

From Red to Green

The rise of British Motorsport 1950 - 1959

An exhibition guide - Summer 2013



 THE
SWIFT GALLERY
in Association with the Jarrolds Collection

Andrew Swift

For my father Jim,
1913-1994

Who, in his own inimitable way, passed on an interest in a number of the characters and events covered by this exhibition, and from whom I inherited a respect for Jaguar and Aston Martin and a love of all things Italian, not least the cars of Modena and Maranello.

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Motorsport in Britain today has become one of the country's most successful industries. A report by the House of Commons Business, Skills and Innovation Committee in 2010 referred to our motor sport industry as one of the "crown jewels" in UK manufacturing. An estimated four and a half thousand companies are involved in some aspect of it, employing around 38,000 jobs. It generates approximately £6 billion worth of sales. It has important spin offs into a number of high tech areas, including electronics and composite materials. Some of this knowledge is shared by defence and aerospace companies. Unsurprisingly the report concluded that

"Motorsport is an industry of national importance."

How it became so, and some of the people who were responsible for this, are the subjects of this exhibition. Although the UK had produced the world's first purpose built motor racing track at Brooklands in 1907, until the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 by and large motor racing had been the preserve of the select few. The old Brooklands adage of "the right crowd and no crowding" pretty well summed it up. After 1945 the world changed and as motor racing resumed after the war, slowly but surely the social changes taking place in the country at large began to be reflected in the growth of the sport. Returning servicemen looking for thrills and young drivers began to race in an eclectic mix of machinery around converted airfields. Fuel and food were both still subject to rationing, so any affordable racing car variants were welcome. Small, lightweight cars began to emerge.

It is tempting to see the story behind this exhibition as the inevitable byproduct of a society which moved from post war rationing,¹ to one in which Prime Minister Harold Macmillan would say,

"Let's face it, most of our people have never had it so good."² To an extent the greater availability of resources no doubt played its part in this story, but really the rise of British motorsport owes a debt to a number of individuals and organisations, each of which demonstrated a combination of ingenuity, practicality and determination.

In the past month two publications arrived which demonstrate just how far British motor racing developed in a short space of time. The first is a very British publication indeed, the latest edition of the ERA Club newsletter. In it is contained a reprint of a

much earlier newsletter, from December 1938. Commenting on the Donington Grand Prix event of that year, the Hon. Editor P.A. Turner wrote,

"... Many of the spectators who attended the Donington G.P. were not the usual crowd of enthusiastic followers to be seen at any race meeting anywhere in this country, and they must have been highly amused at the repeated exhortations of the commentators not to compare the British E.R.A.s with the G.P.cars, for it was obvious even to those most ignorant of racing that the German cars were of far more advanced design than the British ..."³

Mr. Turner then continues to ask why British manufacturing, despite its resources, had failed to design and build a true GP car. There were no very clear answers.

These comments would have carried exactly the same weight had they been written fifteen years later, for it was not until the latter part of the 1950s that a truly GP winning British car emerged. Indeed, a continuing theme in the two magazines dedicated to the sport, the weekly Autosport and monthly Motor Sport, during the first half of the '50s was exactly the lack of a front running British GP car. The success of Jaguar at Le Mans was, rightly, hugely applauded, but a corresponding level of performance at GP level took longer to achieve. A stream of editorials and letters in both publications constantly exhorted British teams and industry to do better and it is with a palpable sense of relief that the Vanwall triumphs were received. The Autosport covers shown here reflect the desire for home grown success. Traditionally sporting a red front, Autosport used a green cover to celebrate British success, of either a driver or constructor. The increasing appearance of green covers during the latter part of the decade tells its own story.

The second publication is the recent English translation of long time Ferrari designer Mauro Forghieri's book on his old employer.⁴ In a very interesting piece, Forghieri relates how he travelled to England in 1962 for a short visit, in the company of other senior Ferrari men, in an effort to understand more about how the British teams were going about GP car design and construction and why Ferrari was falling behind. It was a remarkable turn of events within a short space of time. We hope that this small exhibition is able to relate some of the key characters and turning points in the story of the rise of British motor racing within that time.

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The 1950s saw the end of one period of motor racing and the beginning of another. Some of the great names among racing teams flowered and then died during the period, most notably Alfa Romeo and Maserati. The age of the great road races passed, only the Sicilian Targa Florio surviving into the following decade. New teams emerged and were based on a model quite different from that of the great continental car producing factories which could afford specialised racing departments. By the end of the decade small racing operations with engines produced by outside suppliers would be laying down the templates for modern racing.

It was not only British teams which rose to the top of the sport. British and Commonwealth drivers also took over from the continental stars. Whilst the first eight World Championships from 1950 onwards were won by Farina and Ascari (Italy), and by Fangio from Argentina, the next eight would go to Hawthorn(GB), Brabham (Australia), Phil Hill (USA), Graham Hill (GB), Jim Clark (GB) and John Surtees (GB). We should also mention the name of Stirling Moss at this stage, famously never a World Champion but acknowledged as the world's finest racing driver of the post Fangio period.

Moss was, surely, the best all round driver of the time, competing not only in GP racing, but excelling in Sportscar events, as well as rallying, F2, Production cars and even speed record events. In an age far removed from the specialist GP driver today with multi million pound contracts, drivers had to race as often as possible to earn a living. There were perhaps six to eight rounds of the World Championship each year, less than half of the current schedule, so a far greater emphasis was laid on other formulae. Sportscar racing was the most important of these, the great events of Le Mans, the Mille Miglia and Targa Florio carrying huge prestige for both car and driver. It is part of what makes this period so fascinating, drivers competing in different categories and being able to demonstrate their talents across a broad canvas of events. We have deliberately included both Sportscar racing and the GP events to give a much richer flavour of the period than had we confined it just to the latter category.

The title of this exhibition takes its name from the traditional national racing colours allotted to countries during the sport's formative years. Italy was red, Great Britain green, Germany white, which effectively became silver during the 1930s, France blue. Whilst national colours have largely passed into

disuse in this age of commercial sponsorship, it is interesting to note that the returning Mercedes team has adopted its traditional silver colour. One team, of course, has maintained its tradition from the period covered by this exhibition right through to the present day. Although the red of Ferrari in 2013 may be several shades lighter than it was in 1950, nonetheless the team represents the one unbroken thread from the earliest days of the World Championship, and indeed before that, to the present day. Although elements of the development of Ferrari as a hugely successful modern "corporate brand" are annoying, it is very difficult not to feel a mixture of respect and affection as the two red cars continue to take their place on the GP starting grids. Fifty years on from the last photographs in the exhibition here, in many ways GP racing has become the story of Ferrari against a succession of British based teams. If we celebrate the rise of the British teams here, it only serves to highlight the central role Ferrari has played in the sport's history and without which the story would be so much poorer.

We took the decision to mount this exhibition during the Christmas period last year. There were various reasons for this, but one of them was a recent acquisition by Jarrots of a number of prints by Geoff Goddard. Goddard was one of the best known racing photographers from the 1950s to the '70s. Much of his work is well known through various books and magazines and certainly a number of the pieces shown here will be recognised from his book *Track Pass*. In many ways this was the golden age of motor racing photography. Drivers raced in open faced helmets and were clearly visible at work in the cockpit. Without any of today's stage managed access to drivers and team personnel, it was possible to take informal, revealing shots. Of course, photographers were also a great deal closer to the action than would ever be possible today and this is clearly reflected in the immediacy of some of the photographs. Alongside Goddard's pieces, we are also pleased to be able to show works of a number of the sport's best known photographers, including Louis Klemantaski, Alan Smith, Lionel Clegg and, perhaps our personal favourite, Edward Eves.

For copyright reasons we are unable to reproduce all the photographs in the exhibition in this accompanying guide. It is therefore with an even greater sense of gratitude than normal that I wish to take this opportunity to thank Martin and Lizzie Jordan of Jarrots. Not only have they made available so many of their collection to the Gallery, they have

unhesitatingly supplied the negatives which are reproduced here. As ever Martin has coped with my own changes of mind, and truly eleventh hour decisions over what to include and what to leave out. The surprising thing is perhaps that he still professes to have fun working with us. Quite simply none of this could take place without him.

The same could be said of Jamie Wells who, in the spirit of so many great racing designers and mechanics, has taken on a multiplicity of roles, covering publicity, presentation, book layout, website development and, not least, moral support, all in an entirely voluntary capacity. You would have to ask him about his motivation, but the odd bottle of fine ale passed to him of late is surely not the whole explanation.

Two other people deserve a particular mention at this point. Poor Terry Mottram has, yet again, been forced to listen to some of my ramblings as I have tried to sort this story out in my head before committing it to print. It is a credit to his manners that he has never actually fallen asleep during this process. Finally my thanks to Yvonne who gets the opposite problem, lengthy periods of silence as I have sat trying to write these pages at home, the dining table constantly disappearing under a pile of books and magazines. Her patience and gentle encouragement have been of immense importance.

As ever, all errors and omissions are entirely of my own making. This guide is designed to be read in conjunction with a viewing of the exhibition, so I am consoled by the fact that this wonderful collection of photographs is more than capable of standing on its own. The commentaries here are really a reflection of my own desire to explore and share some of the stories behind the photographs a little further. For much fuller accounts I have included a short bibliography at the back of this guide.

Andrew Swift

May 2013.

Notes.

1. Rationing of fuel, foodstuffs and clothing continued for some time after 1945. Sugar rationing only ended in 1953. Fuel restrictions were gradually lifted, but were imposed again, temporarily, during the Suez crisis of 1956.
2. Macmillan's famous words were uttered at a Tory party rally in Bedford, July 1957.
3. I am very grateful to Adam Ferrington, current editor of the ERA newsletter for passing over a copy of his latest edition during a very brief recent visit to the Gallery. I was delighted to find that it included a reprint of the December 1938 ERA newsletter, when it ran under the title "Hearsay". My thanks to Adam for allowing me to quote from this.
4. My thanks to Ben Horton of Horton's Books for first bringing Forghieri's book to my attention. Ben showed me an Italian version of it at Silverstone last year, but kindly pointed out that an English translation was due out this year. He ensured that I received a copy of it just in time for me to note Forghieri's fact finding visit to the UK in 1962, which in itself neatly summarises just how much the situation had changed during the previous decade. See Mauro Forghieri and Daniele Buzzonetti, Forghieri on Ferrari, 1947 to the present. (2013).

Part 1: Red Supremacy. Grand Prix Racing 1950-1953

Surprisingly quickly after the war motor racing activities resumed. Races were soon taking place in some of the major French and Italian cities, more often than not on street circuits or parks, the course marked out by straw bales and spectators held in check by flimsy wooden barriers. The slightly impromptu feel to such events was neatly complemented by the assortment of cars and drivers competing in such events, a mixture of dusted off pre war racing cars of distinctly varying pedigree, from some of the most illustrious machines to any number of home brewed specials. Much the same could be said of the drivers, a number of veteran stars returning to the fold but with an increasing number of younger men keen to make their name.

At the top of the sport Grand Prix racing bore little resemblance to its modern counterpart. Any number of cities would stage races called Grands Prix, some undoubtedly more prestigious than others. There was no World Championship to provide a season long focus for competitor and follower alike, but that is not to say that there was any lack of interest. After the horrors of the war years the public was keen to move on and large crowds were a constant feature of the continental road races, helped no doubt by the running of so many races so close to the centres of population.

Of the pre war teams which were revived in the immediate post war period, Alfa Romeo was by far the greatest. The Milanese concern had made its name in the 1920s and 30s, its wonderful P2 Grand Prix cars, designed by Vittorio Jano, had earned the highest honours driven by Antonio Ascari and Giuseppe Campari. The great sports car classics of the Targa Florio, the Mille Miglia and Le Mans had all been conquered. By the early 1930s Tazio Nuvolari had become the most famous of all drivers, his rivalry with Achille Varzi remaining part of motor racing folklore to this day.

Alfa Romeo, challenged by Maserati and Bugatti, had represented the cutting edge of the sport until they were rendered virtually obsolete by the astonishing machines produced by Mercedes Benz and Auto Union from the mid-1930s onwards. Although Nuvolari put up a number of great fights, the game had moved on and when Alfa Romeo lost their star driver to Auto Union in 1938 it was time to

think again.

The Alfa 158 had its origins in this period, although there is some debate over exactly who laid down the original design and why. It was often assumed that the team had accepted that they could not compete with the German machinery and decided to spend their resources on a smaller engined car which would be eligible for the Voiturette formula, which formed the basis of the Italian national championship and was often run as a support event for the larger capacity GP cars. The reality was not quite so simple, as the team continued to develop and race full GP cars, including an unsuccessful attempt at a twelve cylinder rear engined car, whilst also developing the smaller one.

The one and a half litre, straight eight engine, was helped by a supercharger which resulted in an output of around 200 bhp when the car first appeared. The car was soon christened the "Alfetta", or "little Alfa", and it proved to be a very potent indeed, winning convincingly on its first outing against Maserati opposition in the Coppa Ciano Junior event at Livorno in August 1938. Although there were certainly some reliability issues, the car was steadily developed over the following winter and ran well in the limited number of races in 1939 held against the worsening political background.

The story of the Alfettas during the war years was typical of many of the racing cars from that era. As hostilities grew and Milan was subjected to heavy bombing from 1942 onwards, the cars were moved across a number of locations, apparently ultimately been given refuge by an Alfa Romeo owner with several properties around the Lake Orta area, just to the west of Lake Maggiore. It was a period of great confusion and divided loyalties across Italy during the next few years, as Mussolini's regime crumbled and allied forces, local partisan groups, communists and the Axis forces fought over the country. Old alliances could prove fatal. During the fascist period it was difficult for anyone running any enterprise to do so without the support of the regime. Ugo Gobbato, who had been appointed as Managing Director of Alfa Romeo with the direct approval of Il Duce himself, was assassinated by partisans in early 1945, despite a reputation for being genuinely concerned over the fate of his factory workers.

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It was against this background that, remarkably, within a few months of the ending of the war the first races were being held. The period from 1946 to 1950 is one of the less well known eras of motor sport history, but much of what happened during the early years of the World Championship which began in 1950 had its roots in this time. For 1947 the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile had decided that Formula One races would be run to a new engine formula, which gave manufacturers the option of running either 1.5 litre supercharged or 4.5 litre unsupercharged power units (a similar option was written into a later set of rules during the three litre formula period, which ultimately led to the "turbo era" of the 1980s).

The Alfettas, now equipped with a twin supercharger completely dominated this period. Drivers, Achille Varzi, returning to competition, Count Felice Trossi, Consalvo Sanesi, Nino Farina and, above all Jean Pierre Wimille between them won every race they entered from the latter part of 1946 until the end of 1948. No doubt they would have continued their streak during 1949, but tragedy struck the driving squad; Varzi was killed during practice for the Swiss GP in 1948 and then Wimille was killed in a F2 Simca Gordini whilst racing in Argentina in January 1949. Count Trossi died of cancer that spring.

1a.

British Grand Prix 1950, the start.

The Alfa team did not compete in 1949 for reasons which are not entirely clear. Although the death of the three drivers has often been given as the reason, it appears that the decision may have been taken earlier for financial reasons. Alfa, beneficiaries of funding from the Marshall Plan, were concentrating on production of their first mass produced model, the 1900 and this was a clear priority. The racing team was not entirely disbanded though and a number of improvements were made so that it was ready in 1950 with a fresh driver line up to take part in the first round of the newly instituted World Championship. Silverstone on May 11 th 1950 was clearly the place to be, as King George VI and Queen Elizabeth were welcomed to the airfield circuit and introduced to the drivers, whilst a crowd estimated at 150,000 which had queued to get in and would queue even longer to get out, were bought to patriotic fever pitch by an entertaining 500 cc race narrowly won by Wing

Commander Aikens driving an Iota from a promising young driver on a Cooper by the name of Stirling Moss, and then by a three lap demonstration run of the new hope of British Grand Prix racing, the BRM driven by its founder and leading pre war British driver Raymond Mays, (see chapter two).

The first race in the new World Championship was, in truth, an underwhelming affair after all the build up. The first appearance of the Alfettas caused much excitement, but opposition was limited. The new team in Grand Prix racing, Ferrari, failed to appear, start money disputes being the rumoured reason, and the assorted Maserati and Talbot-Lago cars from France were not deemed a serious threat.

Four Alfa Romeos started, all on the front row, the new works line up of the "Three Fs", the Italians Farina and Fagioli accompanied by the rising star from Argentina, Fangio, were joined in a one off guest appearance by British driver Reg Parnell. Behind them the highest placed British cars were the ERAs of Walker and Johnson in seventh and ninth places respectively.

From this unpromising position the situation got worse as both the leading ERA drivers hit problems shortly after the start, whilst the Alfa Romeos sped off into the distance. A tussle between the two leading cars of Farina and Fangio ensued, eventually being resolved in favour of the Italian when Fangio brought his car into the pits after three quarters of the race. Farina ran out an untroubled winner, ahead of Fagioli and Parnell.

Thus was the World Championship which came to dominate the sport born. The superiority of the Alfa team was such that it prompted highest place British driver Bob Gerard, who finished sixth, three laps down on Farina, to remark later that,

"we did not really race the Alfas, we just set off at the same time".

The three Alfa drivers were an interesting trio. Luigi Fagioli had made his name before the war, driving for both Maserati and the Ferrari entered Alfa Romeo teams, where his performances were good enough to attract an invitation to join the Mercedes Benz team. Expecting great things from this liaison, Fagioli was to end up disappointed. His relations within the team, both with manager Neubauer and

particularly lead driver Rudi Caracciola, were often tempestuous. On top of this he began to suffer from rheumatoid arthritis which got worse over the following seasons. By the time war came many thought that his active career was over, but he reappeared after it. Nonetheless, it was a surprise to many that he was selected for the 1950 team. His driving was less aggressive than it had been, but he did a steady job for the team over the next two seasons, often having to hand his own car over to either Farina or Fangio as theirs hit problems, but he seems to have played the team role well.

Sadly he died following an accident in the Monaco GP 1952, which was run for sports cars that year.

1b.
Italian GP, Monza, the Start,
photograph by Alan Smith

Seven years later and the story is very different. Three Vanwalls and one Ferrari lead off the grid at Monza. Tony Brooks wins for Vanwall.

How this change came about is essentially what this exhibition explores (for detail of this photograph please refer to number 57)

2.
Giuseppe Farina, Silverstone 1950,
photograph by Alan Smith

Winner of the Silverstone race was Dr. Giuseppe Farina. A somewhat remote figure, even his academic honours are unclear, different authors referring variously to his degree in Law, Political Science or Business Studies. Whatever the discipline, it seems clear that the young student's interests lay beyond the university library. Nephew of the founder of the famed bodywork creator, Pinin Farina, Nino, as he became known, grew up in a comfortable atmosphere and soon had access to powerful sports cars which he proceeded to race. There were a number of hill-climb incidents which carried on when he began his track career. He developed a reputation for ruthless driving and he appeared not to worry overly much if either he or others got hurt. Both Marcel Lehoux in 1936 and Laszlo Hartmann in 1938 suffered fatal

injuries after incidents involving Farina. He certainly gave no quarter.

The speed was there however, as was the style, his straight armed pose at the wheel epitomising the ideal of the relaxed driver at speed. He was probably getting towards his peak when war broke out, but he was still strong enough when racing resumed in 1946. Called up to drive for the returning Alfa squad, he won the prestigious Grand Prix des Nations event in Geneva, but had car troubles in other events. Always conscious of his place within a team, he was perhaps less than comfortable with the brilliance of his team mate Wimille and left Alfa at the end of the year to spend the next three seasons on a variety of Maseratis.

Recalled to the Alfa team for 1950, Farina seemed back to his best, although there was little to choose between him and Fangio. In the six races constituting the World Championship, Farina won the British, Swiss and Italian rounds, Fangio winning in Monaco, Belgium and France, but Farina's other placings gave him the first world driver's title and his place in the history books.

The following season Fangio clearly had the upper hand, and Farina finished behind his team mate and the Ferrari drivers in the championship. For 1952 and 1953 he was at Ferrari, taking the German GP in the latter year and finishing second and third in the championship.

Thereafter his career wound down. He was killed in a road accident driving to spectate at the French GP in 1966.

3.
Alfa Romeo team, Reims 1951

By 1951 the 158 had been renamed the 159 to take account of the various changes made since the previous season. As ever, a Grand Prix car is a constant work in progress, developments and improvements constantly being applied both during the racing season and over the winter period. This can often make life difficult for historians to pinpoint exactly which car is at what stage of its development at any particular point. A part will often be tried on one car first, then, if successful, be applied to its stable mates.

3. Alfa Romeo, Reims 1951



For a car which started life almost fifteen years earlier these comments are particularly true. The cars are now slightly wider than they had been, accommodating larger fuel tanks. Thirst was a major problem for the team, the Alfetta's supercharged engine allowing for fuel consumption of around 1.5 mpg. They are certainly more powerful, the 159 by now developing close to 400 bhp. Suspension, brakes and the chassis had all been substantially modified. The fins behind the front wheels were a recent addition, Farina and Fangio having had great difficulties driving at Silverstone in the International Trophy race a month earlier. Each driver had won a heat, but a torrential downpour in the final had seen the race abandoned after six laps, by which time Reg Parnell was well ahead on the Thinwall Special and the Alfa drivers were languishing in mid field. The fins appear to have worked, at the next race, the Swiss GP it was again very wet, but this time Fangio had won convincingly. Confusingly they seem to have been on and off the cars for the remainder of the season, wet or dry.

There is an elegiac quality to the photograph. Working on the first car a mechanic appears to be applying the markings to the nose which helped identify which car was which as they sped past the pits. The covers over the cockpit and rear of the car are probably in place to protect them from the heat, which, despite the formal clothing seen in the pitlane, was so often a feature of the GP at Reims. Ahead of the cars lies a three hour battle in which the winner would cover over three hundred and seventy miles, twice the distance of a modern GP.

The race itself became one of attrition. The mounting threat of the Ferraris exacted its price, Ascari leading for nine laps before retiring, but the Alfettas were being pushed to the limits of their development. Fangio took the lead but had to pit with a failed magneto. He then took over Fagioli's car. Ascari, now in the Ferrari started by Gonzalez, retook the lead, only to retire for a second time with failing brakes. Farina had trouble, but managed to finish. Fangio took the win, but the days of unquestioned supremacy were drawing to an end.

Since 1946 Alfa Romeo had been on top, but the Reims race in 1951 was to mark the end of their unbroken record. They had not won the non-championship International Trophy race at Silverstone, but technically that race had been cancelled, so does not count in the record books. Their next race was to be back at Silverstone for the British GP, a race which certainly would enter the record books.

