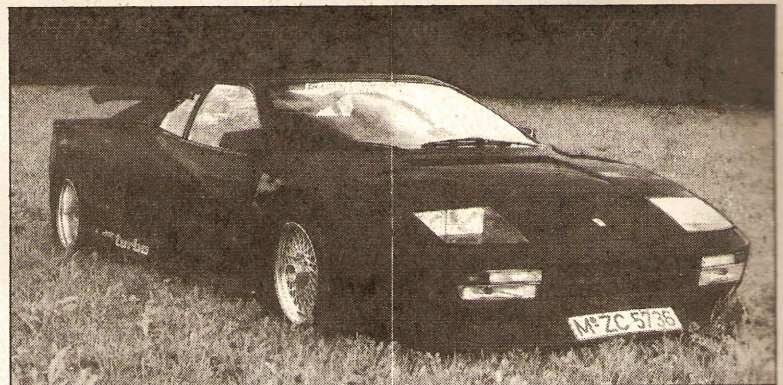
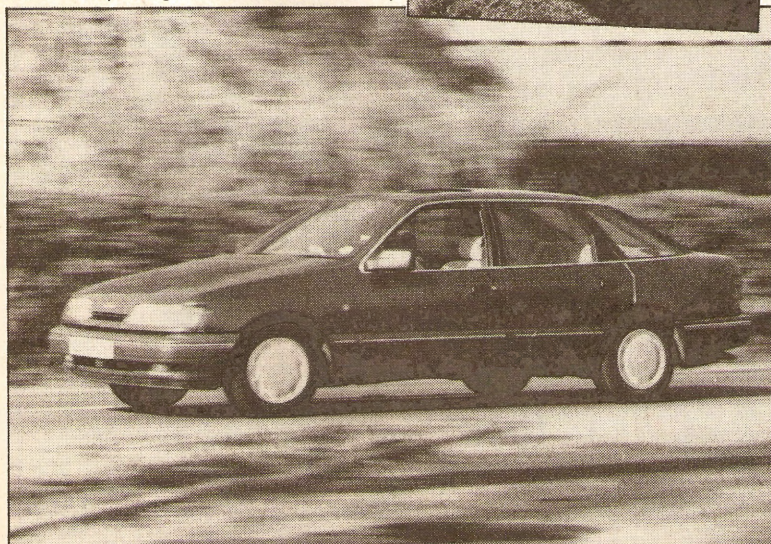
Dimensions

Length	183.8ins
Wheelbase	108.7ins
Track (F/R)	58.1/58.0ins
Width	69.3ins
Weight	26.4cwt

Performance

(What Car? figures)

Maximum	121mph
0-60mph	11.2s
0-100mph	3.7s
50-70mph (kickdown)	7.0s
Fuel consumption (urban/56mph/75mph)	18.2/38.7/30.4mpg
Test consumption	23.18mpg



It's wider, sleeker, and infinitely faster, with 710bhp on tap . . .

Too hot to handle?

Not satisfied with the performance of the Ferrari Testarossa, Koenig Specials GMBH of Munich have chosen to provide those with the relevant readies with a mind blowing means of transport.

The customer has a choice of engine, between four units offering huge outputs ranging from an extra 30bhp (over the standard Testarossa block), to a whacking 710bhp. This last mentioned figure is from a twin turbocharger, twin intercooler unit and gives the car a top speed of 212mph(!) and covers 0-60mph in a little under 3.8s. And the cost? Well, it starts from around

£15,000 on top of the standard Testarossa and rises steeply.

However, Koenig do more than change just the engine, they also offer one of the most comprehensive lists of suspension and exhaust modifications as well as a range of body kits and interior extras. The definitive Koenig body kit makes the car wider with a different front end and a larger spoiler at the rear. Yet, the list of modifications is both too long and too fantastic to cover in detail. For full details of these incredible conversions, call Koenig on 010 49 89 530411.

BRIEFLY

■ The Ford Escort stayed on top of the national charts for the umpteenth month running in November, its advantage over the Vauxhall Cavalier growing to 737 units, while fourth to sixth positions were separated by just 24! Sales are running at a record level, with 1,753,670 cars sold in the first 11 months.

NOVEMBER TOP 10

1 (1) Ford Escort	9960
2 (2) Vauxhall Cavalier	9223
2 (4) Ford Fiesta	6942
4 (6) Ford Sierra	6064
5 (3) Austin/MG Metro	6047
6 (5) Vauxhall Astra	6040
7 (7) Austin/MG Montego	3988
8 (10) Ford Orion	3562
9 (7) Vauxhall Nova	3216
10 (7) Datsun Sunny	3191

Figures courtesy of the SMMT

■ Austin Rover have finally settled on a name for their worst-kept secret, their new executive car codenamed the XX series . . . it will be called the 800, except in the United States where it will be the known as the Sterling.

Initially the 800 range will comprise of models based on three different engines — the 2.0-litre twin cam M16 block in both single and multi-point injection forms, and the 2.5-litre Honda V6. Other derivative designations will be announced at the launch of the 800 in mid-1986.

The introduction of the new range will not, however, spell the immediate end of the Rover SD1, as that will carry on as a three model range alongside the 800, with models ranging from the current six cylinder version to the V8 Vitesse.



The sleekest 323 yet

TWR Sportparts, another of Tom Walkinshaw's subsidiaries, dating back to the days in 1980 when he ran the Mazda competition programme, have just launched a range of performance parts for the Mazda 323 model. The kit contains an aerodynamic package made of GRP, comprising a front spoiler, side skirts and a rear apron, usefully lowering the drag co-efficient and reducing the level of lift, plus aiding stability in cross winds. This package costs £375 + VAT and fitting. Also, there is a range of alloy wheels that can be fitted with standard, low profile or ultra low profile tyres. For 1986, there will also be a roof spoiler and a high efficiency exhaust system. For details, call the TWR Sales Office on Oxford 341010.

To your marques

From time to time, we lucky motoring hacks are given the opportunity to jet off somewhere at a manufacturer's expense. We return, suitably fed and watered, having been impressed by whatever it was we went away to see . . .

Having travelled halfway round the world in pursuit of the first hints of genuinely intercontinental Group A racing, I arrived back on these wintry shores with the impression that I had been off on a Volvo 'jolly' — only Volvo didn't pay the bills. At Macau and Fuji, we were treated to the spectacle of the European Touring Car Championship winners annihilating the opposition. We weren't really watching races, rather Volvo PR stunts, with no Rovers, no Jaguars and no Holdens — just those two Volvos

Having said that, there was a glimmer of what should come next year, and the potential is immense. There can be no doubting that the Japanese love their sports. In a land where you get microchips with everything, you can buy underwater Walkmen and electronic golf ball locators.