4.

Ferrari preparations, Silverstone 1951 photograph by Alan Smith

As we have seen Ferrari missed the opening round of the World Championship in 1950, either due to more work being needed on the cars or financial issues between the team and the race organizers. Both reasons would feature more than once in the history of the Scuderia.

Whilst Alfa Romeo had developed its 158 to the 1.5 litre supercharged formula, Ferrari had taken the alternative route and built a 4.5 litre, 12 cylinder normally aspirated engine. Whilst Alfa had dominated the previous season, Ferrari had been consistently improving the cars. The latest twin plug per cylinder engine, designed by Aurelio Lampredi, was producing around 350bhp, a little less than the Alfa, but the Ferrari was slightly less thirsty than its supercharged rival, reducing the time spent refuelling during the race.

From a modern vantage point it is easy to overlook the fact that at this time Ferrari was very much the new name on the GP scene. Enzo Ferrari had long been linked with Alfa Romeo, as a driver during the 1920s and then effectively running their racing team, although under his own banner. The famous Cavallino Rampante shield had first appeared on the flanks of an Alfa Romeo in 1932.

The intertwining of the Ferrari and Alfa Romeo stories gets ever more difficult to decipher when considering the genesis of both the Alfa 158 and the earliest Ferrari GP car, the 125. Ferrari himself may well have had a hand in instigating the 1.5 litre Alfa, seeing an opportunity for his team outside the full Grand Prix formula of the time. Credit for the Alfa's original design has gone to both Vittorio Jano and, perhaps with greater justification, to Gioacchino Colombo. What is fairly clear is that it was Colombo who designed Ferrari's first engine and interestingly the earliest Ferrari GP cars of 1949 were running 1.5 litre supercharged engines, albeit with the trademark Ferrari v12 layout rather than Alfa's straight eight.

The photograph here, showing the three Ferrari 375 cars in the paddock being prepared is in a sense the mirror image of that of the Alfa Romeo team at Reims, the previous race. Whereas that race was to mark the last victory for Alfa of an unbeaten run

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stretching back to 1946, Silverstone 1951 was to mark the first triumph in what was to become an extraordinary story for Ferrari stretching into the present day.

Seen here are the cars of Alberto Ascari, number 11, Luigi Villorelli, number 10 and the older, single plug per cylinder version, number 12 for Jose Froilan Gonzalez. It was this car which was to end Alfa Romeo's long reign.

5.

Juan Manuel Fangio, Silverstone 1951, photograph by Geoff Goddard.

Although honours had been evenly split between Farina and Fangio, the former had become the inaugural World Champion on the basis of better results in the races he had not won, whereas Fangio suffered non finishes at both Silverstone and Monza. There was little doubt that Fangio in 1950 was at least the equal of Farina, with many rating him higher. From 1951 onwards Fangio was to prove such comments completely justified.

The Argentinian had first come to Europe in 1948, sponsored by his own government who were keen to develop a racing programme. Driving Maserati and Gordini cars in the various European races for the next two seasons, Fangio's pace and tactical awareness were soon being recognised. Nearing forty, he was a veteran of the long distance races across South America which were truly formidable, involving hazardous journeys often at altitude in the Andes, where mechanical knowledge, stamina and outright speed all played their part.

He was to put this mixture of skills to great use over the next few seasons in Europe. He took his first world championship race win at Monaco in 1950 and it was a typical Fangio performance. Whilst half the field eliminated itself in first lap pile up, Fangio, in the lead and unaware of the carnage behind him, came round the lap and was about to come across the wreckage when something made him brake. Asked later what had allowed him to keep out of trouble, it emerged that the evening before he had been looking at a photo of the 1936 race in which a very similar incident occurred. As Fangio had approached the

blocked part of the track his subconscious had registered the fact that the spectators were facing away from him and towards the accident, and in that split second he had slowed down enough to be able to thread his way through the wreckage. This ability to set a fast pace whilst steering clear of trouble was to be a hallmark of his GP career.

During the 1951 season he took the Swiss, French and Spanish GPs and finished second at Silverstone, seen here. It was enough to secure his first world championship although it had been a close run thing as the competition from Ferrari made life increasingly more difficult for the Alfa Romeo team.

It had become clear that the Alfa 158/159 had reached the end of its effective development. It had been an extraordinary success, the basic design laid down in the mid 1930s proving strong enough to allow for considerable evolutionary gains to be achieved. However the end was in sight by 1951 and the directors of Alfa decided against continuing with a racing programme which would inevitably have necessitated a costly new design. The team withdrew from GP racing and would not return until 1979. It would never again achieve the level of success it had enjoyed with the Alfetta.

6.

Jose Froilan Gonzalez, Ferrari, Silverstone 1951, photograph by Alan Smith.

Whilst Alberto Ascari and Luigi Villorelli were the core of the Ferrari driving team, Jose Froilan Gonzalez had only recently been drafted into the team to replace Piero Taruffi who had fallen ill before the Reims GP. The burly Argentinian had made a name for himself during the winter racing series in his homeland and had followed Fangio to Europe in 1950 when he had raced both a Maserati and Talbot Lago in Grands Prix. He left a strong impression and seized his opportunity to drive for a leading team when it arose. His first drive for Ferrari had been impressive, running strongly in second place when he handed his car over to team leader Ascari. The pair were jointly credited with second place behind Fangio (who in turn shared his win with Fagioli).

At Silverstone throughout the weekend Gonzalez was in top form. Spectators were enthralled at the way he seemed to hurl his car into the corners,

7. Ascari, Silverstone 1953



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the very visible physical effort being in direct contrast to the smoother style of a Farina or Ascari. Despite running the older of the two engine types being used by the team, it was Gonzalez who took pole position, a second clear of Fangio's Alfa, the first time Alfa had been beaten in qualifying in a world championship round.

At the start it was the Alfa of Felice Bonetto who grabbed the lead from the second row, but by the end of the first lap Gonzalez was in front and gradually he and Fangio began to draw away. A huge battle between the two ensued, interrupted by the refuelling stops. By this stage Ascari had already retired his car with gearbox troubles, so Gonzalez offered up his car. Most unusually Ascari pointed his team mate back into the cockpit and Gonzalez rejoined the race.

By the end he was almost a minute clear of Fangio who was later full of praise for his friend and compatriot. It had been a magnificent victory and a major turning point in the history of Grand Prix racing. Whilst Fangio publicly congratulated Gonzalez, no account of the day would be complete without mention of Enzo Ferrari's reaction. As with so many Ferrari related stories, exactly where truth ends and fiction begins is questionable, but let us say that "as legend has it" Ferrari sent a telegram to his old employers in Milan, telling Alfa Romeo that he felt like a son who had murdered his mother and that his pleasure at his victory was mixed with his pain at their loss. The sense of theatre, ever present in Maranello, was perhaps justified on July 14th 1951.

7.

Alberto Ascari, Ferrari, Silverstone 1952, photograph by Tom March

The withdrawal of Alfa Romeo from Grand Prix racing at the end of 1951 caused a major problem for the sport's authorities. Other than Ferrari, who had a truly competitive GP car? Maserati and Talbot Lago, stalwarts of the post war years, had been unable to develop their cars to the required level. The British hope, BRM was still not race ready (see Part Two), so only Ferrari was left with a race winning proposition.

The solution was found by changing the

regulations so that for two seasons, 1952-53 the world championship series was run for Formula Two cars, with a maximum engine size of two litres. Confusingly, Formula One cars were still raced, but in non- championship events.

The net result of the change was perhaps not so different from what might have happened had the regulations been left the same, for Ferrari was to enjoy a dominant two seasons with its Formula Two 500 model. Maserati offered a threat, particularly with Fangio and Gonzalez signed up, but Fangio missed almost the whole of the 1952 season after a serious accident in which he broke his neck at an early season race at Monza. The way was clear for Ferrari and they certainly took their opportunity. The British Grand Prix win seen here was his third consecutive win of the season. He then won the next and final three races of the year to give him a very comfortable world title. The winning streak continued for the first three races of the following year, giving him a still unmatched record of nine consecutive GP wins.

The F2 cars were far less spectacular than the bigger F1 cars. Aurelio Lampredi's design for the Ferrari was based around a straight four cylinder layout, developing around 170 bhp, certainly respectable, but less than half of what drivers and spectators had become used to. Nonetheless, the pretty little Ferrari was by far the most successful racing car of the period and, statistically at least, of any period. Apart from the two Indianapolis 500 races, which at the time constituted rounds of the world championship although they were almost exclusively the province of the American " roadsters" built specifically for oval racing, (interestingly Ferrari did send a development of the 4.5 litre car there for Ascari in 1952. Both car and driver, although unsuccessful in the race, caused favourable impressions), the Ferrari 500 won every round of the world championship over two seasons apart from the very last race at Monza 1953, won by Fangio for Maserati. In addition to Ascari's victories, the Ferrari gave a win each to Taruffi, (Swiss GP 1952), Hawthorn, (French GP '53), and Farina, (German GP '53).

8. Alberto Ascari



8.

Alberto Ascari, Silverstone 1953, photograph by Lionel Clegg.

Alberto Ascari seen at the height of his career, mid way through his second season of GP dominance. His father Antonio had been perhaps the finest driver of the vintage era during the 1920s, leading the first of the great Alfa Romeo teams, which had also briefly numbered Enzo Ferrari in its ranks. Ascari Senior had been killed during the 1926 French GP at Montlhéry by which time Alberto was seven years old.

It is no surprise given this history that Alberto should have joined forces with Ferrari during the early stages of the latter's career as a constructor. Always fast, some would say even faster than Fangio, Ascari was very difficult to beat once he had got out in front of the field. To this day Ascari on his Ferrari remains one of the defining images of the early years of the World Championship.

An intensely superstitious man, he was known to have made lengthy detours around his native city of Milan in order to avoid crossing a black cat he had seen in a street. Adored by the Italian racing fans, he was strangely aloof with his own family. Questioned about this one day by Ferrari, he replied simply that he knew that one day he may not return from a race and was merely preparing them for such an eventuality.

That day was to come in 1955.

Autosport, September 18, 1953

Race report of the final race of the GP season, won by Fangio's Maserati, Ferrari's only loss during the two seasons of the two litre championship. Here the Ferraris of Ascari and Farina narrowly lead the Maseratis of Onofre Marimon, and Fangio. Marimon, yet another talented driver from Argentina, suffered suspension problems and pitted for work, but was able to rejoin the race, mixing in with the three battling leaders. For the whole race Farina kept Ascari under pressure, both exchanging spells in the lead with Fangio. As the final lap started the three were less than a second apart, with Marimon although lapped keeping with them. At almost this very spot on the final lap, Ascari spun, Farina took evasive action, Marimon was unable to avoid hitting Ascari and Fangio, as ever, avoided the melee to take a deserved victory.

Interestingly the editorial column is devoted to the news that Ferrari may be forced to withdraw from GP racing unless it can secure extra funding. Ferrari had indeed announced that this was the case and this, in part, was the reason for the defection of Ascari and team mate Villoresi, to Lancia for 1954.

In a question which resonates today, Autosport asks, "Is the whole position an admission that modern Grand Prix racing is impossible without financial support from the governments of the countries concerned?"

It would not be the last time that either Scuderia Ferrari would announce its withdrawal from the sport nor that the question of governmental support would be raised. Perhaps Mr. Ecclestone has not changed the sport so much after all.

Autosport, September 26, 1952.

The cover shows the first three World Champions, from left to right, Alberto Ascari, Juan Fangio and Nino Farina.

Part 2: Green Shoots ?

British Racing efforts 1950-1953

Whilst first Alfa Romeo and then Ferrari were dominating the Grand Prix scene, what was happening among the British teams? It is tempting to answer that by saying not a great deal, but actually that would be unjust, although a look through the record books will reveal very little in the way of results. However it was during these early years of the decade that many of the seeds were sown which would yield such success by the end of the period.

In the Sportscar racing arena there was a very different story forming, one in which a remarkable British manufacturer would lead the way and show that it was possible to take on, and beat, the leading continental contenders on the racetrack. Whilst Bentley had enjoyed their strong run of success during the 1920 s, since 1930 the classic Le Mans sportscar race had seen only one further British win, the 1935 Lagonda victory, Alfa Romeo and Bugatti taking six wins between them. Ferrari had achieved the first of its eventual nine wins when the event resumed in 1949.

Let us take the Grand Prix story first before turning to the Sportscars section.

9.

Raymond Mays.

It is difficult to know how else to start the story of the early British World Championship efforts without bringing Raymond Mays very quickly into it. Already a leading figure in motor racing circles before the war, Mays, from a Lincolnshire family which had made its money over several generations in the wool trade, had been the driving force behind the creation of ERA, (English Racing Automobiles), the single seater racing cars which had been successful in the 1.5 litre Voiturette class of racing, effectively the Formula Two class of its day whilst the much larger Mercedes Benz and Auto Union creations were dominating pre war GP racing. Mays combined the dual roles of car builder and driver to a very high level indeed, competing with distinction both domestically and on the continent, taking the prestigious Eifelrennen race for Voiturette cars at the Nurburgring in 1935.

Whilst he had sold his interest in ERA before

the war, the dream of creating a national racing team to compete at Grand Prix level remained and plans were being laid as early as 1944 for a partnership between a number of engineering and related companies to contribute their specialised knowledge and components to a new project, British Racing Motors. The BRM was to be the most advanced, most powerful and presumably most successful GP car according to all the publicity generated ahead of its launch. Sadly the reality was to prove rather different.

If ever the drawbacks of working by committee needed illustrating the BRM saga would be an instructive one. A complex design for the car itself was reflected in a complex chain of supply with a multitude of outside companies involved. A one and a half litre, sixteen cylinder supercharged engine producing in excess of 400 bhp was an ambitious undertaking from the start. To attempt to produce such a car without full and modern manufacturing facilities was a step too far. When a visiting Alfred Neubauer, Mercedes racing team manager, came to Bourne and saw the drawing office in the buildings behind the Mays residence he was very complimentary about the standard of the design drawings, but could not understand how the car and team could be run without a proper production process in situ. The BRM cars were to be assembled in the same buildings which Mays had used for the ERA enterprise, essentially sheds and old mill buildings which had originally been used for the traditional family wool business. It was all far removed from the German and Italian factories.

The racing career of the BRM v16 was continually delayed as Mays and chief designer, Peter Berthon, insisted that more development work was necessary before the car actually raced. Its first public appearance was at the British Grand Prix in 1950, the opening round of the World Championship won by Farina's Alfa Romeo. The car was demonstrated, Mays at the helm, during a brief three lap demonstration during the lunch interval, whilst it was left to an assortment of ageing ERAs to face the might of Alfa on the race startline.

After considerable build up in the national press, the BRM made its debut later in the year at the non championship International Trophy race, also at

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Silverstone. The Daily Express, sponsor of the event, had helpfully produced a booklet entitled "BRM. Ambassador for Britain, the story of Britain's Greatest Racing Car." There had been much discussion over who would drive the car, Mays himself, Reg Parnell and Peter Whitehead being the favourites for this auspicious occasion. However it was Frenchman Raymond Sommer who eventually had the dubious distinction. The story of the car's debut bears retelling. The transporter arrived late and then there were endless problems with the fuel pump gears. The engine then failed and a new one had to be flown in from Bourne. After an all night session for the mechanics fitting it, Sommer completed three slow practice laps on the morning of the race and was allowed to take the start. Finally the great adventure could begin, after five years of organising, designing, constructing and developing, the car would start a motor race, in front of a home crowd which had waited so long for this moment.

The September edition of Motor Sport 1950 records the event thus,

"The great crowd, which had shown appreciation that the BRM was present, waited in awe as Sommer ... took his place on the grid. The flag fell, the roar of the v16 engine rose to a war cry, the clutch came in - and all the British Racing Motor did was to shudder."

The transmission had failed. Whilst Farina and Fangio staged a duel at the front to keep the crowd amused, Whitehead's privately entered Ferrari finished third a minute down with T.C. Harrison's 1937 ERA just behind him, the BRM was quietly loaded back onto the transporter to make the journey back to base.

It would be flattering to write that after such initial disappointment things improved greatly. A couple of domestic victories at Goodwood in short races with Parnell now driving, provided encouragement, but the team's debut at a full GP in Spain at the end of the year was probably more indicative. Parnell was out after two laps, team mate Peter Walker lasted longer but retired and had been a long way off the pace set by the leading Ferrari and Alfa drivers.

It got no better really, despite the efforts of Reg Parnell (see below) and the other drivers. In 1951 the car only competed in the British GP where Parnell took fifth place, the car's best result securing its single point in the World Championship. At the end of the

season, faced with Alfa Romeo's withdrawal the sport's organisers decided that for the next two years the World Championship would be run to Formula Two regulations. At a stroke the BRM was no longer eligible for the series it had been designed and built for. In many ways BRM had been the architect of its own downfall. The team's repeated failure to enter the car in full scale GPs and its poor showings when it did, meant that only Ferrari had a serious contender for the 1952 season, so the authorities had little choice but to make their decision.

For the next three seasons the v16 was to compete largely on the domestic scene, in short, but often spectacular Formula Libre races. An assortment of first rate drivers raced the car, Fangio, Gonzalez and Moss included. Moss had been invited to test the car, but found both team and machine woefully lacking, describing it as "without doubt the worst car I ever drove". It is perhaps being overly critical to highlight the one time Moss did actually race the car, at Dundrod in 1953 where he joined Fangio. Both were to retire from the race, both having stalled their recalcitrant mounts at the start due to clutch problems, but the race did provide the spectacle of the two v16 s travelling nose to nose at the back of the field after Fangio had spun at the hairpin and continued to travel backwards with Moss facing him! It is a cruel, but perhaps apt image of Britain's first great GP contender.

10.

Reg Parnell, BRM, Silverstone, photograph by Geoff Goddard

There are many extraordinary characters featured in this exhibition, men whose vision, determination and perseverance helped establish Britain as the pre-eminent country in post war motor sport. Among them Reg Parnell occupies a unique place for he contributed to the story on a number of different levels. Various a driver, a trader of racing cars, a builder of racing cars, a manager of racing teams and a talent scout for promising new drivers, we must not overlook the "day job", that of a Derbyshire pig farmer. Surely few others can boast such a varied curriculum vitae.

In many ways Reg Parnell, along with Raymond Mays and Rob Walker, provides the link between the pre and post war years. Parnell had competed at Brooklands, with some success but also with much controversy. Somewhat wild in his earlier

races, in 1937 he was involved in a very nasty accident with another competitor. His modified MG Magnette slid on the banking and collided with the smaller Austin driven by the popular and successful Kay Petre, one of a number of talented pre-war female racing drivers. Petre's car was turned over in the accident and she suffered serious injuries, from which she

eventually made a good recovery. Parnell was blamed for the crash, unfairly in the eyes of some who felt that this was a case of the Brooklands "right crowd" turning against one of the outsiders. Many, including Kay Petre herself, saw this incident very much as a racing accident and not particularly the fault of one driver.

Whatever the merits of the case, the result was that Parnell had his racing licence revoked by the RAC Sporting Committee and despite regular appeals he did not get it back until 1939. It can hardly be said that the whole affair dampened his enthusiasm for the sport. He was soon back and was working on building his own Grand Prix car, the Challenger, when war broke out. Running a transport business during the war, Reg also bought up a number of racing cars which he stored with an eye to trading them on when the war was over. Very shortly after the war his trading had reached a level where he was negotiating to buy one of the 1.5 litre Mercedes cars which had appeared briefly in 1939, but this plan was eventually scuppered by the US authorities, wary of a German racing car appearing so soon after the ending of hostilities. Interestingly Parnell had argued that not only would the car be raced, but it would also prove a valuable engineering and design tool for British racing teams.

He was very quickly involved in racing again as soon as the war was over, and he raced a wide variety of cars from ERAs to Maseratis over the next few years, both in domestic events and on the continent. Alf Francis, who would later work closely with Stirling Moss as his mechanic, recalls watching Parnell in 1948 when spectating at the British Empire Trophy race on the Isle of Man and described him as "the Stirling Moss of his day", a reference to both Reg's versatility across different types of car and his determination behind the wheel. He became the leading British driver of the period, a fact recognised by Alfa Romeo, which honoured him by offering him a guest drive of their fourth car for the British GP in 1950. Instructed to follow the regular works drivers, Farina, Fangio and Fagioli, Parnell obeyed orders, actually taking third spot after Fangio retired.

It was to prove the best result Parnell had in a full Grand Prix, perhaps unsurprisingly as the next phase of his driving career was associated with the BRM project. We have noted some of the BRM's story already, but the Parnell photograph here is of his appearance at the 1951 British GP. Despite all the false starts of the 1950 season, there was still hope that 1951 would bring success. There was, however, also a growing sense that the BRM project was simply not going to work. As the drivers were introduced to various dignitaries before the start of the race, Earl Howe, a distinguished pre war driver and Le Mans winner, said to Parnell in a phrase which sounds as if it belonged more to a doomed polar exploration than a pre-Grand Prix meeting, "We're all with you, whatever happens."

It is doubtful that Howe's words were of much comfort to Parnell as he endured a very painful race. The build up of heat in the cockpit was such that he suffered burns to both his legs and arms, but he carried on bravely and ended up in fifth position. It was a typically tough performance, the result owing more to Parnell's determination than to the car's strengths. Motor Sport kept things in perspective, placing BRM as being "now on the fringes of the motor racing map." Such a judgement is more than supported by the raw data from the race, Parnell's average speed of 90.5 mph was very similar to his speed on the Alfa the previous year. Unfortunately by 1951 things had moved on, Gonzalez' Ferrari winning at an average of over 96 mph, with Farina setting a new lap record at 99.9 mph. There was some relief that the BRM had made it to the finish, but even Mays admitted concerns over its lack of outright pace.

As the BRM project foundered, so Parnell's driving career suffered, and he never really got the chance to compete at GP level for a leading team. Although he continued to be a competitor on the domestic single seater scene, his skills were gradually transferred to the Aston Martin sportscar effort, first as driver, then as team manager in which capacity he was to play a leading role in the success they had in the latter part of the decade.

Following the scaling down of the Aston Martin effort after 1959 Parnell remained in management, but also became something of a talent spotter, being instrumental in the early stages of a number of drivers' careers, including those of Chris Amon, Peter Revson and Mike Hailwood. Most notably he helped John Surtees establish himself on

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four wheels and ran the works Lola team which showed such potential with Surtees in 1962.

Parnell died of peritonitis in 1964, at which stage he was, once again, working on building his own GP car. His biographer, Graham Gauld, summed up his career thus,

"Perhaps history will finally judge Reg Parnell as one of the world's great drivers who was disadvantaged by the fact that he was British when it was Italian teams that dominated the scene and when British motor racing at Grand Prix level was in poor shape..."

In his own way he helped push British standards higher, both through his driving and his managerial efforts. His own professional attitude was, sadly, rather at odds with the management at BRM, of whom Motor Sport wrote in November 1951 that,

"The whole trouble is the people behind the car. Let's be honest. They know little of real racing and seem reluctant to get hold of someone who does."

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that Mays and Berthon could have done a lot worse than put the man behind the wheel here in charge of the project.

11.

Peter Collins and Tony Vandervell, Thinwall Special, Aintree 1954, photograph by Louis Klemantaski

We have included this photograph here, which is from the slightly later period, quite deliberately in order to introduce Tony Vandervell into the story. He can be seen here from the back, wearing the dark overcoat and leaning in towards the young Peter Collins sat in the Thinwall's cockpit.

A clue to Vandervell's character may be found in the story at the beginning of his business fortune. Spotting a business opportunity to market a particular type of bearing then manufactured in the USA and not available in Europe, the young Vandervell flew to New York and sought a meeting with the manufacturer. Unable to get a meeting with the boss, Vandervell essentially installed himself in the secretary's office and waited. And waited. Eventually after a week's makeshift encampment he got his

audience and left with an agreement which gave him the exclusive right to manufacture and market the "thin wall" bearings in the UK and Europe. Entrepreneurial flair, determination, stubbornness, all were to become hallmarks of the Vandervell approach to motor racing.

The bearing franchise turned out to be highly lucrative, Vandervell's factory in Acton finding widespread applications for its components throughout industry and into a number of Ministry of Defence projects. Given his contacts and growing status within the engineering world, it is not surprising that he was invited to join the original consortium which was set up around the BRM project. It is equally unsurprising that Vandervell would lose patience with the endless prevarications and unwieldy decision making process at BRM and would go his own way.

The Thinwall Special in the photograph can be seen to bear a very strong resemblance to the 1951 Ferrari models seen earlier in the exhibition. The similarity is so striking because underneath its skin the Thinwall had started life as a Ferrari. Vandervell had become a supplier to Maranello and, in return, negotiated the sale of an ex-works 4.5 litre Ferrari which was to become, in effect Vandervell's mobile test bed. I am unaware that any such publication exists, but the collected correspondence of Tony Vandervell and Enzo Ferrari throughout much of this decade would prove fascinating. As Vandervell's team raced and developed the cars, so there followed an endless stream of letters between Acton and Maranello, any problem with the engine or chassis being taken up by the former who would subject a failing part to exhaustive tests in an attempt to get to the root cause of the problem. Ferrari, typically, would insist that the fault could not possibly lie in his own factory and its standard of preparation, but Vandervell was not a man to be fobbed off so easily. As replacement engines and updated chassis were promised and then had to be chased up, Vandervell would become increasingly frustrated, but Ferrari would recognise when he had met his match, and he needed Vandervell's bearings for his own engines. Underneath the mutual criticism one can sense a degree of respect growing between the two, both of them sharing a number of characteristics essential to the running of factories and racing teams. Neither could be described as natural committee men, although both attracted teams of talented individuals around them, but in both cases it was always very clear who was ultimately in charge.

The Thinwall Specials ran alongside the BRM v16s in the Formula Libre events of the early 50s, whilst Grand Prix racing was limited to the smaller engined two litre F2 category. As with BRM, a variety of drivers were employed, including Gonzalez, Farina and Taruffi, Parnell, Hawthorn and, seen here, Peter Collins. To give an idea of what was being missed due to the shortage of Formula One cars, it is interesting to note that at the Silverstone Grand Prix meeting in 1953 Ascari's Ferrari and Gonzalez' Maserati shared the fastest lap during the GP at 1.50.0 (95.8mph). During the Formula Libre race which supported the GP, winner Farina on the Thinwall lapped in 1.45.2 to record the first 100mph lap en route to beating Fangio on the v16 BRM.

The battles between BRM and the Thinwalls came to be seen in certain sections of the press as the playthings for millionaire industrialists Vandervell and Alfred Owen, who had taken control of BRM in 1953, but the reality was that for both groups there was a more serious purpose at stake. The Owen Group's persistence would eventually pay off when Graham Hill took the World Championship for BRM in 1962. For Vandervell, the experience of racing the Thinwalls would be directly incorporated into the Vanwall team which grew out of these years and to which we will return in Parts Four and Five below.

Peter Collins by 1954 was one of the new post war generation of drivers who were by now taking their place at the top of the sport. A year or two behind Hawthorn and Moss in this respect, he had established a strong reputation for himself, coming through the 500 cc single seater ranks with distinction and already playing a leading role in the Aston Martin Sportscar team. Here at Aintree he led both his heat and the final, but had problems with a misfire possibly caused by the rain getting into the car's electrics. By now the Thinwall was reaching the end of its racing life and Vandervell was planning his own car. He also had his eyes on signing Collins as one of the drivers for the new Vanwall and the performance at Aintree suggested that this would be a sensible decision.

12.

Stirling Moss, HWM, Goodwood, photograph by Don Coles.

The initials HWM stood for Hersham and Walton Motors, the Walton-on-Thames garage run by

two businessmen and racing enthusiasts, John Heath and George Abecassis. With only limited facilities, the two oversaw the production of a series of both single seater and sports racing cars during the late 1940s and into the mid 50s. The little team deserves a special mention as part of this story as they were really the only works team which competed regularly on the continent against the larger Italian and French concerns of the day.

Abecassis had enjoyed a successful racing career in the immediate pre-war years and had served as an RAF bomber pilot during the war, eventually being shot down in 1944 and spending the final year as a prisoner in Germany. Immediately after the war he joined forces with engineer, designer and garage owner Heath and developed the business whilst resuming racing, driving an assortment of cars including a Bugatti and an ERA. As the team began to develop he continued to race, but gradually gave way to a new generation of drivers.

It was in the Formula Two, four cylinder, two litre Alta engined HWM seen here that a twenty year old Stirling Moss had his first taste of the European motor racing troubadour existence, spending the 1950 and '51 seasons with the team and finding that he quickly acquired a taste for the travelling from country to country and the European racing scene which had an entirely different feel to post war British racing, the latter being dominated by rather short races on disused aerodromes whilst the former, in the driver's words, saw them

"racing over two hundred miles or more, between tall kerbs, trees, walls, houses and people, with yellow straw bales or pole- and- sandbag barriers leaving no margin for error. It taught precise driving...." (My cars, my career, p36)

The HWM period also brought Stirling into contact with a hugely resourceful mechanic, a refugee from Poland during the war, Alphonse Kowaleski, better known later on in racing circles as Alf Francis. It was Francis who acted variously as mechanic, engineer, team manager and transporter driver and his biography "Racing Mechanic" (1966) remains a vivid account of what life on the road in those days was like. Francis and Moss would later work together in Rob Walker's team.

Moss scored his first major success driving the Jaguar XK120 in the wet 1950 TT event, but it was his performances on the F2 HWM which brought him

12. Moss, HWM



to the attention of the leading European teams. Although reliability was often lacking, Moss and team mate Lance Macklin both gave very good accounts of themselves against Ferrari, Maserati and Alfa Romeo opposition. Indeed, so notable were they that the team was invited to take part in the Swiss GP at Berne in 1951, running the F2 cars in the full world championship GP. Moss' debut proved to be an uncomfortable one. As if pouring rain and the cobblestone surface were not enough to contend with, the windscreen broke early on and he took quite a battering but ran well until he ran out of fuel near the end, whilst future team mate, rival and friend Juan Fangio was a convincing winner for Alfa Romeo.

Whilst reliability was an issue for the team, generally drivers and commentators have always spoken warmly of the HWM operation. Its willingness to commit to competition despite its limited resources, the adaptability of Francis and his meagre crew and the generally well presented appearance of the cars all drew praise. Looking back now it is hard not to recognise the complete contrast with the contemporary BRM efforts.

The team folded after the death of John Heath in an accident whilst competing in the 1956 Mille Miglia on one of his own sportscars, although Abecassis continued to run the garage, the fun of motor racing had gone for him with the death of his friend Heath. To this day HWM garage is still on the same site and selling Aston Martins and Alfa Romeos which seems singularly appropriate.

13.

Mike Hawthorn, Cooper Bristol,
Goodwood 1952,
photograph by Geoff Goddard.

As with HWM, Cooper was essentially a garage business which went into racing car production, somewhat by accident, but it was to become one of the most significant names in global motor racing in a little over a decade from its first racing car. Another example of the triumph of the practical over the theoretical, John Cooper, son of garage proprietor Charles, began by laying out the front end of a crashed Fiat Topolino on the garage repair shop floor. After due deliberation he realised that a second Fiat front end might be reworked to create the basis for a new rear end of a lightweight

single seater. Some chalk-marks on the floor later the beginnings of the Cooper 500 began to emerge!

Cooper very quickly tapped into a niche, but growing, market for small, simple to run, racing cars after the war. A number of ex- servicemen seeking a level of excitement, together with some talented and not so talented youngsters were willing and able to race on the airfield circuits that soon began to spring up. With petrol rationing still in force during 1946-47, the ability of the little 500 cc Jap engine favoured by Cooper to run on alcohol based fuels was a distinct advantage. Soon the tiny rear engined Coopers were racing against similarly laid out Kiefts and British post war racing was up and running. It provided the perfect first rung of the racing ladder for a number of drivers, one S. Moss becoming an early star of this 500 cc class, followed a year or two later on by Peter Collins.

In his encyclopaedic work on Cooper, motor racing historian Doug Nye offers a flavour of how the early Coopers were designed and built. In the loosest sense of the word, design was by committee, but this was not of the formal BRM variety. Pete Bedding who had the task of building the cars is quoted by Nye thus,

"We would outline a new shape in strip and The Old Man and John would look at it and pull it about, then we'd talk with The Beard and between us we'd sort something which suited all requirements..."

The Beard refers to the free thinking, jazz playing designer Owen Maddock, who was to remain at Cooper until the mid-60s, achieving the highest levels of success with them. Interestingly it was Maddock who essentially laid down the chassis design of Vandervell's first car, the Vanwall Special in 1954.

With the changing regulations for GP racing at the end of 1951, Cooper realised that the demand for Formula Two cars would grow. Whilst the rear engined layout had suited the F3 500cc cars, it was decided to revert to a traditional front engined layout for the 2 litre F2 cars and Maddock and co duly set to work. The engine was to be supplied from the Bristol company who already had a six cylinder engine up and running. It was in fact based on a BMW engine, the drawings for which had been handed over to Bristol as part of the war reparations package.

It is this F2 Cooper Bristol which is seen here in the hands of the other great driving talent to emerge from Britain during this period, Mike Hawthorn. Ironically unlike Moss, he had not come up via the F3

500cc class, but instead had been making a name for himself in a 1.5 litre Riley with some eye catching drives. His father Leslie, impressed by the new F2 Cooper, soon had a deal to run Mike in a new car owned by Bob Chase. The combination proved to be an instant success, running strongly in early season domestic events often against the far more powerful BRM and Thinwall cars in the Formula Libre events. The decision was taken to enter the Belgian GP at Spa where Hawthorn took an astonishing fourth place behind the Ferraris of Ascari and Farina, with the Gordini of Robert Manzon in third. He went one better to take third behind the Ferraris at the Silverstone GP, with another fourth at the Dutch round at Zandvoort. This was a quite extraordinary run of results for both team and driver and led to Hawthorn being invited to join the Ferrari team for 1953. Moss meanwhile endured a difficult season at GP level with the ERA G Type which was not a success. The two were enjoying a healthy rivalry in the coveted British Racing Drivers' Club Gold Star award. It was to go to Moss in 1952 after Hawthorn suffered a serious crash whilst testing the Cooper at Modena which saw him hospitalised with burns and a lung infection.

Hawthorn would go on to an illustrious, if somewhat erratic, career as we shall see in subsequent chapters. His driving "uniform" gradually evolved from normal clothes which he found disconcertingly flapping around in his face, to his trademark bow tie. A green jacket was added later on when he was driving for Ferrari and his cars were no longer sporting his national racing colour.

The Goddard photograph here is from Goodwood where earlier in the year Hawthorn really had become an overnight sensation at the Easter Monday meeting when he had won two races and claimed the scalps of both Fangio and Gonzalez. He is seen winning the Sussex Trophy later in the season.

The accompanying Autosport shows the great battle at Reims in 1953. It was Hawthorn's ninth Grand Prix and after an epic battle he held off Fangio's Maserati to take an historic win, the first British driver to win a round of the world championship.

14.

Tony Rolt and Rob Walker,
Connaught, Silverstone,
photograph by Lionel Clegg.

Tony Rolt, seen here behind the wheel of the Connaught, had made a name for himself before the war with some outstanding performances driving an ERA. A serving army officer at the time, he was soon in action after the outbreak of the war. Awarded the Military Cross for leading a defensive effort at Calais during the Dunkirk evacuation, Rolt was captured after four days of fighting when the ammunition finally ran out. He proved to be a most troublesome prisoner of war, attempting no less than seven escapes from various camps until he was finally transferred to Colditz. Still unbowed, he was behind the famous glider escape plan from Colditz, an audacious plan which never came to fruition.

He resigned his commission soon after the war ended and resumed racing as quickly as possible. He raced a variety of machines, including the Alfa Romeo Bimotore, which had been designed before the war as a twin engined car to allow Nuvolari to compete with the Mercedes Benz and Auto Union teams. Rolt raced a reduced version of this, with merely one engine. He also joined forces with Rob Walker and drove the latter's Delahaye with some success.

Rob Walker's life had been similarly adventurous. Born into a wealthy family, his father had been heir to the Johnnie Walker whisky group, Walker had caught the racing bug early on in life when taken as a child to watch an event in France. He had the means to indulge his passion before the war, famously running in the 1938 Le Mans event where he took eighth place but perhaps gaining more attention for his strict adherence to proper sartorial rules, appearing in full dinner dress for his evening stint and a more sporting check suit in the morning! He joined the Fleet Air Arm during the war, on one occasion crashing his Swordfish but avoiding more serious injury as he was heavily "anaesthetised" at the time. Disappointingly, it was by all accounts gin rather than whisky which had lessened the pain.

Walker's passport famously listed his occupation as "Gentleman", but underneath the elegant exterior there was a first rate team owner and

14. Rob Walker and Tony Rolt

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organiser. His famous dark blue with white noseband colours became a symbol for solid preparation and beautifully turned out cars. He and Rolt made a strong pair and they enjoyed several good results together during the 1953 season, although the GP at Silverstone was one of the few events where they posted a retirement. Rolt misjudged his pitstop and overshot the Walker area, the subsequent rapid reversing proving too much for a half shaft which put him out of the race, a disappointing end to a promising race in which he had been lying in sixth place and proving to be the best of the British entries.

It was a rare mistake by Rolt who had already made a name for himself as one of the best Sportscar drivers of the period and had been triumphant at Le Mans a month earlier, (see below). He would go on to enjoy more Sportscar success before eventually retiring from competitive driving in 1955 when he concentrated his energy on an engineering business which would be one of the pioneers of four wheel drive systems. With pleasing symmetry, the only four wheel drive car to win a Formula One race was the Ferguson, developed by Rolt's company, at the non- championship Oulton Park Gold Cup in 1961. The car was entered by Rob Walker and driven by Stirling Moss.

Rob Walker continued in motor racing for another twenty years, his golden period really being the three seasons with Moss from 1959-61, when their privately entered Cooper and Lotus cars would prove more than a match for the similar works backed machines.

15.

Peter Walker and Peter Whitehead, Jaguar, Le Mans 1951

Whilst in Grand Prix racing it was to be some years until British teams were on an equal footing with their major European rivals, the story took a different turn in the Sportscar racing arena. In the very earliest days of the sport there had been no distinction between Grand Prix and long distance events, the two types of racing had each forged their own identity since then. The great road race tradition was upheld by the Targa Florio in Sicily and the Mille Miglia on the Italian mainland. Both carried considerable prestige, for both the winning car and driver. The Le Mans Twenty-Four Hours race to this day remains to this day an event greatly prized by leading manufacturers.

British identification with Le Mans was rooted in the Bentley successes of the 1920s, the marque taking its first win in 1924 and then capturing the event four times in succession between 1927 and 1930 before Alfa Romeo began a similar run. The "Bentley Boys" had become part of British motorsport folklore, but it seems fair to say that, along with Brooklands, by 1950 they both belonged to a world that had passed.

Le Mans however continued to offer a unique mix of both sporting and commercial prestige. Whilst GP cars were clearly pure thoroughbreds, in theory at least there was some link between a car racing in endurance events and one which could be sold to the public. The link was always rather tenuous, but it was certainly there and it was one recognised by William Lyons of Jaguar. In 1948 the Coventry manufacturer had caused a sensation when it unveiled its new XK120 model at the London Motor Show. The 3.4 litre straight six engine together with its sporty styling meant that the car was the world's first genuine production car capable of 120 mph, hence the designation. This was not merely a figure for the publicity brochures. In 1949 a section of the Belgian motorway at Jabbeke was closed to allow demonstration of the car's abilities, and it averaged 126 mph for the flying mile, going ten miles per hour quicker with windscreen and sidescreens removed. It then proved that it was not just a sprinter by setting a new record for twenty four hours when a team of drivers, which included Moss, averaged 107 mph at the banked circuit at Montlhéry outside Paris.

In direct competition it was also instantly successful, finishing first and second on its racing debut at the Silverstone production car race in August 1949. It gave Stirling Moss his first major international win when, one day short of his twenty first birthday, he took the TT event at Dundrod in 1950. The car's versatility was amply demonstrated by Ian Appleyard's consecutive Alpine rally wins in 1950-51.

The initial successes of the car were enough to persuade Lyons and his team that an attempt on the Le Mans event was worthwhile. Three XK120 s were entered for the 1950 event, but despite a strong showing there was to be no fairy tale debut. The leading car retired from third place after twenty one hours with clutch failure. It had been enough to convince the Jaguar team that the car had enough basic potential to compete successfully at this level and the

decision was taken to develop a new car, based on the existing model but with racing rather than road use as its primary function.

The XK120 C, the last letter denoting Competition, would become the first British car to achieve major post war racing success and lay the foundation for a series of exceptional cars, both racing and road, from Jaguar, but its genesis was actually rather modest. Whilst Lyons accepted the need for a purpose built racing machine, there was not at the time a separate racing department and the C Type was designed and built alongside the standard production cars. Talent was not lacking, Jaguar having a remarkable group of engineers who made such a project feasible. Bill Heynes had been the driving force behind the original XK engine and was now supported by Harry Weslake who would influence racing engines for the next two decades. Frank England, better known as Lofty, was both an engineer and team manager. Malcolm Sayer designed the shape of the car, who, like so many who came after him had spent time in the aircraft industry and imported an understanding of aerodynamics, reflected in the C Type's beautifully streamlined shape.

The decision to create the new car was not taken until late in 1950 but three were ready for Le Mans the following June. England and two mechanics drove the cars down to the venue, a useful publicity and testing exercise. In truth the team was not the most fancied, more attention going to the Ferrari and Talbot Lago teams which had won the two previous editions of the 24 Hours. American entrant Briggs Cunningham and Sidney Allard both brought big engined cars which would clearly be fast, whilst Aston Martin were fielding a strong line up. The unraced C Type with its, relatively, small 3.4 litre engine was going to have tough opposition.

In the event it was to prove good enough to see off the more fancied opposition, but there were to be worrying moments before the chequered flag was waved on the Sunday afternoon. Stirling Moss, on his first visit to the Sarthe circuit, took an early lead and set the pace as he had been asked to do, but the car he and Jack Fairman shared hit problems after eight hours with its oil pipe system. A similar fate befell the sister car of Biondetti/ Johnson, causing a great deal of head scratching in the pits. Fortunately by the time the two cars had their problems the pace they had set had taken its toll on their competitors and the surviving C Type driven by the two Peters, Walker and Whitehead, ran smoothly to record an historic victory.

For both drivers the Le Mans win would be a career highlight. Highly rated by Lofty England, Walker had enjoyed success with an ERA on both circuits and hillclimbs. He had the dubious honour of driving the v16 BRM alongside Parnell at the British GP soon after Le Mans, but would fare better in sportscar racing over the next few seasons before his retirement in 1956 following a nasty Le Mans crash whilst driving an Aston Martin.

Peter Whitehead was a major part of the British racing scene. Another ERA graduate, he campaigned a privately owned early Ferrari GP car with great verve. He was to follow up his Le Mans win with another classic French triumph, the Reims 12 Hours in 1954 when he shared a Jaguar D type with Ken Wharton. Second at Le Mans with his half brother Graham in 1958, this time for Aston Martin, the two suffered a major accident in that year's Tour de France. Sadly whilst Graham suffered serious injury, Peter was killed.

16.

Jaguar team, Le Mans 1953, photograph by Lionel Clegg.

The Jaguar team had suffered a mishap at Le Mans in 1952. Alarmed by the speed shown by the new Mercedes cars when competing with a C Type on the Mille Miglia in the spring, late in the day Jaguar had introduced a more streamlined version of the C Type for Le Mans, with a much sharper and lower nose section. The plan had misfired badly, the untried shape leading to severe overheating cars which all retired. For 1953 they reverted to their original curvaceous shape. Lionel Clegg's shot here gives a good idea of just what a good looking car the C Type was. This is a view shared by Motor Sport, not normally given to poetic descriptions of racing cars (or of drivers!),

"...we could sit back in the sunshine and watch with genuine pride the passage of the beautiful dark green Jaguars – realising that here is a British sports racing car that really 'does its stuff', apart from looking so very correct."

The occasion for such patriotic and aesthetic appreciation had been the C Type's 1-2 victory in the TT event at the end of 1951 in which Moss had led home Walker. It was doubtful, again, that the expectations for Le Mans 1953 were quite so high.

16. Jaguar, Le Mans 1953



The opposition this time was even more formidable than it had been in 1951. Ferrari had their full GP driving team entered on their brutal looking but very fast 4.1 litre coupes, their acceleration and speed being much remarked on after practice. Alfa Romeo with their pretty three litre coupes counted Fangio and Gonzalez among their drivers. Lancia looked strong and there were again Cunninghams and Talbots to contend with. The Jaguar, now in its third season, was, on paper, not fancied, but the team did have one trick up its sleeve, having done much development work with Girling on its new disc brake system. It had been a difficult technical feat to make this system work effectively and had given test driver Norman Dewis a number of "interesting moments", but along with a lightened chassis and improved engine, it meant that the car would still be competitive.