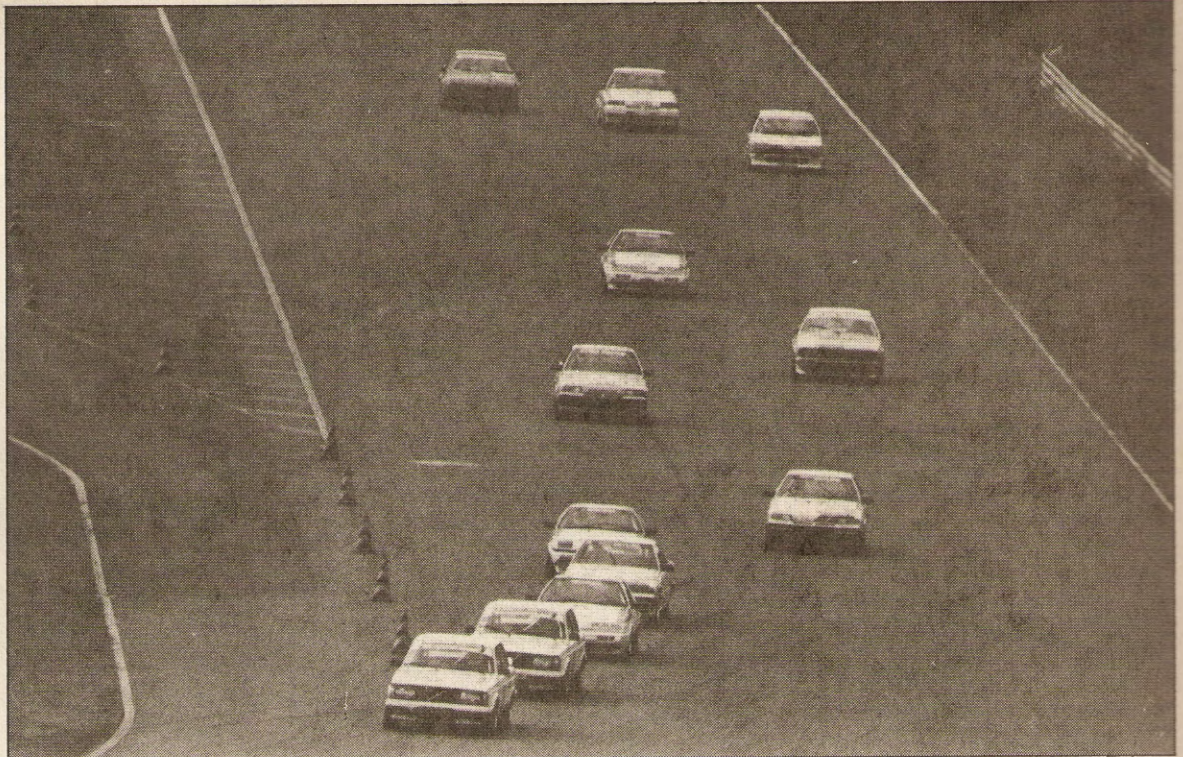
Golf is a religion — Greg Norman, a saint. There are huge cathedrals of multi-storey driving ranges. There is also jogging.

Come lunchtime in Tokyo, they need 'jogger traffic control' on the paths around the Imperial Palace in the centre of the city. Pause to take a photo of the Imperial moat, and you'll be mowed down by headbanded, Nike-clad gangs . . .

And then there is tsumi wrestling, which we unenlightened Europeans watch with a bizarre fascination, such that, on one particular evening in Tokyo, I was telephoned in my hotel by an English driver who insisted I turn on the television — "You won't believe it!" he assured me. He was right.

Motor racing, these days, comes a fair way down the list of Japan's favourite sports, but the signs are that interest is growing, thanks mainly to Honda's

A quite remarkable little car — the 16-valve 1.6 Honda Civic with Satoru Nakajima at the wheel. An outright winner in Japan this year . . .



East meets West at Fuji. The two Eggenberger Volvos head off while Colts, Nissans and the championship winning BMW 635CSi give chase.

involvement in Grand Prix racing. Japan's undisputed ace racing driver, Satoru Nakajima is regularly to be found thrashing round the tight and twisty Suzuka circuit (owned incidentally by Honda) in secret F1 testing at the wheel of a Williams-Honda stationed over there permanently.

A sign of this renewed interest is the increase in the number of permanent racing circuits in Japan. Until this year there were just five tracks: Fuji (owned by the enormous Mitsubishi corporation), Suzuka (Honda), Sugo (Yamaha's own test track), Tsukuba and Nishi Nippon. This year has seen two more circuits under construction at Kucceyan and Nishi Sendai.

The Honda Grand Prix effort is just the start of what could become an avalanche. If one corporation gets involved, the others have to follow. They have the

technology, the will, and the finance to succeed, whether in Formula 1, sportscar or touring car racing. It just remains to see how long it will take them.

Volvo, Rover, Ford and BMW versus Pontiac and Chevrolet. Now that sounds interesting.

Earlier this year, Japan, in keeping with the general worldwide trend, fell into line with FISA's Group A saloon car regulations. After a few unusual early hiccoughs, the championship has blossomed, and looks to go from strength to

strength next year with a number of racing teams keen to get their hands on the latest European equipment, and the manufacturers themselves beginning to get to grips with the black art of homologation.

The opening round of the year was won by a small class Toyota Corolla (just stop and think about that for a moment). The car featured a brand new range of tyres in racing — Toyo's Trampio rubber. Later in the year, they had a 16-valve 1.6 Honda Civic beating a BMW 635CSi thanks to a remarkable engine and the efforts of Mr Nakajima and his regular co-driver in the rapid little Hondamobile, Osamu Nakako. With the season now closed, some sense of order has returned, with the title going to the Hartge BMW 635CSi of Naoki Nagasaka and Kazuo Mogi.

The recent InterTec International Touring Car event at Mount Fuji saw all the Japanese runners up against the ETC Volvo 240 Turbos. The locals didn't stand a chance. How they marvelled at the slick Volvo pitstops! The Volvos won by a mere seven laps, but the Japanese had seen the best in action. They realise they have a lot to learn, but then, Japan is famous for responding quickly.

The Fuji organisers also showed that they have the right ideas about how to stage a race and best please the viewing public, and there are lessons here for our own faltering Trimoco series. The Japanese publicised the event on television well in advance and, although some of what they promised (ie Jaguars and Rovers) failed to materialise, at least the public knew that there was some big motor race on at Fuji.

Come race day, the grandstand was all but full. The drivers were introduced one by one — something they do in French Production racing — and it was appreciated by the crowd. Star names are all very well, but behind helmets and inside tin tops, they might be anyone.

At the end of the race, too, they catered for the public. Each car that made it to the finish was parked along the main straight so the spectators could see them more closely (and read the sponsors' names.) Oh, and the whole event



▶▶ received extensive nationwide television coverage . . .

The Japanese may be new to the Group A game, but they have some fresh ideas which the Europeans would do well to copy.

The advance of automotive technology continues unabated. The Tokyo Motor Show, which coincided with the race, incidentally, showed off the shape of things to come: 24-valve, twin-turbo machines with superchargers to boot. Now image that sort of a beast on the race track.

Despite the potential that is clearly there in Japan, the Fuji race had a 'small-time' feel about it. In the course of the drivers' briefing, several Europeans were seen to raise an eyebrow when told they could overtake the pace car if signalled to. Why was this? Well, it seemed that some of the other machinery would be unable to keep up with the speed of the pace car!

Small-town or not, the prize money was more than sensible, with £15,000 for first place, £7500 for second, and rewards going right down through the field. Small wonder Ruedi Eggenberger looked so cheerful when he collared each of his drivers as they wandered, cheques in hand, from the prizegiving ceremony on the evening of the race. Not a bad weekend for him, thank you very much . . .

One man who attracted a lot of attention, apart from Herr Eggenberger, was the American driver Tim Sharp. An American driving in Group A? His involvement begged one simple question: what were the prospects for Group A in America?