Matters did not get off to a good start when Jaguar found themselves to be in trouble with the officials for having used their spare car in practice with the same number as their race car. Not for the first, and certainly not for the last, time, a foreign team found itself at odds with the French officials. Duncan Hamilton later told the famous story in his book, *Touch Wood*, of retiring with Tony Rolt to drown his sorrows, assuming that they had been disqualified. Alerted to the news that they were to be allowed to race, the two were in such a state of disrepair that there was nothing for it but the "hair of the dog" treatment and black coffee with brandy got them to the start. Sadly it would seem that the story was one of bon viveur Hamilton's fictional pieces, Lofty England later commenting that he would never have allowed them to drive whilst "under the influence", having enough trouble controlling them when they were sober!

The photograph here shows Stirling Moss in the background, on the pit counter, talking to Lofty England whilst William Lyons keeps a watching brief from inside the pit area. Moss will drive car number 17, next to number 19 here, to be driven by Ian Stewart and Peter Whitehead. Yet again Moss will be asked to set an early pace in an attempt to draw the sting out of the opposition. The plan worked, but perhaps not quite in the way it was intended. Moss did indeed set the early pace, but he was into the pits within two hours with a misfiring engine. A problem with the fuel filter was diagnosed and he and Walker were back in the race. The pair ran very strongly for the remainder of the race, finishing in second place. The sister car number 19 also encountered problems but was able to continue, finishing fourth.

17.

Duncan Hamilton and Tony Rolt, Le Mans 1953

It was to be car number 18 which lead the Jaguars home to a stunning 1-2-4 result, only the Fitch/Walters Cunningham in third preventing the clean sweep.

The problems encountered early on by Moss meant that Rolt was asked to take up the pace and keep the pressure on the Italian teams. One by one Ferrari, Alfa Romeo and Lancia lost their cars to a myriad of mechanical problems. The Ascari/Villoresi Ferrari lasted the longest and posed the greatest threat, but it eventually succumbed to clutch problems after seventeen hours of battle.

Such was the pace of the 1953 event that the winning car broke all previous records, winning at an average of over 105 mph, the first time that the 100 mph average race speed was broken. Praising the skill of the drivers and the all round team effort at Jaguar, the Autosport editorial concluded thus,

"To Mr. W. Lyons go the thanks of the entire motor- sporting world, and it is to be hoped that his continued invaluable contributions to British prestige will not be overlooked in high quarters."

Mr. Lyons did not have to wait to long for his due recognition, being knighted in 1956 for his services to the car industry and his company's contribution to exports. There is little doubt that the team's racing success was a huge boost to this effort.

For all his outward flamboyance, Hamilton was a fine driver and made a strong pairing with Rolt. Hamilton had seen wartime service in the Fleet Air Arm and was one of that generation of drivers determined to enjoy motor racing as a sport after the war. He cut a Gonzalez type figure at the wheel of his Talbot Lago during his GP outings, bullying the big car to go round corners quickly.

He was to remain a leading figure in Sportscar racing for several more seasons, although there was a temporary falling out with Jaguar in 1956, when he was deemed to have disobeyed an order from Lofty England to slow down during the Reims 12 Hours event. The net result was that Hamilton was to have the unique experience of receiving a letter of dismissal from Jaguar and an offer of employment

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from Ferrari at virtually the same time. He took part in the Swedish Sportscar race for Ferrari, but by the end of the year bridges with Jaguar had been repaired. He continued to campaign privately entered D Type Jaguars until his retirement at the end of 1958.

18.

Jose Froilan Gonzalez and Maurice Trintignant, Ferrari, Le Mans 1954 Photograph by Geoff Goddard.

For 1954 the Jaguar team introduced their latest offering, the D Type. Despite the suggestion of continuity in the nomenclature, the D Type was a very different car all round. Whilst the engine did continue with the original XK layout, albeit greatly developed, the chassis and body represented a significant step forward in design.

Ferrari's response was its tried and trusted one of employing a more powerful engine to overcome any deficiencies in other departments. The big 4.9 litre engine would give plenty of power, but it also gave the drivers a difficult car to control.

The race came down to a straight battle between these two teams, both suffering problems, all three Jaguars suffering from fuel filter issues, Moss also having an alarming moment when his brakes failed, but he managed to get back to the pits where the car was retired shortly after midnight. Heavy rain showers throughout the event proved a very severe challenge to all drivers, a number of whom had spins and accidents. One to suffer was Rolt who had to make a short stop to have his bodywork attended to on Sunday morning.

By this stage the race has come down to a straight contest between the Gonzalez/ Trintignant Ferrari and the Rolt/ Hamilton Jaguar, with very little between the two. With less than two hours left the Ferrari stopped to refuel and would not restart. As mechanics worked frantically to get the engine back to life Rolt closed the gap, but then he too had to stop. He was driving without a visor and the rain meant that he simply could not see. Under complex rules governing the amount of stops which could be made without making a driver change, the Jaguar team played safe and put Hamilton back into the car, losing precious seconds as the Ferrari was finally restarted.

Whether the result would have been different had Rolt stayed in the car is a moot point, but there was no doubting the contribution that Gonzalez' inspired driving of the Ferrari made to the result. Try as he might Hamilton could not prevent the Argentinian slowly rebuilding his lead over the Jaguar, the final result showing the Ferrari winning by a single lap after the twenty four hour battle. Jaguar had lost this time, but it had been close.

For Gonzalez the summer of 1954 was to prove the high watermark of his driving career, another fine win at the British GP following a month later. The death of his compatriot Onofre Marimon during practice for the German GP a month after Silverstone affected him deeply and although he continued to race strongly throughout the remainder of the season. He suffered a nasty shoulder injury during practice for the TT at the end of the year and thereafter put in only occasional appearances. There was never again the wonderful sight of the stocky driver throwing his car into a corner and providing Fangio with real opposition.

Maurice Trintignant would continue in the sport for another decade, winning at Monaco the following season for Ferrari and then again three seasons later driving for Rob Walker. After retirement the dapper Frenchman enjoyed a long life, mixing local politics and wine growing. He died aged 87 in 2005.

Part 3: The Return of the Silver Arrows

GP and sportscars, 1954 - 1956

19. Mercedes Benz, Silverstone 1954, photograph by Tom March.

No name in racing carried more weight than Mercedes Benz. Whilst Alfa Romeo could point to a similarly long history, memories of the 1930s were still imprinted on many racing minds, when Mercedes and Auto Union had dominated the sport and taken GP design and engineering to new levels. When Mercedes revived its Rennabteilung (Racing Division) in 1950 it was not long before rumours of an impending return to GP racing started. Tantalisingly, it seems that consideration was given to constructing a 1.5 litre supercharged car to compete with the Alfettas. Mercedes had produced just such a machine in 1939 to compete as a one-off in the Tripoli GP that season, which, inevitably, it had won. However, the rise of the larger engined, unsupercharged Ferrari team in 1951 may have suggested to Mercedes that the time for the older engine had passed, and the GP racing decision was postponed.

A step back into international motor racing was taken in 1952 when the team produced its 300SL for the Sportscar season. Bringing back its two great pre-war drivers for the event, Caracciola and Lang, as well as new recruit Karl Kling, the team chose the tough Mille Miglia for its debut. It very nearly won, in the end the Ferrari of Bracco just saving Italian national pride ahead of Kling. The following month the cars were first and second at Le Mans, after Pierre Levegh's solo drive on his Talbot had ended in retirement with little more than an hour left to run. It may not have been the most popular win at Le Mans, but the Mercedes reputation for efficiency and reliability was growing strongly again. Another victory in the Carrera Panamericana rounded off a tremendous comeback season.

Grand Prix racing however remained the ultimate goal. The decision was made in the spring of 1953 to draw up a car for the new GP regulations due in 1954, permitting engines of a maximum 2.5 litres. Mercedes, under the technical supervision of Dr. Fritz Nallinger, within Rudi Uhlenhaut's Experimental Department, designed a straight eight cylinder engine

which could be installed at a slight angle in the tubular chassis, making the car lower than its contemporaries. Inboard brakes were to be used at first, although they reverted to an outboard system on some later cars. Most eye catching of all was the option of the streamlined all enveloping bodywork, available for the faster circuits, with a more standard open wheeled version for the more twisty venues.

It was the enclosed body version which emerged for the team's debut at Reims in July 1954. Having opted to miss the opening races of the championship to concentrate on development, Mercedes showed that the time had been well spent. Three of the new Stromlinienwagen (Streamliners), were entered for Fangio, Kling and Hans Herrmann. Fangio and Kling lined up first and second on the grid and held those positions throughout the race whilst the opposition crumbled all around them. Ascari, a guest Maserati driver on the day, was soon out. So too Gonzalez' Ferrari. Hawthorn's similar car expired. Although Herrmann's engine failed, the other two cars put on the most dominant display possible. The Silver Arrows were back!

The news of the Mercedes triumphant return sent shock waves through the sport, and possibly beyond, even The Picture Post carrying a report on "The Master Racers" at Reims when,

"in less than an hour the pride of the Italian racing workshops was scattered around the five miles of roadway, smoking and broken."

Everything about the return spoke of invincibility. The cars were visibly different. The transporters, the mechanics, the organisation were all superior to those of the Italian and French teams, whilst the British hardly featured at all.

The next race was at Silverstone. Few doubted that there would be a repeat of the Reims result and as crowds gathered around to watch the sensational looking silver machines being prepared, there was the sense that they were here to witness a demonstration rather than a race. The reality, however, would turn out differently. Although Fangio took pole position, during the race he struggled to judge the edges of the track clearly, his low position and the full bodywork making his view difficult. As a result the front end of the car was constantly being battered

19. Mercedes Benz, Silverstone 1954



against the concrete filled oil drums which marked the track's edge and by the end of the race the beautiful lines of the car had suffered badly. The loss of fourth gear had not helped either and the best he could manage was fourth place.

Argentinian honour at least was saved by Gonzalez, who seized the lead at the start on his Ferrari and was never headed, repeating his win in 1951. He had driven superbly, winning from team mate Hawthorn and giving hope to competitors and spectators alike that the Silver Arrows were not, in fact, invincible. The remainder of the 1954 season and 1955 were to prove that they were merely dominant.

20.

Alfred Neubauer, Mercedes Benz, photograph by Alan Smith.

The return of Mercedes to Grand Prix tracks in 1954 brought with it the familiar figure of their Team Manager, Alfred Neubauer. In some ways Neubauer's career had followed a similar path to Enzo Ferrari's. Both had harboured early ambitions to be racing drivers and had run in various events during the years after the First World War, including the Targa Florio. Coincidentally for both men 1924 seems to have marked a turning point when perhaps they realised that their early dreams were to be unfulfilled. In Neubauer's case the Monza GP was the end of his serious competitive aspirations, the death of team mate Count Zborowski overshadowing the fact that Neubauer had been replaced earlier in the race by another member of the Mercedes team, Otto Merz.

Like Ferrari, it soon became apparent to Neubauer that his talents lay in management rather than driving. During the later 1920s Mercedes concentrated its racing activity mostly in the Sportscar division, developing its fabulous 7.1 litre SSK model. The 1929 Wall Street Crash saw the factory scale back its efforts, but Neubauer was able to act as a semi-independent team and continued to run cars for Rudolf Caracciola, again an interesting parallel with Ferrari's activities on behalf of Alfa Romeo.

When Mercedes Benz announced its intention to return to GP racing in 1934, Neubauer was called upon to manage the team. Desperate to do just such a job, he had almost joined the rival Auto Union team who had offered him a similar post first, but

Neubauer was happy to stay with the company he had already served for so long.

It was during the 1934-39 period that Neubauer really honed his skills. It may be said that he practically invented the role of Team Manager as we have come to know it. It was his job to select the drivers, to manage them during the races and to exercise control over the whole logistical procedure of moving men and machinery from track to track during the racing season. As any modern manager would attest, the handling of drivers is far from straightforward and Neubauer had his fair share of problems with his drivers. Early on there was the fiery temperament of Luigi Fagioli to contend with, the snobbery of von Brauchitsch, the nursing back to form of Caracciola who had been badly injured in 1933 whilst practising an Alfa Romeo for the Monaco GP. Later on he had to contend with the integration of Englishman Dick Seaman into the team (this was the late 1930s) and the speed of the mechanic turned driver Hermann Lang against a fading Caracciola.

With this background nobody was better equipped to manage a team than Neubauer in 1954. It was he who insisted on the need to secure the services of Fangio on the driving side, and the following year he was to be instrumental in bringing Moss into the fold. During the races themselves Neubauer was constantly to be seen parading the pit area, ensuring that every last detail was in order, all the while energetically hanging out signs to his passing drivers, instructing them on the gaps to following cars, for there were seldom cars in front of the Silver Arrows, controlling the drivers' pace and generally running the show.

Neubauer retired from his post when Mercedes announced their retirement from motor racing at the end of 1955. By then aged 64 he had served his company loyally for the best part of forty years and in so doing had bought a new standard of professionalism to the role of team manager.

21.

Juan Manuel Fangio, Mercedes Benz, Pedralbes 1954, photograph by Geoff Goddard.

Mercedes Benz had been determined to sign Fangio for their return to Grand Prix racing in 1954. Knowing that their car would not be ready for the beginning of the season they offered him the option of either paying him not to race in the opening events, or of allowing him to drive for another team until the new car was ready. Shrewdly Fangio chose the latter option and duly proceeded to win the opening two rounds of the championship in Argentina and Belgium for Maserati.

It will be recalled that the 1952-53 seasons had been the preserve of Ascari's Ferrari. Fangio had been a bystander during 1952 as he recovered from a serious neck injury sustained in a crash at Monza early in the season, whilst the following year his Maserati had struggled against the Ferraris, although he had taken the final championship round at Monza after Ascari had crashed on the final lap. There was little doubt that it was these two drivers who had risen to the top of the pile since 1950. Lancia, also planning an entry into GP racing apparently tried to secure the services of both, but it was Alfred Neubauer who obtained Fangio's signature on a Mercedes contract.

It was to prove an excellent investment for Mercedes. Although the Reims return gave rise to the legend of Mercedes invincibility, in fact certainly in 1954 the car was probably not as far ahead of its rivals as it seemed. It was unsuited to Silverstone where the Ferraris won, and although Fangio won the next three races they were not as straightforward as the record book might suggest. The Ferraris of Gonzalez and Hawthorn remained a threat and when Ascari was offered a guest drive for his old team at Monza he was in the lead when his car broke down. Moss on the Maserati then took over, but he too was forced out leaving Fangio to win, but only after he had been off the road and onto the grass a few times and he had to nurse his car home after it had gone from eight to seven functioning cylinders.

Here in Spain, the final race of the season, the new Lancia had finally appeared and Ascari took a sensational pole position and led the early laps. When he dropped out it was Mike Hawthorn's Ferrari who enjoyed a trouble free run to the flag whilst

Fangio suffered with an oil leak for much of the race. The Goddard photograph here clearly shows the effects of that leak, Fangio's yellow shirt turning a much dirtier colour at the shoulder.

With six wins from eight races Fangio took a second World Championship with ease, but it is interesting to note that apart from Kling's second place at Reims neither he nor Herrmann succeeded in achieving a top three finish. Yes, both suffered mechanical problems, but it was also clear that the W196 was not the easiest of cars to master. Fangio's unique blend of speed and mechanical sympathy was instrumental in bringing such strong results to Mercedes in 1954.

22.

Juan Fangio, Alberto Ascari, Stirling Moss, Monaco, 1955, photograph by Alan Smith.

Ascari had left Ferrari, along with his old friend and mentor Gigi Villorresi, to join the new Lancia team. Gianni Lancia had a great ambition to create a leading GP squad to rival Ferrari and Maserati. After two seasons in Sportscar racing where a number of interesting ideas had been tried, his talented group of designers and engineers, including ex-Alfa designer Vittorio Jano, were given the go ahead to construct a new single seater for the 1954 season. It had originally been hoped that the car would be ready at the same time as the new Mercedes W196 and would race at Reims, but there were a number of development issues with the very distinctive design, a V8 engined car with pannier fuel tanks either side of the cockpit. Initial tests revealed a number of problems, particularly with the handling, drivers having a number of lurid spins.

For much of 1954 the drivers were reduced to spectators. Ascari put in guest appearances for Maserati at Reims and Silverstone, but the machinery failed him. An invitation to rejoin Ferrari for Monza was accepted and he showed everyone what GP racing was missing with a strong drive and he was leading Fangio when the engine let him down. As some consolation to this frustrating summer he had won the Mille Miglia for Lancia in May. Like Fangio he was no great lover of the distance events, but for any driver the Mille Miglia was a major event and for an Italian driver on an Italian car it was always special.

By late September the Lancia GP car, the D50 was showing real promise and reports began to

filter out of sensational testing times at Monza. Entries were made for the final round of the championship in Spain and Ascari shocked everyone by recording the pole position time, a second quicker than Fangio's Mercedes. He took an early lead, but was out after nine laps with clutch failure. Villoresi had also shown strongly in practice but he dropped out with brake problems. It was a very encouraging start and as the teams returned to their bases for winter expectations were high that 1955 would be a vintage year.

The opening round of the '55 season was again in Argentina. Gonzalez, apparently retired but accepting the chance to drive on home ground was fastest in practice, ahead of Ascari and Fangio who recorded equal times. Stirling Moss was learning the ropes on his new mount and started his Mercedes from the third row. The race turned out to be a punishing one for drivers and cars, an exceptionally hot day making it a timekeeper's nightmare as any number of drivers came into the pits to cool off and, where possible, to hand over their car to a team mate. Ascari again held an early lead, but spun off and with a sense of inevitability Fangio managed to keep going to take his first win of the season.

After a pair of wins in non championship events in Turin and Naples, in which Ferrari and Maserati had been well and truly humbled by Lancia, the teams headed for Monaco to resume the World Championship battle. Yet again Fangio and Ascari recorded identical times to take the first two places on the grid, with Moss just a tenth of a second behind their pace. With new recruit Eugenio Castellotti fourth for Lancia the race seemed set fair for a straight Mercedes-Lancia contest.

The race did not turn out at all as predicted. Fangio led, but had a rare mechanical failure, allowing team mate Moss into the lead which proved to be short lived as his Mercedes had a similar valve spring problem. Ascari who had been the best part of a lap behind Moss would then have taken the lead, but before he could do so his car clipped a concrete bollard at the chicane after the tunnel and was instantly pitched into the Mediterranean. Spectators were relieved to see the driver surfacing and being able to swim to safety. He later spent a night in hospital, but apart from a damaged nose and general bruising he was unhurt.

Amidst continued carnage as both Behra's Maserati and Castellotti's Lancia retired, Maurice Trintignant brought his rather uncompetitive Ferrari

home to a most unexpected win, but it was Ascari's plunge into the harbour which made the headlines.

Tragically it was to be his last race. Four days later he went to Monza for lunch. He had been due to share a Ferrari with Castellotti in the forthcoming Sportscar event, but had decided to withdraw after the Monaco adventure. After enjoying a lunch with Villoresi, Castellotti and some of the mechanics, all of whom were relieved to find him in such good form, he asked if he could try the car, really a case of getting back in the saddle after being thrown. Breaking his long held superstition of only driving in his own blue shirt and helmet, he borrowed Castellotti's helmet and set off from the pits. He never returned, the car inexplicably crashing at what became the Ascari curve, throwing Alberto out. He died shortly afterwards, his friend Villoresi with him in the ambulance en route to hospital.

His funeral cortege brought Milan to a standstill. Fangio made no secret of his admiration and respect for the driver he called his "greatest opponent". After Farina, he had become the second Italian World Champion. Italy still awaits a third.

The photograph here takes on a particular poignancy in the light of what happened subsequently. The Ascari-Fangio battle had been eagerly anticipated and with Moss finally getting into a top car this season had promised so much. For Lancia the year became a disaster, Ascari's death robbing the team of its inspiration. Although the brave and talented Castellotti would do his best to revive the team's spirit, before the end of the year Lancia had withdrawn from GP racing, never to return. Its great creation, the D50 would live on, being passed to Ferrari who would use the cars for 1956.

23.

Stirling Moss, Mercedes Benz,
Aintree 1955,
photograph by Tom March.

Ascari's death left a huge hole at the top of GP racing and there was realistically little else to prevent Mercedes winning. The Belgian GP had seen Fangio and Moss take the first two places, a result repeated at Zandvoort for the Dutch GP. In between these two events had been Le Mans and the worst disaster in racing history (see below).

23. Moss, Aintree 1955



Whilst Mercedes were overwhelming favourites to take the next round of the championship at Aintree, this fact did nothing to dampen down the interest of the British public in the event and by early morning the roads around Liverpool, accustomed to Grand National events, were choked up as an estimated crowd of 145,000 spectators tried to get to the event on time. A large number missed the opening support races, but were there in time for the Grand Prix. Starting in pole position was Stirling Moss who had lapped a fifth of a second quicker than team mate Fangio in practice. Two more Silver Arrows for Karl Kling and Piero Taruffi inhabited the second row, only the red Maserati of the valiant Jean Behra in third place and on the outside of the front row spoilt the silver symmetry. His race was to last just nine laps before an oil pipe split, but as so often the brave Frenchman had battled heroically against the odds, holding his third place during the race's opening phase.

The story of the race though was very much at the front, as first Fangio then Moss set a pace far beyond the rest. From lap 25 onwards Moss began to pull away slightly, gradually building up a lead of around ten seconds at the half way point, which he held until the end, being given the signal to ease off by the pits. The crowd held its breath as Fangio closed on the British driver, ending the race right on his tail as they crossed the finish line. Moss had won! Behind the two leading cars, Kling and Taruffi took the next places to ensure the perfect result for Mercedes.

Much comment has been made about the result, and whether or not Fangio had been asked to let Moss win on home soil. Many have pointed out that the only times Fangio was beaten in an F1 race by another Mercedes driver were on this day at Aintree and in Berlin at the Avus non championship race the previous season by Kling, another home driver win. To add my own two pence worth I would offer the following comments. A close look at the record of the 1955 season will soon reveal that by this stage of the year there was really very little to choose between the speed of Fangio and Moss. Quite possibly Fangio could have won, but Moss would certainly have made him work for it. Secondly, no one could begrudge Moss his first GP win, it was overdue and he had been unlucky not to win for Maserati at Monza the year before. Perhaps of most interest is the fact to this day we are not exactly sure of what took place. Both drivers were generous towards each other, Moss recognising that Fangio could have won, Fangio saying that this was Stirling's day. If it was "gifted" to

Moss, it was done with grace and subtlety and it is impossible not to contrast this with a few examples from the past twenty years when drivers have allowed their team mates through. Invariably these have been humiliating and degrading for all concerned, far removed from the Aintree race.

Mercedes enjoyed a wonderful result. Stirling Moss had won his first World Championship race and had become the first British driver to win his home Grand Prix. It can safely be said that everyone went home happy, except for the rest of the Grand Prix teams who faced the challenge of how to combat The Silver Arrows.

24.

Stirling Moss and Denis Jenkinson, Mille Miglia 1955

The clock is coming up to 7.22 am on the morning of May 1st as the Mercedes Benz 300 SLR of Stirling Moss and navigator Denis Jenkinson prepares to blast off from the starting ramp in Brescia's Piazza Vittoria. In slightly over ten hours they will return after one of the truly epic drives in the sport's history.

For 1955 Mercedes had decided to run a Sportscar programme alongside the GP schedule and for such a purpose had produced the stunning 300SLR, with a similar straight eight engine and layout to the GP car, but this engine was slightly larger at three litres. The thousand miles around Italy was to be the first race for the car and the team took the event very seriously indeed. Four cars were entered for Moss, Fangio, Kling and Herrmann. Training and preparation started early in the year, an assortment of drivers and cars being sent south into northern Italy from February onwards.

For the event Moss was to be accompanied by Motor Sport's "Continental Correspondent", Denis Sargent Jenkinson, or DSJ as he signed off his monthly pieces. This most gifted and enthusiastic of motor racing writers is worthy of several books in his own right and was to prove the perfect partner for Moss on the high speed journey around Italy. A former sidecar passenger for World Champion Eric Oliver, Jenks was never afraid of being sat next to a master at work. Taking the view that it was difficult for a non-Italian to ever hope to learn the roads as well as a native, Moss and Jenks devised a roller map system by which Jenks could give Stirling a series of hand

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signals indicating what was coming up ahead. Signals were devised for left hand bends, right handers, hills, slippery surfaces etc. Verbal communication inside the 300 SLR's cockpit at high speed was out of the question. By May 1st, having survived training incidents involving collisions with sheep and ammunition trucks, the pair had perfected their system of signals and were ready for the contest.

The early stages were more like a Grand Prix sprint event than a thousand mile endurance race. Moss set off at a startling pace, but Eugenio Castellotti was going even quicker. At Ravenna, a hundred and twenty miles from the Brescia start, he was ahead having averaged 119 mph! Yes, for once the Italian spring was dry and sunny, and the first half of the race contained many straight roads, but nonetheless these were public roads being used, not those of a purpose built race track. The early pace took its toll on Castellotti's Ferrari, but the similar car of Taruffi then took up the challenge and was ahead as the leaders made their way down the Adriatic coast to Pescara and then turned inwards towards L'Aquila and onto Rome. By Rome the Ferrari challenge had faded, ultimately their highest finisher being Maglioli who came third, forty five minutes behind the winner.

If Ferrari had suffered on the road, so too had Mercedes. Kling crashed near Rome and suffered three broken ribs. Herrmann was out when a stone ruptured his fuel tank on the Futa Pass. Fangio's car was heard to be off song from an early stage and he made a lengthy stop outside Florence to have the fuel injection system looked at, eventually continuing to take second place.

Moss, for once, enjoyed a mechanically trouble free run, but the day was not without its problems. He overcooked the approach to Padua early on, ("suddenly I noticed that Moss was beginning to work furiously on the steering wheel.." DSJ), had another incident at Pescara and then ended up off the road in a ditch outside Rome, but from which he was able to drive out and rejoin the road.

There is a lovely tale of Mercedes 722 reaching Florence, by which time Moss had driven for seven and a half hours and covered 1,171 kms at an average of 97.5 mph. Between Florence and Bologna and before the flatness of the Emilian plains which would take them back to Brescia, lay the great Futa and Raticosa Passes through the Appenine mountains. At this stage, out of the corner of his eye, Moss caught Jenks rubbing his hands in anticipation, as if to say

"Now we will see some motoring". Moss may have been feeling the long stint, but he certainly put on a show for his navigator, completing the winding uphill and downhill section in a fraction outside one hour. The back of the race had now been broken and from Bologna to Brescia they were untroubled to record a wonderful result.

They had become only the second non Italians to win the Mille Miglia, the first being Caracciola, also for Mercedes, in 1931. Their time of ten hour and seven minutes would stand in perpetuity, the final edition of the race taking place two years later. For Moss and Mercedes it was a tremendous achievement. For Denis Jenkinson it led to perhaps the most famous piece of all motor racing reportage, a report considered so important, rightly, that the June 1955 edition of Motor Sport even held over its "Letters from Readers" page until July in order to accommodate the lengthy first hand report.

Sadly by the time the July edition was published events had taken a tragic turn at Le Mans.

25.

Mike Hawthorn, Jaguar and Juan Fangio, Mercedes, Le Mans 1955, photograph by Geoff Goddard.

A great battle was expected at Le Mans, where Mercedes and Ferrari would be joined by Jaguar fielding a strong team of D Types, led by Mike Hawthorn sharing with Ivor Bueb, Hamilton and Rolt pairing up again, with a third car for test driver extraordinaire Norman Dewis and Don Beauman. Mercedes brought three 300SLRs, all fitted with a new airbrake system, a large hydraulic flap behind the cockpit opening when it was deployed. These spectacular devices were designed to give Mercedes the chance to compete on level terms with Jaguar's disc braked D types. Thus far, only Jaguar had perfected disc brakes, other teams still being reliant on a traditional drum system. For this race Moss and Fangio were put together, Kling and Andre Simon sharing, with American John Fitch being put with Pierre Levegh. Levegh was an interesting choice, the French driver now fifty years old. He had so nearly become a national hero three years earlier in 1952 when he had driven his Talbot for almost twenty three hours and was within touching distance of victory

when his car failed, leaving the returning Mercedes cars to take first and second places. A drive for the German team seemed like a just reward for such an effort.

Tragedy struck the Jaguar team en route to Le Mans when William Lyons' son, Michael, was killed in a road accident. Although the team were determined to carry on with the race, it somewhat set the tone for a sombre event, although this was by no means evident during the initial stages.

The first hour saw Castellotti's big 4.4 litre Ferrari setting off at a record pace, just as he had done at the Mille Miglia. He was then caught by Hawthorn's Jaguar and Fangio's Mercedes and the three of them circulated in a very high speed convoy until the Ferrari dropped back, its engine beginning to suffer. It would be out after five hours.

This left Hawthorn and Fangio to fight it out at the front, the two of them apparently reprising their last famous battle on French soil two years previously when the young Englishman had beaten Fangio in the French GP. Such was the pace during the early hours that Hawthorn set a new lap record ten seconds below the old one. The crowd was clearly enjoying their dice and the race seemed evenly poised as the first round of pit stops arrived after two and a half hours. What happened next has been debated ever since, but Hawthorn seems to have taken a last minute turn into the pits. In so doing he caused the lapped Austin Healey of Lance Macklin to move slightly to the left. Pierre Levegh's Mercedes, at this point a lap down and just ahead of Fangio on the track, caught the rear of the Healey and was launched into the embankment opposite the pits and thence into the packed spectator enclosure where the Mercedes exploded. Levegh and eighty spectators were killed in the horrendous accident and many more injured. It stands as the most shocking moment in the sport's history.

At around midnight the Mercedes Board of Directors issued an instruction that their remaining cars should be withdrawn from the race. At the time the Moss-Fangio car was in the lead by a clear two laps. The Jaguar of Hawthorn and works team driver debutant Ivor Bueb, who did a commendable job, eventually took what can honestly only be described as a hollow victory.

Blame was soon being cast in all directions. Levegh was too old to be in charge of such a high performance racing machine and should never have

been offered the drive. Macklin had swerved unnecessarily and caused the collision. Hawthorn had pulled into the pits too suddenly and was responsible. The track itself and the positioning of the pits, embankment and spectator stand came in for much criticism.

At the end of the day it has to be said that this was a racing accident. Certainly there were areas to be addressed, but to blame any single individual, whilst a natural response to such an event seems essentially futile. Perhaps the last word should go to Fangio, who, in typically generous spirit, later commented that Levegh had saved his life by raising his arm to warn his fellow Mercedes driver of a problem just as the collision with Macklin occurred, allowing Fangio the split second to squeeze through the ensuing carnage.

26.

Mike Hawthorn, Jaguar,
Tourist Trophy, Dundrod 1955,
photograph by Geoff Goddard.

Whilst a number of Grands Prix were cancelled in the wake of the Le Mans disaster, including the French and Swiss races, strangely enough Sportscar racing continued. The Goddard shot here gives a good idea of the hazards present at the time, just note the "stout Ulster gate post" (Goddard) on the right hand side of the road as Hawthorn chases Fangio's Mercedes.

Indeed the TT course at Dundrod, just outside Belfast, would claim the lives of three drivers during the race, bringing an end to use of the seven and a half mile public road circuit for serious racing purposes. After Le Mans such decisions were inevitable.

Jaguar had taken the decision to field just one D Type against a three car entry from Mercedes. It seemed to be asking a lot of Hawthorn and young Irish driver Desmond Titterton to single handedly take on the three silver cars, particularly with Moss and Fangio on board, but in the event the Jaguar pair came close to stealing the show. Moss took his usual early lead, leaving Hawthorn and Fangio to battle over second place. A first lap crash claimed the lives of

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two drivers and two others were taken to hospital suffering burns, but the race continued as flag marshals warned approaching drivers of the hazard.

Moss led, but just before his first scheduled stop suffered a major puncture which shredded a rear tyre and tore some of the bodywork off. Mercedes mechanics soon had the car running again, now with John Fitch at the wheel, but the Jaguar had taken the lead. Titterton had taken over from Hawthorn and was doing a fine job, but rain began to fall and perhaps this was the decisive factor. As Moss was reinstalled for his second stint, and Hawthorn for his, the Mercedes began to close the gap and eventually overtook to set him on his way to his third victory in the event. Hawthorn slid off the road right at the end of the seven hour race, but had some consolation from his new lap record. Mercedes took second and third spots, emphasising the strength of their cars.

Although this was the end of the TT at Dundrod, after a two year gap it was revived at Goodwood in 1958. Moss was to take all four of the first Goodwood TTs before his accident there in an F1 race in 1962.

27.

Peter Collins and Stirling Moss, Mercedes, Targa Florio, 1955.

By the time of the Targa Florio in mid October it was clear that Mercedes would not be in Grand Prix racing for the following year. They had won the F1 World Championship for a second year, again with Fangio, Moss taking second place. Their position in the Sportscar category was less clear, no official announcement having been made.

As it turned out the Sicilian classic was to provide a fitting swansong for this wonderful car and team. For this event Peter Collins had been asked to partner Moss. Collins had been unhappy at Aston Martin despite some good results and appeared to be on the verge of really making a breakthrough as a top driver, with some promising showings for BRM, despite their reliability issues. For his first visit to the Targa, to be in the same car as Moss would provide a strong clue to his true credentials.

It may have been their last race, but Mercedes prepared for the event as thoroughly as ever, spending time fettling cars and drivers to have them attuned to the demands of the Sicilian road course. The preliminary work must have inspired confidence in at least one of the team members, for from the very beginning of the race reports started to filter back to the pits of the terrific pace being set by car number 104, driver, inevitably, S. Moss. He had broken the lap record from a standing start! He lowered it by another minute, but then overdid things, sliding off the road and into a ditch on the third lap. By the time a group of spectators had helped him push the car back onto the road valuable minutes had been lost and he brought the car into the pits, the front crumpled on both sides and the radiator possibly damaged. After some pulling and pushing by the mechanics, Collins took over the damaged mount and proceeded to reel off three very quick laps of the forty- four mile circuit, although he too indulged in some further modifications of the bodywork as he clouted a wall,

"not a very good wall, it simply seemed to crumble before me!"

Moss was put back into the remarkably resilient car for the final stint and he proceeded to continue at unabated pace to take the chequered flag yet again, four minutes ahead of a subdued Fangio. Look closely at the photo and the damage to the front of the car can be seen clearly.

The works 300 SLR had won every race it had entered, with the exception of Le Mans where the team withdrew when holding the first two positions. Its legendary status was secured, and that of its most successful driver. If Fangio was still The Master in GP racing, there was little doubt that Moss was by now the acknowledged world leader in Sportscar racing.

28.

Colin Chapman, Goodwood 1955, photograph by David Hedworth.

This early shot of Colin Chapman captures him at an interesting point in his career, just on the verge of becoming a major shaper of the sport.

Chapman had taken a degree in Engineering at London University and had signed up for the RAF for his national service. It was clear from an early

28. Chapman, 1955



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stage that his real interest lay in designing, building and racing cars. Much of his time was devoted to modifying Austin Sevens, converting them to trials competition specification and running them in 750 cc motor club events.

Chapman's particular genius lay in his detailed understanding of a racing car's framework, its chassis and suspension. He developed an ability to design and create ever lighter and more efficient cars, a skill that was soon being applied to both racing and road cars.

Lotus Engineering had been founded in 1952, Team Lotus being spun out from the original company two years later. By this stage Chapman was making his name both as a constructor of smaller engined Sportscars and as a fine driver in his own right. He had scored a number of successes in UK events and had already competed at Le Mans. He had been running well in 1955 but spun into one of the sandbanks around the circuit. Digging himself out and reversing back onto the track without official permission saw him disqualified, one of a number of brushes he was to have with race officialdom over the years. Given what had happened by this stage of the race at Le Mans 1955, perhaps we should look more leniently on officialdom than usual.

At around the time of this photograph Chapman was asked to help at Vanwall. In typically incisive style, when questioned by Tony Vandervell as to how the existing chassis could be improved, Chapman gave a long list of potential changes. Both agreed that it would be easier to start again, which is what they did. Chapman also brought with him Mike Costin to design the bodywork. The results of their work can be seen in the success of Vanwall over the next period. One byproduct of his work at Vanwall was to be offered a drive for the team in the French GP 1956. In one of those interesting footnotes of history, Chapman never actually raced in a GP, but did take part in practice. Unfortunately he suffered a brake problem whilst following team mate Hawthorn around the Reims circuit and ran into the back of him, damaging two Vanwalls, to the great irritation of Vandervell. Only Hawthorn's car could be repaired for the race, so Chapman's career as a GP driver was over.

Chapman performed a similar design service for BRM, redrawing the suspension on their P25 model and helping transform it into a properly competitive machine for the first time. By 1958 he had had a hand in the design of Vanwall, BRM and was

running his own Lotus GP cars. It was, of course, with the latter enterprise that he was to make the most impact. Whilst his period of greatest influence and success lies just outside the period covered by this exhibition, it is fair to say that Lotus took over what Cooper had started, the radical changing of GP design. For the two decades after 1960 Chapman and Lotus consistently pushed F1 to new levels.

The photograph here shows Chapman at the wheel of a Lotus IX, the designer-driver appearing deep in thought as he waits in the Goodwood paddock. Designed as a production racing car, about thirty of this model were built, most fitted with the 1100cc Coventry Climax engine. The car competed well in both Europe and the US.

29.

Tony Brooks, Connaught, Syracuse 1955. Painting by Michael Turner

At the very end of the 1955 season the Syracuse Grand Prix, a non-championship race was held in Sicily. With no Mercedes to contend with, Maserati sent a strong team and looked forward to a comfortable victory, the opposition, on paper at least, not looking too threatening, with a pair of privately entered Ferraris, a pair of Gordinis, some private Maseratis and two entries from Connaught.

The latter appeared to be even less threatening when the transporter failed to turn up in time for the first practice session. By the time it did appear, after all sorts of adventures with failing brakes, the mechanics were exhausted. The drivers Les Leston and Tony Brooks had been forced to try to learn the road circuit aboard hired Vespa scooters, not exactly ideal preparation. For Brooks this was to be his first Formula One experience. Until the car arrived he had never sat in an F1 car before, his racing career thus far being mostly domestic sports car races on his Frazer-Nash, in which he had made enough of an impression to have been called upon by both Aston Martin for the TT and by Connaught for F2 work. He received a call from Connaught boss Rodney Clark ten days before Syracuse inviting him to take the drive. Brooks at the time of the call had been attending to a patient at the Manchester University dental hospital where he was in the latter stages of his training.

Taking his dental books with him to study on the journey down, by the time he finally got into the Connaught he was clearly ready for action, setting the fastest time on the second day to claim an unexpected front row slot alongside the Maseratis of Musso and Villorresi. From his position on the grid it proved difficult to watch both the starter's flag and the rev counter in the cockpit, with the result that his getaway was less than perfect, but he was soon up with the leading Masers, taking Villorresi on lap eight, before doing the same to Musso seven laps later. After quite a scrap between the two for some laps, the green Connaught gradually pulled ahead and stayed in front throughout to come home a comfortable winner.

To say that such an outcome was unexpected would be to seriously exaggerate. Italian officials had the Connaught's engine stripped down to ensure that it was not larger than the regulation 2.5 litres, but once the initial surprise had faded the Italian crowd was very generous towards both driver and team. In his recent autobiography Brooks recounts how he lost the crown of one of his teeth in the melee as he tried to get back to his hotel. An emergency do it yourself repair job later, he was able to mumble his thanks to his team and the race organisers at the official prize giving ceremony.

The tale of the dental student taking such an unexpected win, and on a British car is certainly a romantic one, but it had a deeper significance. Although it had not been a round of the Championship, the Maserati team had been at Syracuse in force and they had been beaten. A British car had won a Grand Prix for the first time since Henry Seagrave's win for Sunbeam at San Sebastian in 1924. To do so again was not impossible, although for Connaught this victory would prove to be the high watermark of their Formula One career.

Deriving its name from the Continental Automobiles garage run by team founders Rodney Clarke and Mike Oliver, the team had been a stalwart of British racing since the beginning of the decade, in both single seater and sportscars. Helped by finance from Alfred McAlpine of the construction family and himself a Connaught GP competitor, the team struggled to raise the funds necessary develop the team as McAlpine's interest waned. Connaught folded after the Monaco GP in 1957.

30.

**Stirling Moss and Harry Schell,
Vanwall, International Trophy,
Silverstone 1956,
photograph by Alan Smith.**

The Vanwall team had endured a difficult season during 1955, starting the season with Hawthorn as lead driver but the relationship between driver and team owner Tony Vandervell had soon broken down. Already under tension after early season failures, the pair had fallen out at Spa. Vandervell had decided to drive his car, i.e. the Vanwall, through the traffic from his hotel to the race circuit, with a cooked clutch the result. Hawthorn was not amused and the pair decided to go their separate ways, although the relationship was concluded on civil terms.

A worse fate befell Hawthorn's Vanwall team mate, Ken Wharton, who suffered serious burns after a crash during the team's opening race of the season, the International Trophy. He was to be out of action until later in the year. Vandervell, short of drivers part way into the season, received letters from all sorts of correspondents, the majority totally without relevant experience, offering their services to drive his cars, but in the end he turned to American national Harry Schell. Schell had actually spent most of his life in France and even in age of such men, 'Arree was colourful character. Alongside his life as a Parisian restaurateur he had been a regular on the GP scene since 1950, driving a variety of cars, most notably Gordini and Maserati. Whilst not a recognised top line driver of the Fangio/Moss standard, he was a good midfield racer with a wealth of useful experience.

For 1956 Vanwall had produced a very impressive looking GP car indeed. The team had come a long way in terms of design since its earliest efforts two years previously. Never afraid to import talent, Vandervell had brought Colin Chapman into the fold to concentrate on chassis and suspension work, whilst Chapman's Lotus collaborator Frank Costin produced a very slippery, efficient shape.

Although Vandervell had tried to sign him Stirling Moss, like Fangio without a drive at the end of 1955 following the withdrawal of Mercedes, had opted to go to Maserati, whilst Fangio went to Ferrari. The Vanwall had attracted Moss during a test session, but he considered that Maserati offered him the better opportunity for the Grand Prix season. Nonetheless, a

deal was made to allow Moss to race the Vanwall at the early season non championship International Trophy race, where Maserati were not entered. As Moss later noted,

"... you just knew that Tony Vandervell was serious about his motor racing and would not rest until he was successful." (All my Races, p200).

The photograph here tells its own story. Moss and Schell took the first two positions on the grid, ahead of the Ferraris of Fangio and Collins. Although Moss was not away cleanly, he was soon ahead of the Ferraris, both of which had to drop out with problems. Whilst Schell also had problems, Moss put in a series of fast laps and came home an easy winner. He had seen the potential in the car and the team and this would prove significant in his decision to sign for them in 1957.

Although there was to be no fairy tale result for the team during 1956, Harry Schell put in two stirring performances on the fast tracks of Reims and Monza. At Reims he showed tremendous speed and mixed it with three Ferraris which were most unhelpful towards him before he retired with fuel pump problems. Likewise at Monza, he drew very appreciative applause from the crowd for the way in which he put both Ferrari and Maserati under pressure.

There was clearly potential in the car. The following season would see this potential realised.

31.

Stirling Moss, Maserati, Monaco 1956.

After looking at BRM, Vanwall and Connaught as possible berths for 1956, Moss decided to go back to Maserati where he had spent part of the 1954 season. He was offered the number one driver position, with Jean Behra alongside him. There is no doubt that he was more likely to win Grands Prix at Maserati than with the British teams at this stage, but the season was to have its frustrations as reliability issues let the team down on several occasions.

He led from start to finish here at Monaco, and took another win at the end of the season at Monza, but only after running out of fuel towards the end and having to be pushed along to the pits by another Maserati. The British GP at Silverstone could easily have gone his way, but a healthy lead three

quarters of the way through the race was lost when a fuel tank began to leak. A good result at Spa the previous month had looked likely until a wheel parted company with the rest of the car.

The overall result for the world championship was the same as it had been in 1955, Fangio first, Moss second. Both had suffered car failures during the season so it is difficult to state categorically that either one deserved it more than the other. What was becoming clear was that there was not really that much to choose between them. The beautiful shot of Moss here with the Monaco harbour behind him, shows perfectly how much at ease he was with the demands of Grand Prix racing at the very highest level. The classic straight armed driving style and the total calmness of his face speak clearly of a master of his trade.

32.

Peter Collins, Ferrari, Reims 1956, photograph by Geoff Goddard.

For the previous two seasons Peter Collins had appeared in both the BRM and Vanwall teams but had not quite settled into either, a mixture of the cars' performance and his own vacillations. However, his drive with Stirling Moss for Mercedes in the Targa Florio at the end of the previous year had kept his name firmly on the shortlist for any topline GP drives and he was duly signed by Ferrari.