The USA and Canada are due to adopt Group A regulations next year, and who knows what will come from that . . . Volvo, Rover, Ford and BMW versus Pontiac and Chevrolet? Now that sounds interesting. Add to that Nissan, Honda, Mitsubishi Colt and Toyota, and you can begin to understand the optimism found these days in touring car racing.

But let's not get ahead of ourselves. On a more down-to-earth plane, the Europeans who came over to Fuji will remember the event as a pleasant, stressless weekend, and one which made reporting European events seem a major struggle. The yellow books stayed safely tucked away in the regulation-issue motor racing briefcases.

Everyone had their own particular high points, the sight of Mount Fuji itself (if you'll pardon the pun) being one of them. It isn't every day you see race winners bowing with thanks to a moun-

A Bastos Volvo? No, just close racing . . . Group A is booming in Europe, Japan and Australia. America and Canada adopt the rules in '86.



BMW, Jaguar, Holden and Volvo — the competition in Australian Group A has been intense this year. Next year the Aussies go international . . .

tain! For me though, the announcer/translator was the star of the show, with a perfect *Orcksford* accent. Where on earth did he learn that? "Oh, actually I practice a lot. I can do all kinds of accents!" And with that he broke into a perfect Pakistani, "I just love this motor racing business you know, such fun . . ."

Be it *saki*, *tsumi*, superchargers, *sukiyaki* or just plain live squid leaping out of your soup, much fun was had by all. Twelve months from now we'll be back to do it all again and to see just how quickly the Japanese have caught up . . .

With 10 days between the Fuji and Macau events, there was just time to nip down to Sydney and the land where saloon cars are the big news, the home of the hunky Holdens where anyone who drives a Renault is considered a left-wing poofa. Until this year, the Australians had scarcely heard of Formula 1, and the only men who mattered were the guys who raced at Bathurst with their meaty Ford Falcons.

This year, Group A replaced the traditional 'Group C' 'big banger' saloons and it has been an immediate success, to the extent that the Australians are waiting on every word from FISA in Paris concerning the World series. Next

year, Allan Grice plans to take an Australian National Team to Europe to show the Europeans just what the Holdens can do. After all, beating the poms is something of a national sport . . .

The enthusiasm over there is contagious and, to us reserved Europeans, sometimes seems to go a little over the top. To quote from a recent story in *te Australian Daily Mail* about Andy Rouse taking his (they were at that stage) Ford Sierras to Europe. "Rouse intends to slam Schnitzer, wallop Walkinshaw and eliminate Eggenberger." Quite . . .

Having survived the the enthusiasm of our Antipodean cousins, it was off to Hong Kong for the second race in the 'East meets West' series, and a similar disappointment to that of the Fuji race. There were the Volvos once more, the Colt Starions and a mix-and-match bag of Japanese cars, joined only by a couple of Schnitzer BMWs and the local machinery which, with the best will in the world, looked as though it came out of the ark. Still, with only one race a year it really isn't worth them buying up some snappy European number when they can outdo the rest with an ageing ex-Spice Capri.

A jetfoil ride across the South China

Sea from Hong Kong to Macau—a rather downmarket version of the British colony with Portuguese subtitles. It's a den of gambling and iniquity which, curiously, is a firm favourite with all racing teams—I can't imagine why!

The circuit itself is daunting as it twists its way around a rather untidy wasteland which, after a few drinks at a local 'casino', might perhaps be described as prime development land. For saloon cars this is a veritable Valhalla. There isn't anything to hit but good old concrete walls and, if you're in a Volvo steaming down the main straight at 175mph and a backmarker gets in the way, it can get pretty hair-raising.

In a local saloon car event on the Saturday, Yeung Wai-Kin, Tang Tak-Wing and R. J. D'Assumpcao-Clemente showed how not to do it as they contrived to cause the commentators twisted tongues, colliding in a fiery mess at the Marlboro Bend. All escaped injury, but they blistered the track in the ensuing conflagration.

Last year, so they say, the TWR team had to telex ahead to discover the dimensions of the Melco Hairpin just in case the Jaguar XJSs couldn't actually get round this most narrow of corners. The thought that, in the course of this year's event, Gerhard Berger overtook someone going down the inside at the entry to the turn still sends shivers up the spine.

Sadly, the opposition to the Volvo was not strong enough. A few more top level cars and it would have been a classic.

As a World series beckons, Macau surely has a place in the calendar alongside Brno, Bathurst and Spa. Spectacular places all, and combined into one series they must produce some of the most exciting motor racing action ever. With manufacturer interest ever increasing, and thoughts turning to how best to present the racing to the public at large, the future of touring car racing worldwide looks the healthiest it has ever been. It is only a matter of time before it all takes off, and believe me, it might have been disappointing this year, but the best is yet to come . . .

In the cold light of a British Arctic dawn, it all seems rather distant now, but just so often a telephone rings and someone else is bubbling with enthusiasm, "What is FISA doing?" Ah, the eternal question . . . Who cares? Next stop New Zealand . . .



Pacific becalmed

Discount Adelaide's Australian Grand Prix and it would not be an exaggeration to say that Australasian single-seater racing — and particularly that in New Zealand — is a shade unhealthy. Formula Pacific/Mondial, call it what you will, seems to have lost what little manna it once held and that is probably why the news that Ross Cheever and Jeff Macpherson will head up the late December-January four meeting international series has failed to create excitement among Kiwi motor racing fans.

In fact, those whose memories of the Tasman Series remain fresh might wonder what New Zealand's so-called premier formula is all about these days. Even New Zealand's Motorsport Association has intimated that the Formula Pacific affair is one that it would prefer to forget, although it admits to recognising it at international level.

The nub of the matter is that saloon car racing, a longtime favourite in New Zealand and Australia — remember the Benson & Hedges series and Bathurst — has, with Group A, assumed the cloak of respectability and with the prospect of a FISA-recognised World Series, with New Zealand and Australia conducting rounds, even the purists are becoming interested.

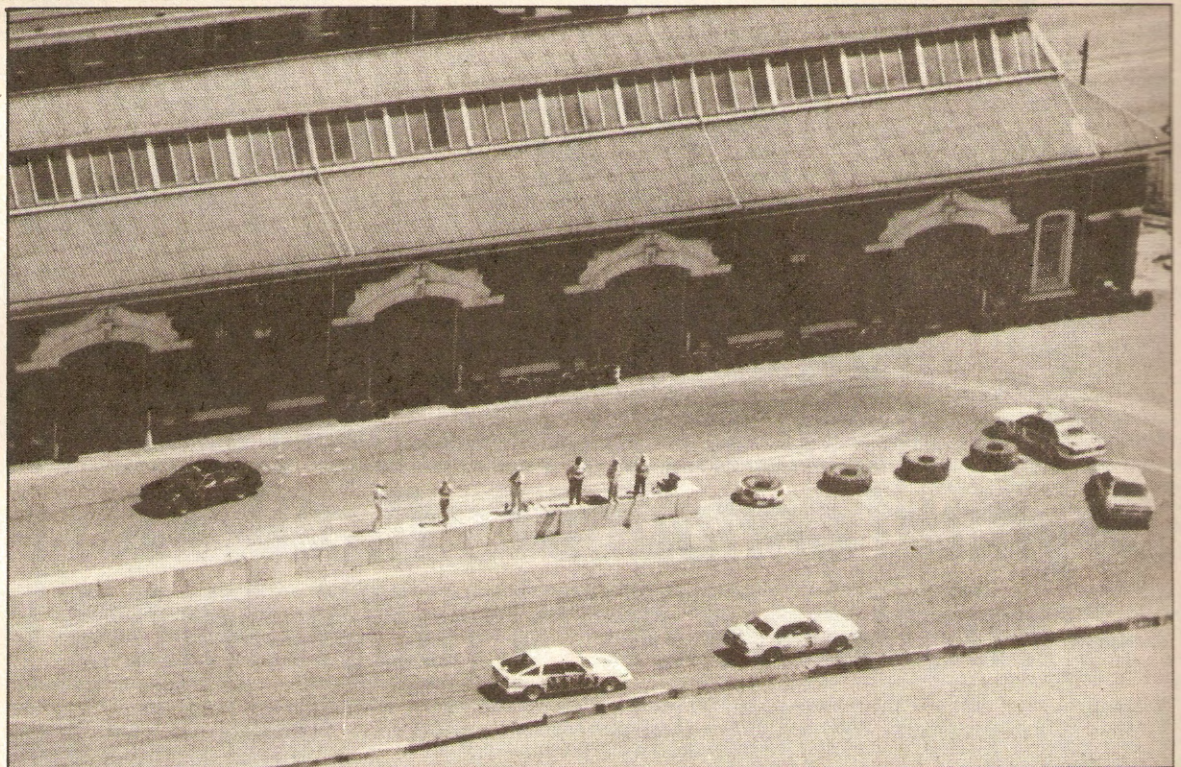
New Zealand motor racing is buzzing with Group A gossip, although the Nissan Mobil 500 International Series on the upgraded (to the tune of NZ Dollars 750,000) Wellington street circuit and Pukekohe is still weeks away.

While the Formula Pacific pre-race publicists talk nebulously about the prospects of the Bren brothers and whether John Lloyd or Pancho Carter might join them on the international grids, there is much more speculation about Mike Thackwell's plans. Will he come to New Zealand to drive a Walkinshaw car in the Group A internationals? More importantly, will he come at all?

Pacific mounts for Cheever, last year's Pacific champion, and Macpherson will be Ralts from the stable of ex-patriot New Zealander Graham Watson. Without Watson, the Australian Ralt agent, the international flavour of the series would diminish considerably.

There is talk of Australians John Bowe, Ross Zampatti and Steve Harrington coming to New Zealand, but they are no more than rumours at this stage.

Locals, probably girding their loins for the Pacific races, are mostly familiar



Saloon car racing is on the up Down Under. The Wellington street circuit has undergone a NZ\$ 750,000 rebuild ready for this year's race.

names to followers. There's Dave McMillan, the promising Formula Ford star John Crawford, Bryan Hartley, Peter Heskett, Brett Riley and the evergreen Kenny Smith, who rumour has it, will front up with a new Ralt.

David Oxtan, whose leanings in the last year have been towards saloons, is giving the open-wheelers a miss and will drive the ex-Andy Rouse Sierra in the ANZ Banking Group's New Zealand Touring Car Championship before going on to the Nissan Mobil International races with backing from a syndicate of Auckland travel business men.

Saloons to the fore

The national touring car series will be held at the Pacific internationals with Baypark, Mount Maungenui before continuing on successive weekends at Pukekohe, Manfeild and Wigram. The Nissan Mobil series takes in the Wellington street race on January 25-26 with Pukekohe the following weekend.

While the early Nissan Mobil favourites are Trevor Crowe and Queenslander Tony Longhurst with the Archibald's BMW 635CSi, in which they took the Benson & Hedges series, Robbie Francevic with the very quick

Mark Petch Volvo 240 Turbo is also at short odds. Last year the voluble Aucklander won at Wellington, with the help of Belgium's Michel Delcourt.

These, though, are early days. There is every indication that there will be at least one other foreign entered Volvo as well as a couple of BMWs and, no doubt, Walkinshaw will be back to make amends for the debacle of last year. Inky Tullock, Mayor of the Southland country town of Maitoura and an accomplished rally and circuit driver, will front up with a Vitesse.

With former Australian touring car champion Dick Johnson teaming up with New Zealander Neville Crichton in the ex-Zakspeed Mustang GT and a swarm of Australian and New Zealand entered Holden Commodores the Nissan Internationals look promising.

Group A is being professionally promoted and this, plus the prospect of participation in a FISA-recognised World Series has widened national interest and attracted real money to New Zealand motorsport.

Looking to F1

Amid the flurry of Group A activity, open-wheeler racing has not been forgot-

ten entirely. An Auckland group led by Alan Burrows, a former spanner man at Brabham, McLaren and Williams, and Lou Vanderer, is putting together a new Auckland circuit proposal with Formula 1 in mind. A steering committee is now preparing a proposition which could be the lift off pad for, hopefully, a Formula 1 round in 1988.

This group believes that Auckland badly needs a close-at-hand circuit to replace Pukekohe, where horse racing takes priority and is making increasing demands upon the facility.

Present intentions are that that fundraising and design studies should take place in 1986 and by the 1987-88 season there should be national and club racing on the new circuit, leading up to an F1 race.

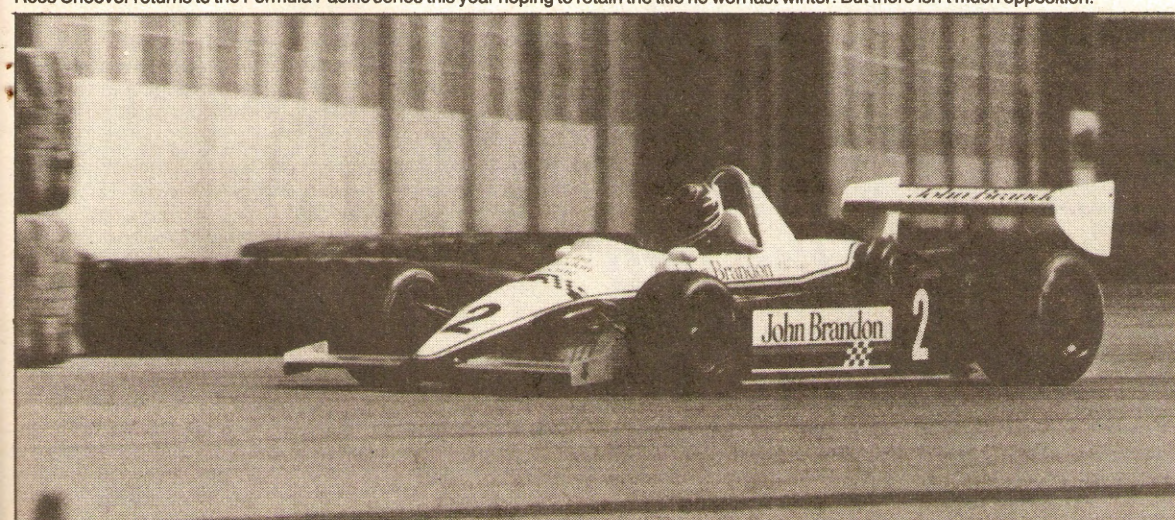
This project could turn out to be more than just a pipe dream. Adelaide has set the stage for 'Down Under' F1 racing and there is little doubt that fiercely parochial Sydney and Melbourne, slapped mightily in the face by Adelaide, will make strenuous overtures to Bernie Ecclestone for F1 in their cities. They could be fresh out of luck...