He very quickly became a firm favourite with Enzo Ferrari, enjoying life in Italy. After a poor season in 1955, the team had benefitted from a Fiat brokered deal whereby Ferrari took over the Lancia D50 cars following the latter's decision to withdraw from their short lived F1 attempt. Ferrari modified the cars and developed them over the winter, adding a degree of reliability which had perhaps been missing from the cars in their original form.

Contrary to current Ferrari practice, at this period there was not any explicit number one or number two status granted. This created an interesting dynamic within the team, for not only had Collins joined, the top two Italians Castellotti and Musso were there, with Olivier Gendebien, Fon de Portago, Wolfgang von Trips and Paul Frere ready to be summoned for occasional duty. Last, but clearly not

least, Juan Fangio had agreed to join after the Mercedes withdrawal.

As a triple World Champion Fangio's status within the sport was not in doubt. His precise status at Maranello was less clear. In an age when drivers could take over team mates' cars during a race the precise pecking order within a team was a matter of some importance. The issue became a central one at Ferrari in 1956, for Fangio took over Musso's car in Argentina and Collins' in Monaco when the latter had been in second place to Moss, exactly where Fangio eventually finished.

The situation became more interesting still when Collins took a maiden GP win at Spa, after Fangio's car was stranded at the far side of the circuit, too far for him to walk back to the pits! Here at Reims, Fangio, Collins and Castellotti held sway at the front, to be joined by Harry Schell's Vanwall for a period. Fangio had to make a stop to fix a leaking fuel pipe and the Vanwall retired, leaving the two young Ferrari recruits to fight it out to the end, Collins just managing to hold off his team mate, winning by less than half a second at the flag. The victory was something of a tonic for the team which had appeared wearing black armbands for the weekend. Enzo Ferrari's son, Dino, had died that week after many years of illness.

Two consecutive wins propelled Collins to the top of the Championship standings and prompted much comment about how the team would manage the rest of the season. Autosport editor, Gregor Grant, wrote,

"... from now on, there can be no question of bringing him in to hand over to Fangio if the reigning champion's car packs up."

It seems that both Collins and Fangio sought reassurances from Ferrari himself that there would be no undue favouritism for the remainder of the season. Quite how both were reassured is unclear, but this was Ferrari!

In fact the next races saw Fangio on much stronger form, winning at Silverstone and the Nurburgring, so that by the time the teams arrived at Monza Fangio was ahead of Collins in the points, but the latter could still win the title if he could win the race and if Fangio retired. Such a scenario was by no means impossible, which made what actually took place all the more remarkable.

Fangio did indeed retire his car. Musso pitted, but did not hand over to Fangio, determined to put on a show himself in front of his home crowd. With the Ferraris suffering excessive tyre wear, Collins was called in for a tyre change, but without discussion he vacated his seat and offered it to Fangio who needed no second invitation. He rejoined the race, finishing second to Moss, to confirm his fourth championship. As for Collins, his precise motivation has never been properly explained. His act of generosity remains extraordinary. He himself later said that had he indeed taken the title with Fangio in the pits it would not have felt right. He also said that he would have other chances of winning.

Sadly this was not to be the case as the summer of 1956 was to be the highest point of his Grand Prix career, the following season yielding no wins. As we shall see, he would win one more Grand Prix in 1958.

33.

Juan Fangio, Ferrari,
Silverstone 1956,
photograph by Geoff Goddard.

There had been rumours at the end of 1955 that Fangio would retire after Mercedes announced their withdrawal from the sport, but by the end of the year he had signed for Ferrari. Perhaps there were times during the following season when he wished that he had indeed retired, for he seemed to be ill at ease at Maranello. Quite what the problem was is uncertain, but it was most likely a mixture of different elements. Back home in Argentina, President Peron's regime had been overthrown by the military in September 1955. Over the following months any public individual had their finances and assets frozen. Fangio, as one of the most famous persons in Argentina found himself among their number and although this was eventually sorted out, 1956 was not the easiest of times for him.

He was also unwell for the early part of the year. A particularly cold and wet Mille Miglia event at the end of April had seen him finish fourth behind team mates Castellotti, Collins and Musso. Fangio had finished in a weakened state, soaked and depleted. Perhaps this is what caused his driving to be so uncharacteristically untidy during the Monaco GP, where spectators were astonished to see the normally

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meticulous champion banging and barging his Ferrari against the barriers, damaging it badly enough that he had to come in to the pits and commandeer Collins' car. Although he would later state that this had been the only way of maintaining the necessary pace to stay in touch with Moss, in truth it had not been his finest hour.

Collins' back to back victories at Spa and Reims did not help his mood. He had to retire at Spa, and although he had stormed through the field after a stop at Reims to take fourth place, the two cars of his team mates had run faultlessly. Amid mutterings of sabotage and favouritism, a private meeting with his employer was sought, as a result of which from now on Fangio had a mechanic personally assigned to his car for the remainder of the season, a system he had been used to at his other berths.

How much difference this made is a moot point, but the results began to improve. Following Moss' late retirement, Fangio won at Silverstone, curiously his only British GP victory. At the Nurburgring he was in more commanding form, leading all the way and establishing himself at the top of the table before the final round at Monza. As we have seen, his own car having failed, Fangio took over Collins' machine to ensure his fourth title was safe.

Clearly it was not the happiest of seasons for Fangio and relations between him and Enzo Ferrari were never warm. Nonetheless, he had stuck to the task and collected another world championship and it could not really be said that anyone had actually driven any better than him over the course of the season. He would remain in Grand Prix racing for another season, leaving Ferrari to join rivals Maserati. Here he would give some performances by which he could be remembered properly.

Part 4: The End of the Beginning

The 1957 Season

34.

Tony Brooks and Tony Vandervell,
Vanwall, Goodwood,
photograph by Edward Eves.

For 1957 Vanwall had done enough to convince Moss that it was worth signing up for a British team again and he was to be joined by Tony Brooks. Following Brooks' famous win at Syracuse at the end of 1955 he had a few domestic outings for BRM the following year, including his world championship debut at Silverstone. It had not ended well, as a sticking throttle pitched the car off the track and left him with a broken jaw and ankle. As he later remarked ,at least

"the car did the decent thing and set fire to itself"

He had continued to pursue " the day job" during 1956, passing his dentistry final exams at the end of the year before, briefly, taking a position in the university dental hospital. It was to last only a few weeks as a professional motor racing career began to develop. Brooks had been invited to test the Vanwall at his nearest circuit, Oulton Park, in the autumn of '56 and on the strength of that signed a contract as number two to Moss for the coming season. They would be joined by another talented driver, Stuart Lewis-Evans to make this an all British team.

By now the Vanwall was on its way to becoming a properly developed GP car, although there were still a number of reliability issues. Whenever he was asked who exactly designed the car Tony Vandervell would always stress the team behind the car rather than any single individual. It was quite a team, including Frank Costin and Colin Chapman on chassis, suspension and aerodynamics, Leo Kuzmici and Harry Weslake on the engine side plus the skilled and disciplined team of Vanwall engineers and mechanics headed by Cyril Atkins and Norman Burkinshaw. Above all this was Vandervell's personal project and he continued to put the most enormous energy into it. There was a standard throughout Vanwall, from its manufacturing to the presentation of both its racing cars and mechanics which echoed the Mercedes team under Neubauer and which was

strikingly in advance of the two leading Italian teams of Ferrari and Maserati.

Despite such high standards the car itself by all accounts was not the easiest to drive. Both Moss and Brooks found it very unforgiving, particularly when compared to the Maserati 250 F which could be thrown around with far greater confidence. The Vanwall was certainly fast, but at this stage still sometimes fragile and demanding.

The non championship event shown here at Goodwood followed a similar event at Syracuse, and both events summed up the " fast but fragile" reputation. Moss and Brooks retired from both races having been clearly the fastest cars at each venue. There were problems both with the fuel flow system and the throttle linkages which needed to be cured if the team was to enjoy success once the world championship season began. The attention to the engine bay shown here neatly sums up the situation.

Brooks himself came into the pits early on in the race but, after attention to the throttle linkage went back out and demonstrated the potential by setting a new outright Goodwood lap record. Here he is seen talking with The Guv'nor himself, Tony Vandervell. Approaching the car from the rear is the unmistakable figure of commentator and writer John Bolster.

35.

Stirling Moss, Vanwall, Aintree,
photograph by Geoff Goddard.

By the time of the British GP held again at Aintree, there had been four rounds of the World Championship. If we discount the Indianapolis round, (won by Sam Hanks), the other three in Argentina, Monaco and France had all gone to Fangio's Maserati. Vanwall had not contested the Argentine race, Moss crashed at Monaco where Brooks was a fine second and at Rouen both drivers had missed the race, Moss having to undergo a sinus operation and Brooks having suffered a very nasty leg injury when he had crashed at Le Mans. He had been trapped underneath his Aston Martin which had overturned on one of the sandbanks laid at the edge of the circuit. With fuel

34. Brooks and Vandervell, 1957



leaking around him the Aston had been struck by another car which miraculously freed Brooks, but his leg needed treatment and rest.

By the next round at Aintree Moss was fit again, but Brooks was clearly in great discomfort, having to be virtually lifted in and out of the car and requiring sheets of rubber to be placed in the cockpit to protect his leg. Over in the rival Maserati camp all was not well either. Fangio was decidedly off colour with a gastric problem whilst the mechanics were heard to be complaining of the strain the team had been under for the past two months, competing in both Sportscars and GP racing and fearing that their preparations for Aintree had been compromised by lack of time and resources.

Moss took pole position, closely followed by Behra's Maserati and Brooks, with Fangio fourth ahead of the first of the Ferraris driven by Hawthorn. Despite a local bus strike on raceday (Britain held its GP on Saturday in those days), there was a substantial crowd at Aintree, much of it gathered in the hopeful expectation that this could be the day when a British driver on a British car could finally win a Grand Prix. Henry Seagrave had won for Sunbeam in France in 1923 and in Spain the following year, but those victories were a long time ago and way before the world championship began in 1950. Stirling Moss had of course won on home soil on this very track two years previously, but that had been on a Mercedes Benz. Could he do it on a green car this time?

Vanwall went into the race with hope but tempered by realism. Whilst Brooks' practice time indicated that he was not short of speed, the leg injury meant that he was going to find a long stint more difficult. A plan was made that if either Moss or Lewis-Evans on the third car had problems, Brooks would be called in and would hand over his car to them. It was to prove critical.

From the start Behra's Maserati took the lead from the middle of the front row, but as they crossed the line to complete the first lap Moss was ahead, to a huge roar from the crowd. Brooks was well up and on lap seven Lewis-Evans overtook Fangio for sixth. Three Vanwalls in the top six! The spell was soon broken as Moss headed for the pits, briefly on lap fifteen to have a misfiring engine looked at. Thirty seconds later he was on his way again, but only for five laps as the problem was not cured.

At this point the heroic Brooks was called in

from sixth place and Moss was now put into car number 20, but he re-joined in ninth place. Brooks actually took over Moss' number 18 car, but it would eventually retire with engine problems.

The race which had promised so much for the home crowd seemed to have fallen apart, with a familiar look now at the front, Maserati leading (Behra) from the two Ferraris of Hawthorn and Collins. Perhaps a British driver might still win? Fangio had confirmed Maserati forebodings by retiring his smoking car at just over half distance, but with sixty of the ninety laps completed it was still the three Italian machines in front, although Moss was on the move again, setting a new lap record, half a second quicker than his pole position time.

For once luck was to be on his side. Collins dropped out, but more drama soon followed on lap sixty eight as Behra's clutch literally exploded on the Railway Straight. A closely following Hawthorn ran over the debris and, assuming the suspension had broken, coasted into the pits, helmet already off. He was surprised when the mechanics simply changed a wheel and sent him on his way again to take an eventual third place. The crowd had reacted to these changes at the front in a most un-British way,

"There was something not quite nice about how the news of Behra's breakdown was received - or maybe the cheers were for the two Vanwalls; at least one hopes so." (Autosport)

The excitement was understandable Lewis-Evans and Moss were now circulating at the front and with twenty laps to go began to put on a show for the crowd. Surely it was too good to be true? It was, as Lewis-Evans was soon out with the familiar Vanwall throttle linkage problems.

Worse almost followed. Moss made a quick stop for more fuel with ten laps to go, but that was the final act in this great drama. Moss crossed the finish line a very safe thirty seconds ahead of Luigi Musso and Mike Hawthorn on their Ferraris. A British driver had won the British GP on a British car and the national reserve was momentarily dropped as,

"Hats were hurled high into the air - never to be retrieved. Complete strangers shook hands and danced jigs. Even hard-bitten pressmen could not conceal their excitement" (Autosport)

It had been an extraordinary day and a

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triumph for the Vanwall team who were rightly praised throughout the land. Interestingly the BBC has quite recently shown some of its motor racing archive film in its series *That Petrol Emotion*. The footage of the finish of Aintree 1957 captures the occasion wonderfully, the normally precise, clipped tones of commentator Raymond Baxter suddenly becoming distinctly watery as a waving Stirling Moss comes to the line to the very audible approval of jubilant crowd. Whilst there have been any number of celebratory scenes at the end of British GPs since then, it is hard to think of any which have carried such significance. An event few believed possible had happened and it paved the way for so much of what was to follow.

As a footnote, this was the last time a winning driver took over a team mate's car. The job of lapscorers and timekeepers became much easier from 1958 when drivers could only use the car in which they started the race.

36,
Juan-Manuel Fangio,
Maserati. Monaco,
photograph by Edward Eves.

37,
Juan-Manuel Fangio,
Maserati. Rouen.

38,
Juan-Manuel Fangio,
Maserati. Nurburgring,
photograph by Louis Klemantaski

We take the next three photographs together in tribute to the great Argentinean driver in his final season. All three are among the most treasured of the collection, partly for the subject they depict, partly due to the photographic qualities they possess.

In his final season Fangio was now forty six years old, almost twice the age of many of his challengers. He had four world titles to his name, he had driven for the great teams of Alfa Romeo, Maserati, Mercedes Benz and Ferrari. For his final year he returned to Maserati which, after the politics of Ferrari the previous season, he regarded as a

spiritual home.

The season started with a win on home soil in Argentina, where he led home team mate Jean Behra. Vanwall had chosen not to send cars to the race and Moss had driven a Maserati, but had problems with it from the start. For Monaco, Vanwall were back and with Brooks joining Moss they would be a threat. The Ferraris of Hawthorn, Collins and Musso would also be strong.

In the event Moss took an early lead but overdid things on the fourth lap, spinning off the track and dislodging one of the telegraph poles which marked the trackside. Collins ran into this and crashed, shortly to be joined by Hawthorn who, having hit Brooks, lost a wheel and landed on top of Collins' car, fortunately without injury to either.

Yet again Fangio avoided trouble, as he had done back in 1950 on the same circuit. As he continued unscathed to lead the rest of the race, ahead of a recovering Brooks, one could only wonder at how he alone of the front runners managed to stay out of trouble while all around him fell into chaos.

The French GP was held this season for the first time on the beautiful sweeping road circuit outside Rouen. There is a lovely story of Fangio seeing the track for the first time, noting its sweeping series of downhill curves and rubbing his hands together, in happy anticipation that such a course would allow him to show his skills. The photograph shows him in a classic four wheel drift in which the driver has deliberately allowed the rear wheels to break their grip and controls the angle of the car by a careful balancing of the throttle and steering. It is perhaps as iconic a picture of the first fifty years of GP racing as any, although I confess to have been unable to ever trace the source of the crumpled nose of the Maserati 250F - A clip with another car, or a brush with a trackside obstacle?

Doubtless Fangio's race was made easier by the absence of Moss, missing and in need of a sinus operation after a water skiing accident during a short Mediterranean break from racing, but it did not detract at all from the appreciation of Fangio's supreme artistry. Motor Sport, hardly given to effusive individual praise, reported in glowing terms,

"on most circuits there is perhaps one corner on which he demonstrates his ability over all others, but from all round the Rouen circuit came reports of the fantastic way the "Old man" was sliding the

36. . Fangio, Monaco 1957



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Maserati through the fast bends."

Despite a fighting performance from the brave Luigi Musso on his Ferrari, it was Fangio who won by almost a minute, his Maserati going as crisply over the line as it had been at the start. As Motor Sport concluded, so did the three Lancia Ferraris which took the next three places, "though had the World Champion been in a Maranello car the positions would have been reversed, for it seems that Fangio will win irrespective of what car he uses."

As an aside, for all of us so familiar with the voluminous writings of D.S.J., it would be as well to bear his comments from Rouen 1957 in mind when trying to fathom his much later comments that there have only been five true greats since the war, (Ascari, Moss, Clark, Villeneuve and Senna). Jenks was nothing if not contradictory!

The Louis Klemantaski shot of Fangio on his way to his wonderful victory at the Nurburgring is in itself a perfect homage to the great man. The story of the race is well known, but bears a quick retelling. Starting with a lighter fuel load than the Ferraris, the plan was for Fangio to build up sufficient lead to allow for a refuelling stop. The main opposition looked like being Hawthorn, Collins and Musso, the Vanwall drivers finding their cars horribly unsuited to the bumps of the 'Ring and having a most uncomfortable time during practice.

Fangio executed the first part of the plan perfectly, pitting on lap 12 with an almost thirty second lead over Hawthorn, having already lowered the lap record several times. At this point the best laid plans can go wrong, and, sure enough, as the Maserati mechanics struggled to change the rear wheels much of the good work was undone as Hawthorn and Collins went by the pits. Fangio re-joined forty seconds behind the Ferraris and for the next three laps the gap remained constant, Collins and Hawthorn taking it in turns to lead.

Suddenly the gap started to reduce as Fangio began to increase his pace. Forty seconds became thirty, then twenty-five and even as the Ferrari mechanics held out signals telling their men to speed up and warning of the danger behind, there was a growing sense of inevitability that this was to be Fangio's day.

To give some idea of the pace, the 1956 lap record had gone to Fangio with a time of 9 minutes

41.6 seconds. The track had been resurfaced since then and speeds were expected to increase. In practice Fangio had lapped in 9.25.6 to take pole position. Prior to his pit stop he had taken the record down to 9. 29.5. Now, chasing the Ferraris, he produced three laps at 9.25.3, then 9.23.4 before unleashing a scarcely credible 9.17.4 on lap 20 which saw him close to within two seconds of the two leaders.

The game was up, first Collins then Hawthorn surrendering to the onslaught. Although the latter hung gamely on to the flying Maserati, it was to no avail as Fangio took the chequered flag to huge applause. It was to be The Maestro's final statement of his great all round ability. Pictures of him immediately after the race show him looking unusually drained, witness to just how much effort had gone into this performance. A fifth championship was his, and deservedly so. Of his drive on this day he later remarked,

"Without any doubt the Nurburgring was my favourite circuit. I loved it, all of it, and on that day i think i conquered it. On another day, who knows, perhaps it would have conquered me."

Although there were still two races to go, in both of which he would finish second to Moss, he had given of his best at the Nurburgring and his drive there stands comparison with any other in Grand Prix racing history.

39, 40, 41, 42. Pescara Grand Prix

As with the preceding Fangio pieces, we treat the next four photographs from Pescara 1957 together. The race has been beautifully covered in Richard Williams' book *The Last Road Race* (2004) which captures so much of both the atmosphere of the race and of racing life generally at the time. The race represents a turning point in many ways which gives this quartet of photographs here a particular significance for our story.

The Vanwall victory at Aintree had been followed by Fangio's magnificent win over the Ferraris at the Nurburgring, where the Vanwall team struggled all weekend with unsuitable suspension which made the drivers' lives very difficult.

Would they fare any better on the public roads which made up the Pescara round of the championship? Although there had been a number of important races held there before the war, 1957 was to be the only time that the Adriatic seaside town south of Ancona would hold a round of the championship. Starting in the town itself, the course ran briefly south parallel to the sea before turning inland in the direction of Rome, turning north east again towards the coast where the final leg of the triangle headed back down the coast to the start. At a fraction under sixteen miles it was similar in length to the Nurburgring, but very different in character, two thirds of the lap being run at very fast speeds along more or less straight roads, but where the 'Ring was a purpose built track the Pescara course ran straight through villages.

It takes very little to produce a carnival atmosphere in Italy and any road race is bound to bring out a large following. When it is a full scale GP held by the seaside during the national holiday of Ferragosto a very large gathering is guaranteed and reports suggest a crowd of over 200,000 spectators the vast majority of whom, it must be assumed, were hopeful of another home win for a Ferrari or Maserati.

The odds very much favoured the latter camp. Of the sixteen cars which lined up for the start no less than ten were carrying Maserati's Trident symbol. In our first photograph here the Maseratis of Giorgio Scarlatti (no.8) and Jean Behra (no.4) can be seen lining up next to the straw bales in the foreground. Fangio's car,(no.2), can just be seen in the background, to the left of the shot, peeking out of the

makeshift temporary pits and grandstand structure. Roy Salvadori's little 2.2 litre Cooper, (no.22), is pointing across the track towards the pits. He and team mate Brabham, struggling for top speed against the larger engined opposition on this fast track, would bring up the rear of the grid.

Ferrari was reduced to a single entry for Luigi Musso and this was agreed to only after lengthy pleadings from the Roman driver who had approached other teams in the hope of a drive. Ferrari sent no cars for Hawthorn or Collins. At the time Ferrari himself had come under very public criticism in Italy, not least from the Vatican through the pages of *L'Osservatore Romano*, for his responsibility for the death of Eugenio Castellotti in a testing accident at Modena and then for the accident in the Mille Miglia in which a group of spectators including five school children had been killed, (see below). Ferrari was threatening never to race his cars in Italy again.

The second photograph shows the Vanwall team pits, slightly further along, with the cars of Brooks (28), Moss (26) and Lewis Evans (30) being prepared for battle. Salvadori's Cooper can be seen more clearly here in the foreground.

During practice Fangio set the fastest time by ten seconds, in 9 min 44 .6 , an average of just under 98 mph, ahead of Moss with 9.54 and Musso on 10 minutes exactly. There were mutterings about a very special brew in Fangio's fuel tank which was unlikely to be used in the race itself.

A rather grainy and marked photograph shows the front row moments before the start, which, according to the programme, had been called for the wonderfully vague time of "around 9.30 am"! A degree of chaos was by no means uncommon to the starts of many continental races at the time, but Pescara seems to have excelled in this respect and the photograph is revealing in the contrast between the sense of anticipation in the front two rows and the presence of officials or mechanics among the cars a few rows further back. It is not altogether surprising that private entrant Horace Gould collected a mechanic on the front of his Maserati and had to wait as the unfortunate passenger sorted himself out.