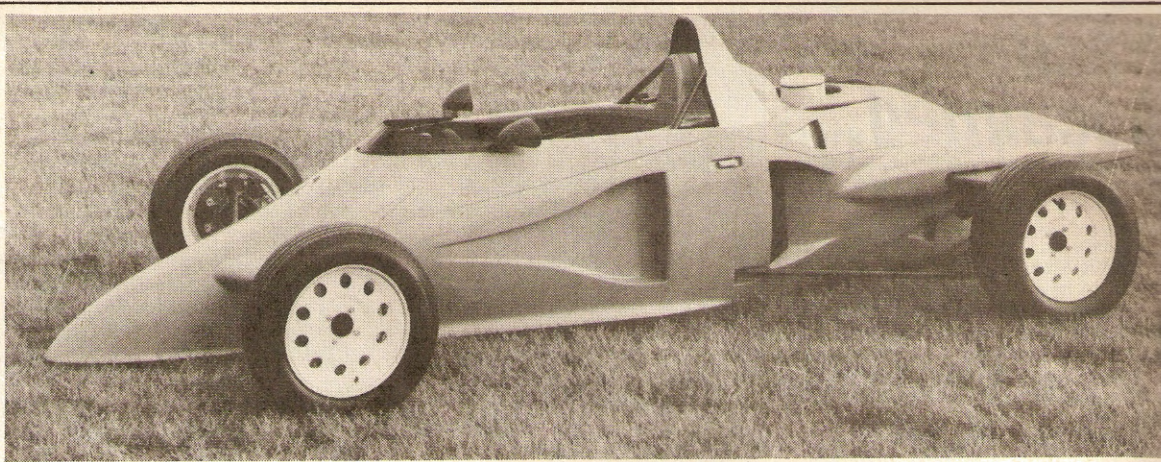
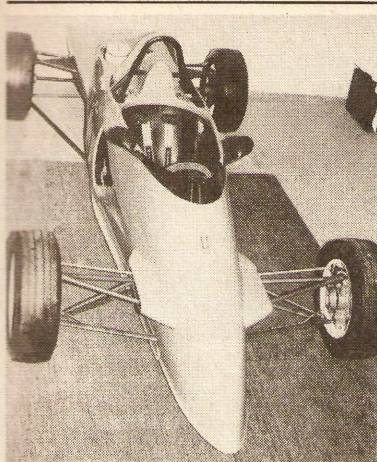
Keith Williams, the man behind Surfers' Paradise Raceway and a millionaire developer, is at present spending A\$250m to refurbish Hamilton Island in the Whitsunday Passage into one of the world's leading tourist resorts.

The Whitsunday Passage is a tropical island paradise between the Queensland coast and the fabulous Great Barrier Reef. With Ansett, a major domestic airline operator Williams is constructing a A\$12m airstrip to handle Douglas DC9s and Boeing 737s that will bring the holidaymakers to this glamorous resort. That airstrip will become part of the motor racing circuit Williams plans to build around his island.

With accommodation of the highest international standard and a racing circuit, built in consultation with Jackie Stewart what better way could the Grand Prix circus end off its F1 year? And then, of course, that New Auckland circuit, hard by the international airport, is only half a day away.

Maybe the prospects for New Zealand open-wheeler racing are not quite as bad as the purists despondently believe... ■



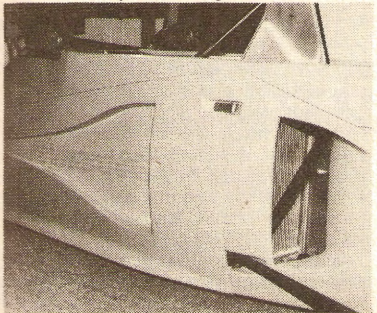


A more rounded front section à la F3 chassis is immediately apparent (left) while the side air scoop remains. The helmet support is now faired-in creating a lower drag factor.

Reynard announces the 86FF — emphasis on aerodynamics

Reynard publicly unveiled their 1986 Formula Ford challenger, the 86FF at their impressive Bicester factory last Wednesday (Dec 04).

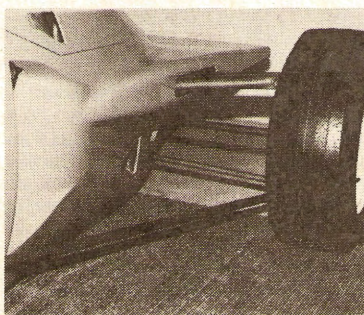
The car is a new concept car, the main aim for which has been to lower the centre of gravity. As any technical design book worth its salt will tell you, it is the height of the centre of gravity that dictates the amount of grip afforded by the tyres. To this end, a new lower exhaust system fed over the rear suspension exit duct joins the large side air scoop.



tion has been utilised, in conjunction with lower radiators and a lower oil tank.

Reynard have spent much time in the wind-tunnel and have produced what they consider to be the most aerodynamic FF1600 design to date. The most interesting feature is a stepped underside to the chassis effected around the line of the front wheels. Caged about the exact benefits of the design, the factory would only comment that the system removes pressure from beneath the car. Importantly, too, it allows the car to run 15mm lower than would otherwise be possible, thereby lowering the centre of gravity and reducing drag.

At first glance the car appears similar to the 85FF but close inspection reveals a number of changes to the bodywork. Familiar are the large side cooling ducts, actually a problem area on the 85FF. On that chassis, they were found to generate lift and this has been eliminated by new rear exit ducts which lead down to the narrowest rear end from the manufacturer yet, some 3" less than the 84FF and 1" less than last year's model. The head rest is faired into the bodywork and in wind



Stabilising wide based rear radius rod.

tunnel tests was reckoned to reduce drag by the equivalent of 1bhp. The nose section of the eight-piece bodywork is also changed, now rounded as per the F3 car.

Suspension is new front and rear. At the front, a new front push-rod system features new top and bottom wishbones incorporating friction-free roller bearings. A resultant advantage is that camber can be adjusted without altering the toe-in. At the rear, the car uses a

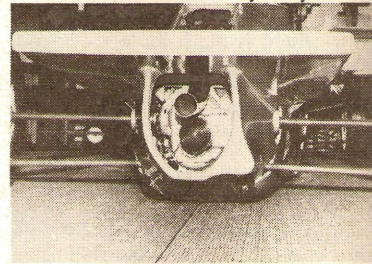
simple rocker system which enhances streamlining while being easy to set up. A widely based lower radius rod stabilises the rear end and keeps the chassis loads to a minimum.

The 86FF uses the fewest components of any Reynard design yet, many of which are interchangeable with the F3 and FF2000 cars. These include the inner uprights, hubs, flanges and driveshafts, the car also featuring the F3 dash panel.

Specialist light alloy castings include an alloy sump which incorporates the engine mounts. Resisting the trend toward narrow footboxes, Reynard have designed the footbox to FIA safety regulations and have also inserted extra chassis tubing adjacent to the driver.

In the immediate future, the 86FF will be tested by several top drivers including Maurizio Sandro Sala, Julian Bailey and Andy Wallace, and Reynard are convinced that the car will put them back to the forefront of Formula Ford.

The neatest rear end from Reynard yet.