At the start Musso took an initial lead but it was the green Vanwall of Moss which soon assumed command. Musso pushed him, but was out after nine laps with an oil leak. Fangio, at that stage third, slid on Musso's oil and had to make a stop to repair the

42. Moss, Pescara 1957



damage but was soon back on his way. There were a number of casualties in the early stages of the race as cars and drivers both struggled with the heat and road conditions. Roy Salvadori tangled with team mate Jack Brabham and had to retire. He made it back to the pits where he hung out a sign to Brabham which simply read "Gone Swimming". As Salvadori headed for a refreshing Adriatic dip, Brabham soldiered on. He was to run out of fuel on the final lap and coasted into the deserted forecourt of a petrol station, expecting to abandon his Cooper and walk back to the pits. A pump attendant suddenly appeared, a few litres were put in and after shaking hands Brabham drove on to the finish. It was that sort of event.

At the business end of the field Moss was in a class of his own. The final photograph in this sequence shows him taking the chequered flag, a fraction under three hours after the start having covered 287 miles at an average of over 95 mph. Fangio was second, three minutes down, ahead of team mate Harry Schell. The event was over by 12.30 and as the crowds made their way to the beach or further afield and the temporary stands and pits began to be taken down, the inner circle of managers, drivers and reporters could begin to take stock of what they had witnessed. It was one thing for a British car and driver to win a race around the perimeter of the Aintree Grand National course, but now the same combination had beaten the red cars on home soil on a classic road course. In retrospect it is easy to see that Pescara did mark a turning point and that the balance of power between the continental and British teams would never quite be the same. Such turning points are often clear after the event, but possibly not so much at the time. Certainly there was little time for reflection as the circus moved on towards its next venue at Monza.

For the winner there was definitely no time at all to ponder what he had achieved. Stirling Moss headed back home to London, but his hire car broke down and he had to take a taxi, and then suffered delays at the airport, the net result was a 4 am arrival in London, a quick wash and change before going into his office. The next day he flew to the USA where he joined the MG team for their record breaking efforts at Bonneville. He succeeded in taking the class F speed record for 1100-1500 cc cars in the streamlined EX181. He averaged 245 mph for the two way run, smashing the previous record of 203mph set by Goldie Gardner in 1939. It was not a bad week's work.

43.

Maserati team, Monza, photograph by Edward Eves.

There is a haunting quality to this Eves shot of the Maseratis at Monza which echoes the much earlier piece in the exhibition of the Alfa Romeo team at Reims in 1951, (photo. No. 3). The hand beaten panels of the rounded tail sections of the 250Fs, the detail of the rivets and leather strap, hand painted numbers and crude chalk markings all speak of an age which is about to disappear. Whilst there were rumours and questions surrounding the longevity of the rival Ferrari team, ironically what was not realised at the time was that this would be the last appearance of a works Maserati Grand Prix team on home soil. The famous Modenese marque had started life in neighbouring Bologna and had carried the symbol of that city, Neptune's Trident, proudly since the 1920s, but financial pressures were increasingly calling into question the ability to field a full works effort in GP racing and Sportscars.

At the time this was by no means apparent. After all lead driver, the incomparable Fangio had recently won the World Championship, clinched with his epic drive at the Nurburgring. As can be seen here, the team came to Monza at very much full strength with cars for Fangio (2), Schell(4), a new v12 model for Jean Behra (6), and Scarlatti (8). Maserati number 10 is the privately entered example of wealthy Spanish businessman Francisco Godia, who had a career encompassing a fourth place at Le Mans in 1949 on a vintage Delage and racing a Ford GT40 twenty years later.

The race was to come down to a battle between the Maserati and Vanwall teams, with Ferrari, at least entering at full strength again after the lone Musso car at Pescara, on this occasion reduced to the role of very much the third party. Practice had been fascinating as the two leading teams slugged it out over the Friday and Saturday sessions. The results were momentous as Lewis - Evans took pole position from Moss and Brooks for a Vanwall 1-2-3, only the width of the Monza straight allowing a degree of face saving as Fangio's red Maserati took the outside front row slot.

If Pescara had turned out to be a virtuoso solo performance from Moss, Monza proved to be far more the traditional mano a mano contest so often produced by the majestic old Monza autodromo. The early stages saw a huge battle between the three Vanwalls

43. Maserati at Monza, 1957



and the Fangio and Behra Maseratis, but one by one they hit problems leaving Moss to win comfortably from Fangio whom he had, at one stage, actually lapped as the Champion stopped to change tyres. Brooks underlined the British team's dominance, setting fastest lap whilst coming back after two pitstops.

Autosport really went to town in its praise for the team after the race, seeing Monza as an even greater performance than Pescara. The domination in practice, the speed of the cars, the presence of a full team from Ferrari all combined to make this an outstanding performance. As Fangio communicated to Tony Vandervell after the race, the Vanwalls had just been too fast for the opposition.

For Maserati, whilst a number of privately entered cars would continue to race during the following season, this was really the end of the road for their 250 F, perhaps the classic among all front engined GP cars. It had been developed over the past four seasons and for the team to compete at the top level a new model would be required. As we shall see, events later in the year conspired to prevent further involvement at this level.

44.

Ron Flockhart and Ivor Bueb, Jaguar D Type, Le Mans, photograph by Edward Eves.

Although the works Jaguar team had been wound down after 1955, there were still a number of teams running the D Types. The best known of these was the Ecurie Ecosse team, owned by colourful Edinburgh businessman David Murray and run by "Wilkie" Wilkinson. They had been good enough to win at Le Mans in 1956, but faced a major challenge in 1957, with strong works entries from Ferrari, Maserati, Gordini and Aston Martin.

The event turned out to be a Jaguar triumph after an initial three hour sprint had put paid to a number of the more fancied runners. Collins and Hawthorn both showed huge speed in their Ferraris but were early casualties, as was Jean Behra on the big 4.5 litre Maserati after a good spell at the front. Moss had rather drawn the short straw among the Maserati drivers, being given the coupé version of the same car. This one-off device had an interesting story, being a

version designed by Frank Costin whom Moss had recommended based on his experience of the designer's work at Vanwall. Costin designed an efficient body shape, but it was built back in Italy by Zagato. It has often been assumed that the Italians felt that their noses had been put out by bringing in an Englishman to help design their car and effectively sabotaged it by ignoring some key elements of the drawings, but the contemporary Motor Sport report suggests that it was actually the complete misunderstanding of Costin's work on aerodynamics which led to the car being described by Moss as one of the two worst cars he ever drove. The other was the v16 BRM.

In contrast the D Types ran well, Bueb and Flockhart leading for all but the first four hours of the race and heading a Jaguar 1-2-3-4 result. Considering that the engine in the D Type was effectively a development of that first seen in the XK120 seven years previously, the achievement was extraordinary and testament to the strength of that initial design and all the work that had gone into the C and D Types subsequently. It was to be Jaguar's final win at Le Mans for over thirty years when a very different era had arrived.

British Le Mans success in 1957 was not confined to Jaguar's overall domination. The much smaller Lotus cars were also triumphant in the famed Index of Performance, essentially a formula which equated engine size to miles covered, a very French type of handicap system. It suited Colin Chapman's dedication to the lightest possible car to perfection as he managed to shed around fifty kilos from an already lightweight Lotus X1 to allow drivers Cliff Allison and Keith Hall to take the 750 cc class win as well as the Index award. In the 1100 cc class, again Lotus triumphed, Herbert Mackay-Fraser and Jay Chamberlain bringing their car home to a remarkable ninth place overall. The Team Lotus performance drew high praise from Motor Sport which described it as

"probably the best effort that has yet been attained by the British at Le Mans."

No doubt the remaining Bentley boys and Jaguar personnel would have had their own views on such a comment, but the sense of achievement all round was more than justified.

Ivor Bueb, a popular and accomplished driver who had shared the winning Jaguar with

44. Flockhart, Jaguar, Le Mans 1957



Hawthorn at the ill-fated 1955 Le Mans, was to die two years later following a crash in a Formula Two race at Clermont Ferrand.

Ron Flockhart was also a double winner at Le Mans, having won the previous year with Ninian Sanderson. Flockhart had an interesting career, appearing in several GPs over a four year period for a number of British teams, Connaught, BRM, Lotus and Cooper. Fast and talented, he never quite had the regular drive in a decent car which might have allowed him success in the single seater category. After racing cars he turned his attention to flying and became involved in the pursuit of the London to Sydney record. He was killed in an accident in 1962 in Australia as he was flying a converted Mustang in preparation for the record attempt.

45.

Piero Taruffi, Ferrari, Mille Miglia.

The two photographs of Piero Taruffi, "The Silver Fox", are taken together here as they suggest the story of the final staging of the great one thousand mile road race around Italy. Following the Le Mans tragedy of 1955, it was probably only a question of time before the true road races were brought to an end. The combination of increasingly powerful cars and lengthy courses over public roads where it was difficult, if not impossible, to adequately police groups of spectators, was unlikely to survive for much longer. The one exception to this beyond the period under review here remained Sicily's Targa Florio, always a law unto itself, which somehow survived all the way until 1973.

The Carrera PanAmerica, the Mexican five day epic which dwarfed all European races, had come to an end in 1954 after countless fatalities among spectator and competitor alike.

Taruffi by this stage had had a long and distinguished career. This was to be his fourteenth Mille Miglia, his first having been as far back as 1930 when he had taken a Bugatti to fortieth place, improving considerably by 1935 when he took an Alfa Romeo to third place.

After the war he won a number of important races for both Ferrari and Lancia, including the Mexican event in 1951 for the former where he

partnered Luigi Chinetti, Ferrari's first winner at Le Mans in 1949 and on his way to becoming Ferrari's key importer of cars into the US. Taruffi had even won the Swiss GP at Berne, the single seater highlight of his career.

Not content with cars, Taruffi also had a record on two wheels, both in road racing and in speed record runs. A notable development driver and rider as well as racer, his talents extended into management, during the mid- 50s he was running the Gilera team which included world champion Geoff Duke.

What he did have in common with a large number of drivers, managers and engineers was a disagreement with Enzo Ferrari. At the end of the 1955 season there had been a falling out with him over the availability of a suitable car for the Venezuelan sportscar race. It seems Taruffi was promised a drive of one of the latest models only to find that no such thing was forthcoming. Shades of Moss, whose versatility Taruffi greatly admired, at Bari in 1952.

Differences between the two were patched up ahead of the 1957 Mille Miglia.

Ferrari preparations were thorough, Taruffi and his team mates, including Collins, taking various cars out to practice over different stages of the route. Taruffi, with his long experience of the Italian roads at racing speeds, preferred to drive alone, without the aid of a navigator. He did take an occasional passenger on his training runs though, his wife Isabella, who otherwise tended to wait in their private car in front of the factory, either reading or knitting! By Taruffi's own account, Isabella was a good passenger, her only real complaint being the heat in the cockpit which was alleviated by her putting her feet out over the door to cool them. It is still a sight occasionally to be seen when driving in Italy today, but must have been quite something to be witnessed as a Ferrari racing car sped past.

Before the race Taruffi, by now fifty one years old, had promised Isabella that he would retire from racing if he succeeded in his long held ambition of winning the race. Ferrari knew of this and reminded him of it before the event, assuring him that he would win the race and asking him to keep his promise.

Taruffi was allocated number 535, to indicate his morning start time. Collins would start one minute ahead, Wolfgang von Trips another strong Ferrari

contender a further two minutes in front. For Taruffi the number was a good omen, 5+3+5 giving 13, lucky in his mind. It almost worked against him. By Rome Collins was ahead by five minutes and Taruffi was suffering gearbox problems. By Bologna the problem was worse and he was thinking of retiring the car when Ferrari himself told him at the checkpoint that Collins was also in trouble. Yet again proving the old Mille Miglia adage that "he who leads in Rome does not win in Brescia", shortly after Bologna Peter Collins was out of the race.

Taruffi now led into the final leg of the course, back up to Brescia, but von Trips remained a threat, just ahead on the road but behind on time. Taruffi played an old racer's trick, passing von Trips and then signalling to him that they should both take it easy to the finish line. In so doing he was able to disguise the problem with his own car and lead his team mate across the line. He kept his promise to Isabella and retired at the end of the season.

Sadly the less romantic story of the 1957 Mille Miglia was the accident by another of the works Ferraris, that of Spanish aristocrat Fon de Portago and his co-driver the American Ed Nelson. On the final part of the race, not far from Modena, their car suffered a tyre failure and crashed into a group of spectators within which were five schoolchildren. Including the two occupants of the car, eleven people were killed and it signalled the end of the event. There was a media outcry, Enzo Ferrari, rather unfairly, taking much of the blame from certain sections of the press.

The photographs of Taruffi as he pushes the big Ferrari on the Futa pass between Florence and Bologna, and with his wife Isabella after the victory, mark another stage in the passing of motor racing from an age in which there was still a link to its oldest traditions, the great city to city road races, to a more modern era where circuit racing would become the accepted norm. It had to move on, but it is difficult to avoid feeling that something precious was lost in the transition.

46.

Stirling Moss, Maserati, Caracas.

It is difficult to know whether to laugh or cry when looking at this piece, particularly with Stirling's written comment "Fire in Caracas" written onto it. Whilst fielding a bewildering assortment of different engined and bodied cars during the Sportscar season, Maserati had enjoyed some good results during the season, Fangio and Behra winning for them at Sebring, the French driver then accompanying Moss to victory in Sweden.

The big 4.5 litre 450S was a brutish car to handle, the chassis not really being up to the job of handling its 400 bhp, but on the right track and if it held together, it was capable of demolishing the opposition. Fangio apparently referred to it as a "bazooka" in reference to its power and mode of delivery. The car was campaigned by the leading factory drivers during 1957 but with a view to selling them to private entrants the following year, particularly in the USA.

Moss and Behra, this time in separate cars, were the two fastest qualifiers for the 1000 kms race to be run around the dual carriageway of Caracas, but Moss had trouble at the start and was left amongst the stragglers as the field tore off. As ever undaunted by this, after an hour he had hauled the car back up to the lead. It would not last as he became helplessly caught up in an accident whilst a car he was lapping had a violent crash of its own and the Maserati was out.

Moss returned to the pits where further drama was taking place. When Behra brought the sister 450S in for refuelling the car caught fire. Behra and Chief Engineer Bertocchi both suffered burns and were removed to hospital. As the flames were extinguished it was decided to put Moss into this car. He set off, but was quickly in after only two laps. The driving seat was still on fire! As Stirling was taken off to have his more sensitive areas attended to, Harry Schell took his turn at the wheel, seat now cooled down. Later in the race Schell moved to lap the smaller, three litre, engined Maserati of Jo Bonnier. As Schell started to pass, Bonnier's car suffered a puncture and the ensuing crash eliminated both cars.

Whilst the story has its comical elements, the race was actually a disaster for Maserati. Writer Anthony Pritchard estimated the cost of the damaged cars alone to be over £20,000.00, a fortune to Maserati

46. Moss, Caracas 1957



From Red to Green

at the time. It was probably the final straw for the company. They had been badly hit by unpaid debts in Argentina, one of its largest markets, after the fall of the Peron regime. On top of that it was decided that from 1958 Sportscar racing would be limited to three litre cars, rendering the plans to market the 450S obsolete.

There was little option but to pull the plug on the works racing effort and Maserati announced its withdrawal at the end of the year. This being Maserati and Italian racing blood the matter was not quite as open and shut as it seemed, and Maserati did indeed continue to build some new racing cars over the coming years, most notably the Tipo 61, better known as "The Birdcage" which enjoyed some success including two Nurburgring 1000kms victories in 1960-61. However, as a genuine factory entered front running operation, the Caracas race signalled the end for a marque which continues to inspire loyalty and affection among aficionados to this day.

Part 5: The Revolution Begins

The 1958 Season

A convincing argument could be made for seeing the 1958 season as either the closing act of the mid-50s story or the beginning of a new chapter. In Grand Prix racing a new championship was instituted, for Constructors, overdue recognition of the role played by the teams as well as the drivers. Although front engined cars won that championship, smaller cars with rear engines made their mark, as we shall see. In the Sportscar category Ferrari were again on top, but another British team was on the way to take up where Jaguar had left off.

We have opted to place 1958 on its own, for whilst there was a large measure of continuity, there were enough pointers to the future to suggest that change was on its way. In one area in particular the tide had definitely turned. With the retirement of the great Fangio, it was British drivers who dominated GP racing. Of the eleven rounds constituting the championship, French driver Maurice Trintignant won at Monaco and American Jimmy Bryan won at Indianapolis, a race largely ignored by the leading Europeans at the time, but technically a round of the championship until 1960. The other nine rounds were won by a quartet of British drivers.

47.

Tony Brooks, Aston Martin DBR2, Oulton Park

Whilst Tony Brooks has already featured in this story, Aston Martin has thus far been unfairly neglected. Under the ownership of David Brown, the company had been producing high performance GT cars for the road throughout the decade and, like Jaguar, had recognised both the engineering and publicity values of top level competition. It has to be said that the Feltham concern had not enjoyed the racing success of Coventry based Jaguar to this point, a second place behind the winning Jaguar D Type at Le Mans in 1956 being its best result in the French classic.

The arrival of the Ted Cutting designed DBR1 in 1957 had signalled a more determined effort by the team to take major honours. The car had suffered various development problems, but had taken

a notable victory in the Nurburgring 1000 kms round of the championship, where Tony Brooks, starting his love affair with the most demanding of circuits, sharing with Noel Cunningham-Reid, had defeated the more fancied Maserati and Ferrari teams.

The elegant lines of the car are seen here, where it dominated a largely domestic event, The British Empire Trophy race at Oulton Park. Brooks followed Stirling Moss home to make it a comfortable one-two for the team. More demanding challenges were to follow and Brooks would have to wait until the end of the season before he would take a victory in this category when, again on home soil but at Goodwood, he was to share a TT win with Moss. The Grand Prix season was to bring better results for this quiet and gifted driver.

48.

Stirling Moss and Reg Parnell, Aston Martin, Targa Florio, photograph by Edward Eves

The Targa Florio had not originally featured in Aston Martin's racing programme for the season, but Moss fancied his chances with the fine handling DBR1 on the demanding Sicilian road course. Already a winner here for Mercedes Benz during his dominant 1955 sportscar season, when he had shared the driving with Peter Collins, Stirling was familiar with the 44 mile road loop which wound its way across Sicily's mountainous terrain. For Brooks this was to be his first visit and there was much to learn.

Although by now firmly ensconced at Ferrari, Peter Collins offered to show his compatriot the ropes and took him out in the standard issue Fiat hire car. Brooks was unimpressed by the roads as a venue for a high performance racing car and after some miles of traversing what appeared to be little more than goat tracks he had had enough of what he assumed was a Collins practical joke. He was nonplussed to learn that this was indeed the Targa Florio course!

In the end Brooks' racing mileage was limited to a solitary practice lap. Moss started the race

48. Moss and Parnell, Targa Florio 1958



but clipped a stone marker post on the first lap. An ensuing twenty-three minute pit stop effectively put the car out of the running, but this was not the Moss approach to motor racing. Undaunted he set off at an extraordinary pace, breaking the lap record on four consecutive laps, before the transmission cried enough.

Reg Parnell had continued to be a central figure in British motorsport, by this time he had graduated from a driving to a manager's role. Working under Racing Director John Wyer, Reg had a great input at Aston Martin, overseeing race strategy and guiding his star drivers. Often to be seen on the pit wall, megaphone to hand, Reg retained a firm grip on the team during races and displayed all his virtues of determination and tenacity to ensure that Aston Martin kept the pressure on Ferrari.

49.

Luigi Musso, Ferrari,
Targa Florio 1958,
photograph by Edward Eves.

The frantic atmosphere of the Targa Florio is neatly captured by Edward Eves here in this shot of a Ferrari pitstop, with the yellow helmeted Luigi Musso about to take over for his stint. Together with Olivier Gendebien, Musso's Ferrari actually had a fairly comfortable race, leading throughout to make it three wins out of three races for Ferrari in the Sportscar championship, the team having already taken the rounds in Buenos Aires and Sebring.

The legendary Testa Rossa cars in use for the 1958/59 seasons were developments of a model which had originally been made in two litre form for sale to customers the previous year. The works team ran the car with three litre engines and with fuller bodywork than the customer cars which had originally had the "pontoon" shape behind the front wheels, the scalloped shape giving the car its distinctive shape. It had proved unstable when tested by the works drivers so the team had quickly reverted to a more standard shape.

Musso had enjoyed a strong start to his season, taking second places in both the Argentine and Monaco Grands Prix, but the atmosphere within the team was tense, Hawthorn and Collins not making life easy for the Roman driver.

There were also rumours about growing debts connected with unsuccessful business ventures. At the French GP, two months after his win here at the Targa, he lost control of his Ferrari whilst striving to stay with team mate Hawthorn in the early stages and was fatally injured.

50.

Stirling Moss and Jack Brabham,
Aston Martin, Nurburgring,
photograph by Edward Eves.

Although Aston Martin had won the event in 1957, a strong Ferrari team with four works Testa Rossas and a their entire Grand Prix driver line up were tipped to beat the British team at the Nurburgring round of the championship. Aston Martin were fielding three cars, 1957 winner Brooks sharing with Vanwall team mate Stuart Lewis - Evans, with Roy Salvadori and Carroll Shelby on the third car.

Moss took the lead from the start, whilst Brooks had a very rare spin and Salvadori was out early on. With Hawthorn and Collins sharing the lead Ferrari, this really was a major battle between the greatest drivers of the day.

It became clear that whilst the Ferrari pair were evenly matched in terms of pace, neither Brabham nor Lewis Evans could match their respective partners' times. As Brabham completed his stint the Aston Martin had fallen down the leaderboard and it required a major effort for Moss to haul the car back to the front. The pattern was repeated once the drivers changed again, leaving a third and final stint in which Moss again showed his brilliance as he repeatedly broke the Sportscar lap record on his way to a tremendous win.

Brooks was in fourth place when he was forced off the road by a much slower car he was lapping, an occupational hazard of sportscar racing which put many of the star drivers off this category.

Another Eves pit stop photograph here shows Jack Brabham refuelling the winning car. Drivers were kept busy in those days! Team manager Parnell gives the orders through his megaphone from the pits counter, whilst Moss watches impatiently.