Rushen Green expansion

Crack Norfolk-based Formula Ford team, Rushen Green Racing, are to expand their sphere of influence in 1986.

Dennis Rushen has agreed to assist Canadian Reynard importer Raymond David on a consultancy basis whereby the pair will field the rapid Richard Spenard (former Atlantic team mate of Gilles Villeneuve) in an attempt to win the Canadian Tire FF2000 championship. Rushen has considerable experience within racing having worked as a buyer for Team Lotus as well as following the F1 circus with Brabham and Williams between 1971-75. He then worked with Ralph Firman at Van Diemen in '77 and took a good deal of the credit for successes notched up by Brazilian, Chico Serra.

On the British front, Paulo Carcasci has been talking to the team and is keen to contest the Racing Displays and European FF2000 series with Rushen Green. The rapid Brazilian is known to have secured half of a workable budget and hopes to tie up the remainder in the near future.



Trevor Hegarty in happier days with Bertrand Fabi earlier this year.

The end of the line for Penistone Racing

Sad news this week was that Trevor Hegarty's Penistone Racing team will cease trading at the end of December.

Hegarty formed the team in 1981 and ran Ian Briggs, the Hornchurch news-agent winning the F4 championship that

year. The following year, Penistone ran Russell Spence, the Yorkshireman collecting the Donington FF2000 series, and towards the end of the year Hegarty began a successful association with Tim Davies. Davies, of course, won the

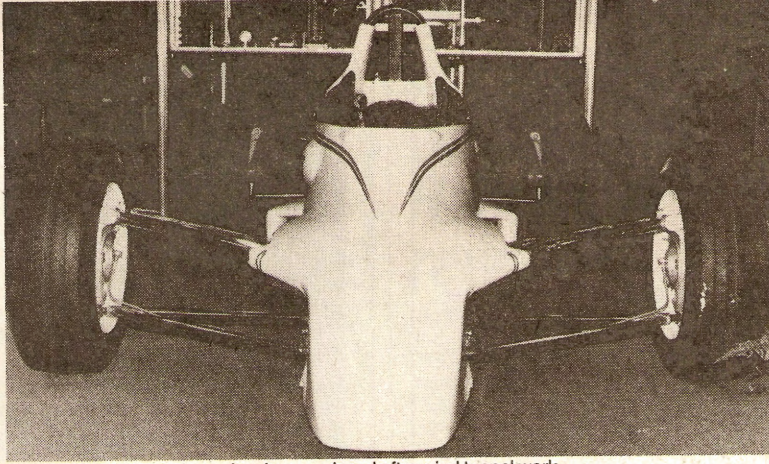
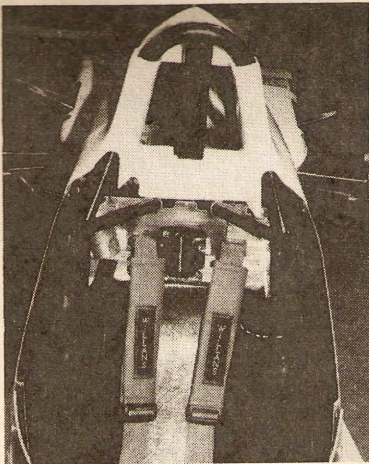
Racing Displays British FF2000 series with a Reynard SF83 but as yet has been unable to complete a full season of F3.

For 1984, Penistone fielded Julian Bailey and Gary Brabham, Bailey finishing the Racing Displays series runner-up to Maurizio Sandro Sala.

This season, of course, Bertrand Fabi contested the British and European 2-litre championships with the team, winning both. Unfortunately, the Canadian left the team after 18 rounds of the 20-race British series, and switched to Richard Dutton's team for round 19 where he sealed the title, albeit with a trip to the armco that also eliminated rival, Martin Donnelly. That left a bit of a bad taste in the mouth and from then on there was the feeling that the team were downcast and low on enthusiasm. "I'm getting a bit too old for it all and the financial pressures of running a race team are getting too great. Doing the rounds of the circuits take up all my time and after discussions with the family I decided to call it a day after much soul searching. It's a sad day for me, though", Hegarty told us on Monday.

Although nothing has yet been confirmed, Hegarty has had an offer from a manufacturer and while AUTOSPORT wishes him well, the Penistone team will be sorely missed from the FF2000 scene.

AUTOSPORT, DECEMBER 12, 1985



The RF86 has been widened across the shoulder area (left) and frontal area has been reduced after wind tunnel work.

Gachot to go FF2000

Adding even more spice to the FF2000 outlook for 1986, Bertrand Gachot has confirmed that he will return to the UK to contest the Racing Displays and European championships.

Gachot was a consistent front runner in this season's premier RAC/TTFF1600 series, clinching the championship at Thruxton's final round. Run by Keith 'Wiggy' Wiggins' Pacific Racing team, Gachot defeated strong opposition including the works Van Diemens, and it was thought that he might make an immediate jump to F3 as a Marlboro sponsored driver. "I was always keen to do FF2000 but at first Marlboro wanted me to go F3. I eventually persuaded them that FF2000 would be a wise move and I'm really looking forward to it" enthused the Belgian when we spoke to him on Monday.

With regard to a chassis for next year, no firm decisions have been made, but Bertrand will once more run with Wiggins. "I'm going to test the Van Diemen this week and do some development work on it but there is no commitment at all" offered Gachot. Meanwhile, Wiggins' name has been mentioned as a likely overseer of the works Van Diemen 2-litre outfit next year, although nothing was confirmed as we went to press.

Gachot — decided upon a year of 2-litre.



BRIEFLY

■ A familiar face around the Formula Ford Paddocks in recent years, top Van Diemen preparation man Mike Galter has joined Anglo European Racing.

Galter, a tireless worker, has been responsible for the cars of Dave Coyne and latterly John Pratt in FF2000 this year. Courted by many teams in the recent past, Galter was approached by AER with 'an offer he couldn't refuse', and hopes to strike up a successful association with Mark Blundell. The team is beginning to look very strong.

■ The Burgess Park Kart Challenge to raise money for the local homeless takes place this coming Saturday (Dec 14) at Albany Rd, Walworth. Seven teams entered include one from AUTOSPORT, but it will surely be hard pressed against the Kart and Superkart team with no less a pedaller than Martin Hines. Karts are available to the public between 9-12am with competition between the teams from 1.30-5.00pm.

■ Adrian Willmott's championship winning Van Diemen RF85 has been purchased by former Team Touraoo pupil, Brent Cornelius. The 23-year-old roofing contractor from Westbury took part in a S of T round at Cadwell earlier this year, and intends to contest the novice and Esso championships in 1986.

Van Diemen unveils the RF86 — a logical development car

The first Van Diemen FF1600 chassis in 1986 guise has been on display recently at the Essen Motor Show.

As has been company policy with an ultra successful chassis in the past (the RF79/80 and 81/82 spring to mind) the RF86 is a logical update of this year's RF85 chassis. The chassis is lighter, with aircraft specification tubing utilised and weighs in right on the formula's 420kg limit. Progress has been made in this direction as the RF85 regularly tipped the scales some 10kgs over the limit.

As has been a Van Diemen hallmark, the chassis is exceptionally strong with extensive bracing in the cockpit and footwell areas. In response to customer feedback, the cockpit area has been

widened across the shoulder region by some 1½" and seems a good deal roomier without any loss in aerodynamic efficiency.

Bodywork is the result of both circuit testing and research at the MIRA wind tunnel and has a reduced frontal area and faired-in roll hoop which produce an exceptionally low drag coefficient. Further improvements have been made to the mounting of the side radiators as a few problems in that area were experienced this year. Cleaner ducting is another improvement.

The front suspension uses wide-based rocking levers operating Bilstein dampers via bell cranks and triangulated lower wishbones with quick camber

adjustment facility.

At the rear, the dampers are mounted inside specially designed gearbox carriers similar to many F1 cars, thereby allowing clean airflow and maintaining the weight as near as possible to the centre line. The dampers are ducted for cooling and as with all '80 series Van Diemens, the suspension is designed to tear off in the case of an accident.

"The design is the result of a year's development work on an already successful chassis during which time we have found a better balance and ironed out any imperfections. I'm sure the car will keep us at the head of the FF1600 field" professed a contented Ralph Firman last weekend.

Bancroft heads Swift challenge in '86

Formula Ford Festival runner-up and '84 double novice champion Jonathan Bancroft signed a deal with Frank Bradley last Saturday to drive the 'works' Swift in the Racing Displays and European FF2000 championships next year.

"Basically, Frank offered me a deal I couldn't refuse and it took the pressure off. I had not secured a full budget and this has allowed me to concentrate on the driving. Batemans will support me again and hopefully UK. Optical will continue

— I have a meeting with them later this week."

The Swift, of course, showed strong potential in the final two BBC *Grandstand* FF2000 races in the hands of Martin Donnelly and Bradley has worked hard of late to tie up any loose ends. C W Developments of Reading are looking after the bodywork while Titan motorsport of Huntingdon are carrying out the casting work.

Bradley is, of course, one of Neil

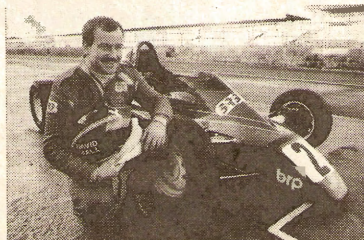
Brown's oldest customers and with a works engine deal and single car attention, Bancroft should go well. "I'm keen to race as always, but often business commitments mean I can't test and so Jonathan may often have two cars at his disposal", added Bradley.

Swift designer, David Brun, is also due to come to Britain to assist the project and help out with any difficulties that the team might encounter.

good interview, made him the outstanding driver of the day.

A mechanic by training (he works on the family farm at present), Hall dabbled in saloon car racing as long ago as 1975, while still a student. Very spasmodic FF1600 appearances in the intervening years merely showed him "how not to go racing", until school races in 1984-5 rekindled his enthusiasm. "I can't believe this new opportunity, it's a dream come true. I have no excuses now and must work hard to cement a future in the sport which I have enjoyed for so long."

Hall — a decisive winner.



Hall claims £33,000 drive

David Hall, a 30-year-old farmer from Bromyard in Herefordshire, has won the BRDC's Silverstone Racing School Scholarship for 1985. He will receive a fully sponsored drive in next year's Esso FF1600 championship with the excellent British Racing Prospects team (another BRDC subsidiary), and will round his season off with an assault on the World Cup and Festival competition.

Hall's magnificent prize, which includes 24 test sessions, is worth more than £33,000 plus VAT, the richest reward offered by any racing school in Great Britain.

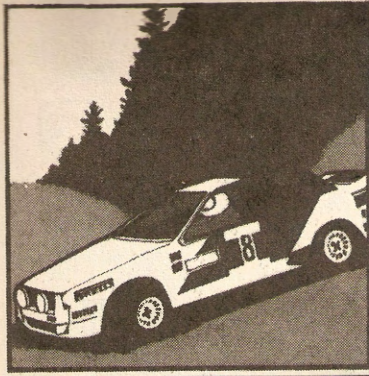
Each of the 12 competitors (selected from eight SRC meetings this season) was required to face a stiff interview (before the judging panel comprising Jack Sears, BRDC Director and retiring Chairman, Gerry Corbett of SRS, BRP Team Manager Nicholas Crichton Masters and AUTOSPORT's Marcus Pye) and

drive former Le Mans winner Richard Attwood for an extended circuit analysis session in the first instance.

The top four candidates overall were then invited to complete observed lapping sessions in BRP's Van Diemen RF85 single-seaters.

Hall, David Botting, John Hollingworth (so impressive at the interview stage) and Piers Hunnisett were the quartet who went forward to chase target times set by BRP's rapid teamster Allan Seedhouse. John and Piers ran first, in damp, slippery, conditions, leaving Seedhouse to set a new standard for the two Davids, on a fast drying line.

Hall, by far the most aggressive driver, put in a faultless display of controlled and consistent lappery (getting down to 64.8secs in far from ideal conditions) and this, together with Attwood's findings (David was quickest in the MG Maestro, balancing it superbly throughout) and a



INTERNATIONAL RALLIES

Nice & easy

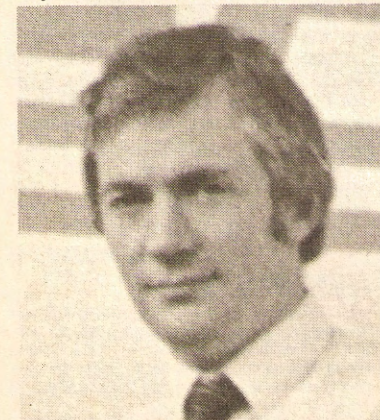
RALLY OF THE LAKES, Dec 07/08: "The most relaxed rally I've ever done" beamed Billy Coleman before popping the cork on the Carling Killarney Rally of the Lakes winner's ramp, last Sunday afternoon.

Coleman had started the rally on the Saturday morning just a little more serious faced, his Gartrac Escort having had a new engine fitted only hours before the start. Ahead of Coleman's Escort, starting the classic Molls Gap first stage, was Frank Meagher's Escort RS1800, running at two, while top seed was the new STP Tarmac Champion Austin McHale, in his usual Shell/Dealer Opel Team Ireland Manta. McHale was 20 secs faster than Coleman on that first stage, with Meagher ½min back in third. Stage 2 was over Ballaghbema, and McHale's Manta plunged off the road at high speed after suffering a front wheel puncture, while Meagher's Escort stopped with a broken distributor.

That was more or less as far as looking for a rally winner was concerned. Coleman had only to stroke the Shell supported Ford to the finish. That's exactly what the Cork farmer did, the car experiencing a few niggly problems, but nothing too serious.

Behind Coleman there was a furious battle for the runner's-up spot, with another Millstreet man, John Moynihan, pushing his Escort hard to move into second, a place he wasn't to lose. Third was disputed the whole way through, with first Belfast's Dan Daly moving into the slot, indeed even heading for second place before his Nissan aquaplaned into a County Kerry wall. Letterkenny's James McDaid then pushed his new Opel Manta 400 up to third, but was passed by yet another Millstreet driver in yet another Escort, Barry Duggan.

As the weather on the rally went through about three seasons in 24 hours, Duggan first opened up a 1 min gap, then McDaid fought back, until the Escort engine suffered what looked like piston



Billy Coleman — enjoyable victory.

failure, to come through the Kilmacilloge stage in a cloud of blue smoke, lucky to make the finish at all, in fourth.

Rossa McCosker won Group A in his Sunbeam, a terrific climax to his winning his category in the STP Tarmac series, while Ed Colton took Group N in his Peugeot 205 GTI. Marie Moloney won the ladies and small Group A award in her Opel Corsa.

However, as the 35 finishers from 75 starters struggled through the final service in the now beautifully sunny Castletownbere, the sore heads inflicted in the delectable Gaby's restaurant the night before were beginning to clear, and the chat was all about why oh why, with 22 of the best asphalt stages in Europe, a good format, plus stunning countryside, this final counter in the Tarmac series does not attract a better entry.

BRIAN PATTERSON

RALLY OF THE LAKES (IRL)

1, Billy Coleman/Ronan Morgan (Ford Escort G3), 4h04m29s; 2, John & Willie Moynihan (Ford Escort), 4h07m40s; 3, James McDaid/Rory Kennedy (Opel Manta), 4h09m44s; 4, Barry Duggan/Philip Moynihan (Ford Escort), 4h10m40s; 5, Greg McCormack/Kevin Kiely (Ford Escort), 4h16m56s; 6, Mike Dunning/Dave Stone (Vauxhall Chevette), 4h19m26s.



Bin Sulayem — second in the series.

Only just . . .

DUBAI INTERNATIONAL RALLY, Dec 05/06: With victory on the Dubai International Rally assured for local driver, Mohamed bin Sulayem, in his Marlboro Toyota Celica Turbo, a broken bolt almost cost Qatar's, Saeed al Hajri, the new champion's title.

After setting the early pace, Al Hajri slowed in a calculated move, his Rothmans Porsche dropping to second behind bin Sulayem. He knew that a top four finish would secure him the 1985 Middle East Championship.

Behind the leading duo, the battle for third rested with Kuwait's Michel Saleh, in his Opel Manta 400, and Dubai's Paul Connolly in an Audi Quattro. Saleh's Opel team-mate, local man Abdullah Omar retired on the first day's stages in the Hatta mountains while high winds, sand storms and rain lashed the 57 starters on the two day 850kms championship finale.

Bin Sulayem held his lead overnight on Thursday, extending it on the second day's coastal area stages. Then trouble hit second placed al Hajri when his Porsche's rear suspension failed, leaving him to nurse the car home over the closing stages. It was enough for Saleh to move the Opel into second place.

Sulayem's victory — his first on home ground — gives him second place in the Middle East Championship with Saleh third, ahead of Oman's Tony Georgiou. But for Saeed al Hajri, the 1985 title brings his total of Middle East crowns to five in just four years.

STEVE FELLOWS

DUBAI INTERNATIONAL RALLY

1, Mohammed bin Sulayem/Hassan Ali (Toyota Celica Turbo), 3h11m34s; 2, Michel Saleh/Ron Varley (Opel Manta 400), 3h22m20s; 3, Saeed al Hajri (Porsche 911SC RS), 3h28m41s; 4, Paul Connolly/Euen Burke (Audi Quattro), 3h32m14s; 5, Mohammed Swaidan/Alan Skennerton (Nissan), 3h40m45s; 6, Hamad al Mazroui/Abdul Sabdet (Nissan 240RS), 3h56m31s.

Racer's reward

NORTHERN LIGHTS RALLY, Nov 30/Dec 01: Former European Formula Super Vee Champion, Mika Arpiainen, finally took a long overdue Finnish Championship in rallying with a convincing display, which yielded overall victory with a Group A Audi 80 Quattro. It had been initially assumed that the Group A title was already settled in favour of Sebastian Lindholm in the penultimate round of the series, but closer examination of the rules revealed that a win could still salvage that elusive honour to Arpiainen.

The ex-racer attacked in his customary dramatic style, which left everybody gasping in his wake, including confirmed Group B champion Antero Laine, who played a cautious game during the early stages. Laine did not make it to the finish, however, and it was Arpiainen's GpA rival, Lindholm, who offered the toughest opposition to the 37-year-old Helsinki businessman. Young Lindholm rose admirably to the occasion, making it a straight fight for overall victory as well as championship honours. Still, Arpiainen made sure that Lindholm never got within striking distance, not putting a foot wrong on his way to a very impressive triumph.

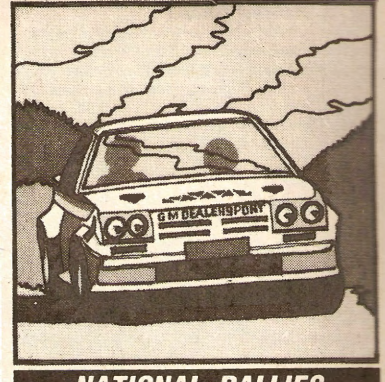
The event turned into something of a bonanza for Audi 80 Quattros, these cars filling five out of the top six places with Raimo Niemi's example third and erstwhile championship leader Timo Heinonen's similar car fourth. Only Kyösti Hämäläinen in a Group N Ford Escort Turbo managed to get in among the 4WD cars, holding Joumi Kinnunen's Audi at bay . . . by 1sec!

ESA ILLOINEN

NORTHERN LIGHTS RALLY (SF)

1, Mika Arpiainen/Timo Hantunen (Audi 80 Quattro), 1h12m48s; 2, Sebastian Lindholm/Staffan Pettersson (Audi 80 Quattro), 1h14m15s; 3, Raimo Niemi/Kari Mannila (Audi 80 Quattro), 1h14m21s; 4, Timo Heinonen/Ari Kononen (Audi 80 Quattro), 1h15m52s; 5, Kyösti Hämäläinen/Martti Putkonen (Ford Escort Turbo), 1h16m32s; 6, Joumi Kinnunen/Juhani Nieminen (Audi 80 Quattro), 1h16m33s.

Donald Heggie had a very successful debut outing in his Quattro (report on following page).



NATIONAL RALLIES

Sibling rivalry

Dec 8: A puncture and spin cost Dougie Watson-Clark more than 1 min after only four stages on the Transpares Solway Stages. He had to work hard on the remaining eight stages to eventually snatch victory by 10 secs in front of a Chevette which his sister navigated.

Wigton MC had 70 entries for their all tarmac event which used three former military bases as venues, but the day was not a happy one for the new Cumbrian stages champion Mike Byrne who crashed his RS2000 on the third stage. The similar car of Bob Blair was going well until the big ends went.

TRANSPARES SOLWAY STAGES

1, Dougie Watson-Clark/Ian Donnelly (Ford Sierra) 30m 41s; 2, James Peel/Alyson Watson-Clark (Vauxhall Chevette) 30m 51s; 3, Andrew Ludlam Duncan Shaw (Opel Ascona) 31m 30s; 4, Richard Cuffwright/Barry Philipson (Hillman Imp) 31m 58s; 5, Ricard Clark/Irving McBranty (Ford Escort 1600) 32m 05s; 6, Geoff Bland/John Marshall (Ford Escort 1600) 32m 13s.

From behind

Dec 7/8: Three crews staged a battle royal at the head of a field of 45 in north Devon and eventual winners of the Ilfracombe Rally — Derek Arnold/Chris White — has just 3 secs advantage after 130 miles.

The long distance travellers pulled back a first half deficit of 27 secs to win the penultimate round of the South West Association Road Championship organised by North Devon MC and they left Graeme Bolt and Graham Lacey wondering what had happened as they were flying all night as well. Third placed Fred Camp/Stuart Wood stayed a discreet minute away but were still 8 mins quicker than the rest.

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