50. Moss and Brabham, Nurburgring 1958



Moss later recorded that this race took far more out of him than had his Mille Miglia win in 1955. In all he drove for thirty six of the forty four lap race and vowed never to take on such a large proportion of the driving again. It was to be the first of a hat trick of wins for him in the classic event, winning the following year (and making it an Aston Martin hat trick), when paired now with Jack Fairman, he had to perform similar heroics to take the win. His third victory in 1960 saw him sharing a Maserati Birdcage with Dan Gurney and this time it was Gurney who had to overcome mechanical problems and keep the car in the lead. Looking at his three Nurburgring 1000 kms wins it is easy to see why Moss referred to Gurney as his best co - driver.

51.

Phil Hill and Olivier Gendebien, Ferrari, Le Mans 1958, photograph by Hamelin.

The crown jewel of the Sportscar series remained Les Vingt Quatre Heures du Mans and both Aston Martin and Ferrari arrived in force to contest the French classic, fielding similar line ups to those seen at the Nurburgring. Both teams were backed up by privately entered cars, as well as Jaguar, Porsche and the usual assortment of cars of various engine sizes which have always been a feature of the race.

In the event the race quite quickly developed into a race of attrition rather than the anticipated fight between the leading teams. Moss, as usual, took an early lead, running at a pace designed to lure the Ferrari drivers into an unsustainable pace. It certainly proved to much for the Aston Martin itself which was out after two ours with a blown engine. Ferrari were quite capable of damaging themselves, particularly with their star Hawthorn-Collins pairing. The former in particular had little enthusiasm for racing in the dark and wet conditions which prevailed. There is dispute over exactly what happened, but it seems that the clutch failure on their car, for which Collins took the blame, was caused by Hawthorn's excessive use of it as he pulled away from the pits. The car was retired during the night and Collins found himself relegated to the Formula Two race at Reims which supported the GP race a fortnight later. After much wrangling the team also entered him for the GP itself.

The Le Mans race developed into a battle between the ageing Jaguar D Type, privately entered by Duncan Hamilton who shared it with fellow previous Jaguar winner Ivor Bueb. Throughout the soaking wet night they kept the pressure on the surviving works Ferrari of Phil Hill and Olivier Gendebien. The battle was resolved in favour of the Ferrari after Hamilton crashed.

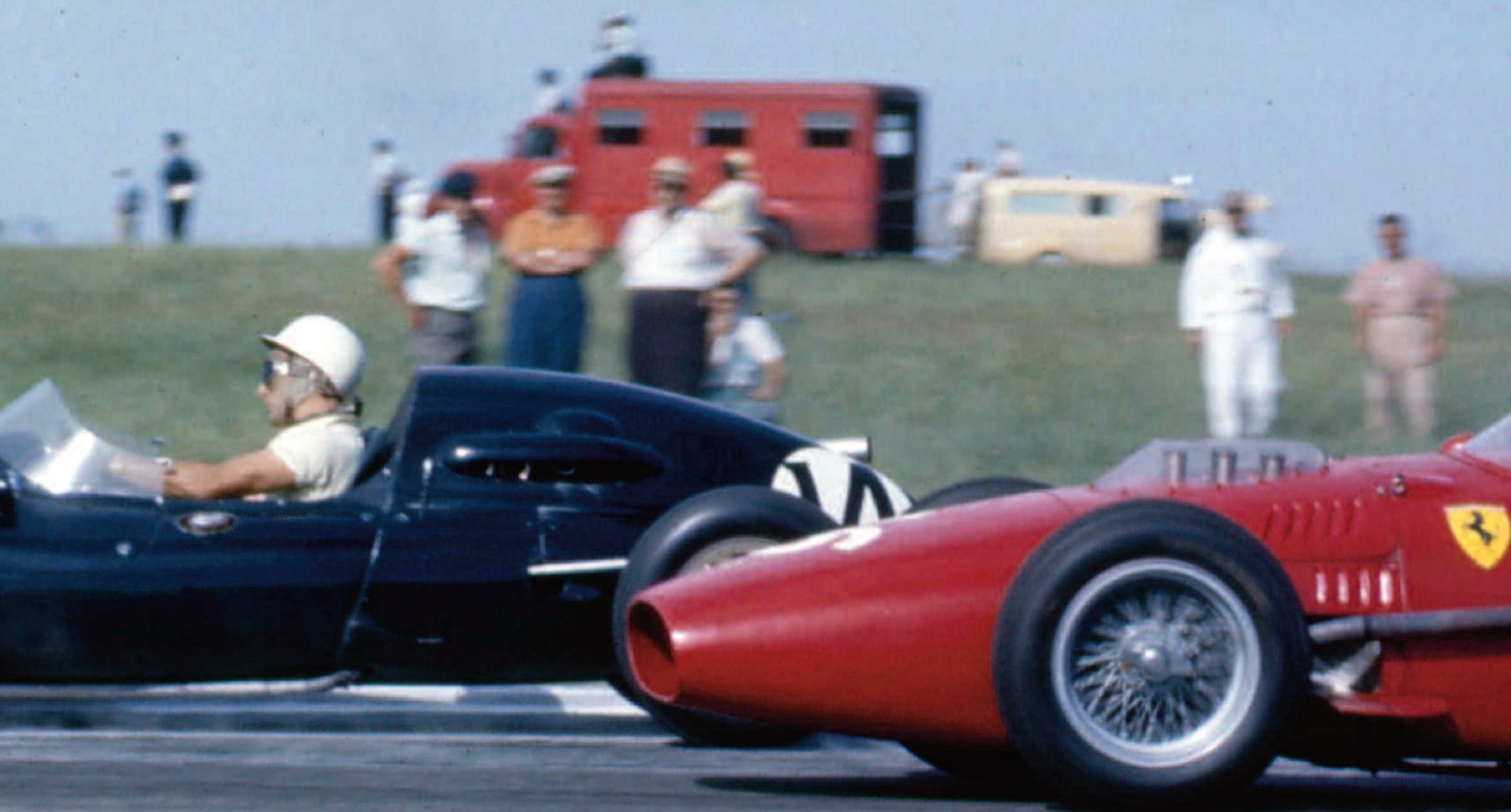
It was to be the first of three Le Mans Ferrari wins for the Californian Hill and Belgian Gendebien pair. Hill had already shared wins with Collins in Argentina and Sebring, so had certainly earned his keep at Maranello, as had Gendebien with his win on the Targa. Hill in particular was becoming increasingly frustrated at being kept waiting for his GP debut by the team, so the Le Mans win was some consolation. As we shall see, his chance in GP racing would soon come.

The Grand Prix season 1958.

After their wins in the latter half of the previous season Vanwall seemed to be in the strongest position. Maserati had withdrawn the works team although were to contest a couple of races and offered a degree of support to various private entrants. Ferrari, after a winless 1957, had a new car and could be expected to provide the strongest competition. There was one major change to the regulations which was causing a concern. The authorities had decided to change the rules governing the type of fuel which could be used. Over the preceding seasons the engines had been running on ever more exotic mixtures, which were now outlawed In favour of something much close to normal " pump gas". Of course, it was not quite as simple as filling up a Grand Rix car's tank with one type of fuel instead of another and some major redesign work was necessitated.

Partly to allow more time to perfect the latest engines to run to the new fuel regulations, Vanwall did not send any cars to the opening round of the World Championship in Argentina, but they did release Stirling Moss to drive for the Rob Walker team, now running a Cooper. It was to be a significant decision.

52. Moss, Argentina 1958



52.

Stirling Moss, Cooper,
Argentina.

If one photograph in this section justifies treating 1958 as the beginning of the revolution, it is this shot of Stirling Moss on the rear engined two litre Cooper leading the front engined Ferrari of Luigi Musso with its two and a half litre engine. Whilst giving away a lot in horsepower and top speed, the Cooper was lighter and had a key advantage in being less thirsty than its larger engined competitors.

Moss and Walker's chief mechanic, Alf Francis, had first worked together during the HWM years and shared similar levels of determination and racecraft. Realising that any possible advantage they may gain from not having to refuel would be negated by changing tyres, as the Cooper had wheels fixed by four studs rather than the more normal single knock off spinner used by Ferrari and Maserati. Between them Francis and Moss hatched a plan to attempt to run the race without stopping, but to lure the opposition into assuming that they would be making a stop. Whilst Fangio on what was effectively his farewell race in front of his home crowd took pole position, Moss qualified in seventh place for the grid whilst moaning to all that his stop was going to take much longer than everyone else's.

As the race developed and the larger cars made their stops to refuel the Cooper ran on. And on. Alf Francis moved out into the pitlane and gave signals to Moss as if bringing him in, but out he stayed. Eventually the penny dropped and Musso began to give serious chase. The closing stages were tense, Moss seeing the tyre tread wear away and then the rubber itself as the tell tale white of the inner carcass began to show, but he managed to hold onto his lead, eventually winning by a scant two seconds.

It is not clear that at the time the significance of the event was fully appreciated, but for the first time since the days of the mighty Auto Union team of pre-war days a rear engined car had won a GP. Whilst Auto Union had raced an immensely powerful car which gave away nothing in horsepower terms to the opposition, the Cooper was designed to different criteria and led the way in the search for smaller, lighter cars where the emphasis was more on chassis than engine design, indeed the engine was a bought in component made by Coventry Climax, a move unthinkable to the great racing houses of Alfa Romeo,

Ferrari, Maserati or Mercedes. Indeed Enzo Ferrari often referred to "assemblatori" when talking about the British "constructors", but within a remarkably short space of time the Cooper rather than the Ferrari model was to prevail.

53.

Stirling Moss, Vanwall,
Zandvoort,
photograph by Edward Eves.

The Vanwall team had rejoined the fray for the second round of the championship at Monaco, but despite Tony Brooks taking pole position the team suffered a variety of problems and the race went to the very same Rob Walker entered Cooper which had won in Argentina, but this time driven by veteran French driver Maurice Trintignant who took an unexpected but popular win.

Zandvoort witnessed a return to the more normal order, the Vanwall team occupying the whole of the front row as Stuart Lewis-Evans took pole position ahead of Moss and Brooks. Whilst Lewis-Evans and Brooks both retired their cars, Moss led the whole way to take a convincing win. So dominant was his performance that he was now referred to by Gregor Grant, editor and GP correspondent of Autosport, as "Moss the Immaculate." Behind Stirling the story was equally remarkable, as the BRMs of Schell and Jean Behra followed the Vanwall home, with Roy Salvadori's Cooper pushing Hawthorn's Ferrari down into fifth place. Three races gone, three victories for British teams.

54.

Mike Hawthorn, Ferrari,
Spa-Francorchamps,
photograph by Edward Eves.

After the initial promise of 1953 Mike Hawthorn's career had been inconsistent. He had put in some stirring drives for the works Jaguar team, but in Grand Prix racing as the careers of Moss, Brooks and Collins had all clearly advanced, Hawthorn had endured disappointing periods at BRM, Vanwall and

53. Moss, Zandvoort 1958



even at Ferrari his best result in 1957 had been the second place behind Fangio at the Nurburgring.

By this stage of his career it is clear that his thoughts had already turned to life beyond motor racing. There was the family garage business to run, but possibly the overriding concern was his own health. He had long suffered from a kidney problem, which may well explain his somewhat erratic performances, and the prognosis was not good.

There is no doubt that in a good car an on form Hawthorn was a match for anyone, but everything had to be right. His approach was not that of Moss, who could be relied on to get the very maximum out of any car he drove, week in, week out. For 1958 Ferrari had produced the two and a half litre engined Dino which was clearly going to provide Vanwall's greatest threat. Relations within the team were often strained, for whilst Hawthorn and Collins had formed their "mon ami mate" friendship, this was inevitably to the exclusion of the third team member, Luigi Musso. As Phil Hill later explained, "Hawthorn was all right, as long as he liked you."

As we have seen the rivalry within the team may well have contributed to Musso's death at Reims, scene of Hawthorn's only victory of the season. Here at Spa he finished second to Brooks who took his maiden World Championship win, his Vanwall's gearbox only just making it to the end whilst Hawthorn himself had his engine blow as he crossed the line!

It was to be the start of a remarkable sequence of finishes for Hawthorn, who apart from retiring at the Nurburgring finished second a further four times.

55.
Peter Collins, Ferrari,
Silverstone,
photograph by Edward Eves.

After the strong showings in 1956 Peter Collins, in common with the other Ferrari drivers, had had a disappointing 1957 GP season, third places in France and again in Germany after the battle with Fangio were his best results. His position as Ferrari's "favoured son" had also slipped, although whether this had any more to do with his racing results than his

marriage to actress Louise King and subsequent move to Monaco is a moot point.

To this point of the season 1958 had not been a great deal better, a third at Monaco the only result of note, mechanical problems in other races leading to retirement. Expectations at Silverstone were not high, as Collins ended up sixth in practice. The grid had a distinctly green look to it as Vanwall (Moss), BRM (Schell), Cooper (Salvadori) took the first three places ahead of Hawthorn's Ferrari, with Allison's Lotus ahead of Collins. Compare this with the starting scene at Silverstone at the beginning of this story.

On one of Silverstone's occasional baking hot days, it was Collins who burst through from the second row to lead the field and, despite a challenge from Moss which lasted until one third distance, he led all the way to the finish. Moss retired with engine problems, Brooks' model was clearly off form, but the Ferraris were back on song as Hawthorn followed his team mate home, taking time out to pick up a tankard of beer on the slowing down lap!

Two weeks later battle resumed between Vanwall and Ferrari at the Nurburgring. The front row of the grid was Hawthorn, Brooks, Moss and Collins, so the scene was perfectly set. Moss was the early leader, setting an astonishing pace for four laps, including a new lap record, before a magneto failure made him an early retirement again. The two Ferraris were then left in front but in a virtual reprise of the 1957 epic against Fangio's Maserati, this time the two Ferrari drivers in the lead were chased down by Brooks' Vanwall. Brooks remorselessly closed in on them during the middle laps and took the lead on lap eleven (the race this year reduced from 22 to 15 laps.)

Tragedy struck as Collins, striving to stay with the Vanwall, made a rare error and crashed, dying that evening of his injuries. The joy of the Vanwall camp was short lived. Peter Collins had been hugely popular among the whole motor racing community, being able to get along with virtually everyone he met. His death at twenty seven clearly had a profound impact on many, Moss and Brooks included. The effect on Hawthorn was even deeper. He had already been thinking of retirement, but the loss of his friend took much of his pleasure from the sport and confirmed his decision to stop racing at the end of the year.

56.

Roy Salvadori, Cooper
and Stuart Lewis- Evans, Vanwall,
Silverstone 1958,
photograph by Charles Dunn.

There were justified expectations of another "home win" at Silverstone to follow the Moss-Vanwall triumph at Aintree the previous year. The grid lined up in the order Moss (Vanwall), Schell (BRM) and Roy Salvadori (Cooper), ahead of the first Ferrari, that of Hawthorn. In the event it was Collins' Ferrari which would lead all the way, with Hawthorn second.

The photograph here shows the battle for third place which was waged by Salvadori and Lewis - Evans during the race's final quarter. Salvadori would hold on to third position by just one fifth of a second at the end. It is interesting because it shows two generations of Constructors' Championship winning cars, Vanwall in this 1958 season and Cooper the following year. We are used to seeing photographs showing the obvious differences between Cooper and Ferrari, but the contrast between Cooper and Vanwall is equally marked if less commonly shown. The Cooper's performance was highly promising, the 2.2 litre engined car holding its own against the 2.5 litre Vanwall even at Silverstone. The Cooper gained just enough through the bends to keep it away from the Vanwall which would catch up along each straight. If ever there was a pointer to the future it was here.

Roy Salvadori, despite the Italian name, was a Londoner who was making a big name for himself by this stage. Experienced in Sportscars, saloon cars and single seaters, he enjoyed some strong results in 1958, taking second place to Brooks at the Nurburgring the following month and ending up fourth in the championship at the end of the season. With his Aston Martin Sportscar links he was an obvious candidate for that team when it decided to enter the GP arena in 1959. For both it turned out to be a poor decision, Aston Martin producing a beautifully turned out front engined car just as the Cooper rear engined revolution really took hold. Salvadori's GP career never really recovered, although his story in Sportscar racing would be a happier one, (see Part Six).

Stuart Lewis - Evans was regarded as one of the sport's great talents. Having come through the

ranks of 500 cc racing he had made his GP debut the previous season with Connaught at Monaco. Sadly it proved to be the final race for the team which was struggling to fund the racing operation, but Lewis-Evans did a good job to bring the car home in fourth position, a performance which brought him to the attention of Tony Vandervell who offered him a Vanwall drive for the French GP, when he found himself without the services of both Moss (ill) and Brooks (injured). He made enough of an impression to be invited to join the team, making an all British three car line up, something Vandervell had been trying to achieve for some time.

Alongside Moss and Brooks, one of the finest pairings ever, Lewis - Evans showed well, taking pole position at Monza in 1957 and again at Zandvoort in 1958. He suffered his share of mechanical failures during the year, but took third place in Belgium and Portugal, as well as fourth here at Silverstone. He looked to have an exciting future and was one of the early drivers to employ the services of a manager, one Bernie Ecclestone. Sadly the year was to end disastrously, (see below).

57.

Italian GP, Monza, the Start,
photograph by Alan Smith.

A small but revealing Alan Smith photo tells us much about the state of play in GP racing by this late stage of the season. Following the German GP the teams had travelled to Portugal where Moss has taken an emphatic win from Hawthorn, to keep the championship very much alive between the two.

Here at Monza for the next round, Hawthorn's Ferrari had managed to prevent a Vanwall 1-2-3 in practice, demoting Lewis-Evans to fourth place on the grid, Moss as usual quickest from Brooks, whilst the second row was solidly Ferrari, ahead of three BRMs on row three. Lotus and Cooper cars were next up, with five Maseratis in the rearward positions.

The white edged nose of Stirling's car can just be seen at the near edge of the shot, as Brooks on number 28 edges momentarily ahead of Hawthorn and Lewis-Evans. As the race developed only the Vanwall of Brooks survived. After an early pit stop to investigate an oil leak, he drove another fine race, conserving his tyres whilst the Ferraris had to change theirs, and closed Hawthorn down as the race entered its closing stages. Even the Italian crowd applauded

his drive as he took the lead with ten laps to go and held on to win his third GP of the season. Wins at Spa, the Nurburgring and Monza in the same season are testament to his ability.

58.
Phil Hill, Ferrari,
Morocco.

Had Hawthorn won at Monza he would have claimed the World Championship. As it was he was almost overtaken for second place by new Ferrari GP recruit Phil Hill, who, realising what was at stake, held back and remained in third place, a strong result for a maiden works F1 drive.

As we have already seen, Hill had already taken a trio of sports car wins for Ferrari in 1958, including a very strong performance in the treacherous conditions at Le Mans. Impatient at not getting the hoped for drive in the GP team, the Californian had actually made his GP debut in France, where he had driven a privately entered Maserati to seventh place, the same event in which Musso had lost his life. His first Ferrari GP race had been in the F2 section of the German GP, where he had led that category until an oil leak caused him to stop. Collins had been killed in that race, so the Californian driver found himself promoted to the full GP team at Monza, and would continue as a works Ferrari driver until he left the team at the end of 1962.

Although he would become the first World Champion from the USA in 1961, in many ways it was at the early stages of his GP career that Hill's driving was at its most impressive. He showed both raw speed and tactical awareness at both Monza and Morocco and was instrumental in securing the title for Hawthorn.

As the drivers started the race, Moss knew he had to win and set fastest lap, which at the time earned a championship point. If he achieved this and Hawthorn finished outside the top two, the title would go to Moss. It was to prove a very close run thing, Moss doing what he had to do and taking his fourth win of the campaign, but it was not quite enough, as Hawthorn took second place and despite only winning in France the title was his by a single point. At one stage Brooks had been ahead of Hawthorn, but his Vanwall retired with a failed engine. Hill had lain second for much of the race, but surrendered his

position to team leader Hawthorn, an act the latter singled out for praise in his book *Champion Year*.

Sadly yet another driver lost his life. Stuart Lewis-Evans crashed heavily and was trapped in the burning Vanwall. Despite the personal efforts of Tony Vandervell who had the driver flown to London where he was treated by leading burns specialists, his driver succumbed to his injuries a few days later. It was a bitter twist to a year which had seen the team take six wins and the first ever Constructors' Championship. Together with failing health, the death of Lewis-Evans, for which Vandervell unfairly blamed himself, persuaded him that he should leave GP racing and concentrate on his business. Enzo Ferrari wrote to Vandervell to offer his sympathy for the death of his driver, suggesting that they had to face such tragedies and carry on, but although there were to be another couple of appearances, effectively Morocco 1958 saw the end of the Vanwall story. It had been a most remarkable one.

Tony Vandervell died in 1967 at the relatively young age of sixty eight. In their comprehensive work on Vanwall, those two great writers Denis Jenkinson and Cyril Posthumus offer the following summing up,

"... what magnificent racing years he brought to Britain, immensely enlivened by this ambitious, ruthless but very human personage, who resembled that other great leader, Winston Churchill in visage, mannerisms and character. Just as Churchill had struck his jaw out and taken over the country in its darkest hour, so Tony Vandervell had taken motor racing by the scruff of the neck and given it a thorough hiding. He lit the torch for Britain, and British built cars have virtually dominated Grand Prix racing ever since." (Vanwall, p151)

Part 6: Britain Triumphant

The 1959 Season

59.

Enzo Ferrari, Monza 1958, photograph by Edward Eves

It seems strange to start a chapter entitled "Britain Triumphant" with a photograph of Enzo Ferrari, especially one taken during the previous season, but we have chosen to place this piece here deliberately, for two reasons. If any one person can be said to embody both the past and the future of motor racing then surely Ferrari must be the strongest of candidates for such a position. It was also Ferrari that by 1959 was the only team standing in the way of British domination in the twin arenas of GP and Sportscar racing. This latter point is implicit throughout this final part, as Cooper, BRM and Aston Martin all waged battle against the Maranello team.

To take the first point a little further, by 1958 Ferrari had already been involved in motor racing for almost forty years. He had risen to the rank of a works driver during Alfa Romeo's first golden period in the 1920s, alongside Ascari Senior and Campari. Exactly what happened to his promising driving career remains, typically enough, mysterious, but what is known is that a car was prepared for him to race in the French GP of 1924 but he failed to appear. He appears to have undergone some sort of crisis and although he raced in hill climbs on and off until the early '30s, he never appeared in a major event again as a driver. The setback was the prelude to the discovery of his true vocation, as a manager and ultimately constructor of his own team.

The association of Tazio Nuvolari on a red Alfa Romeo bearing the Cavallino Rampante shield on its flanks is as enduring image as any in the sport's history. Ferrari had been awarded the shield of the noble Baracca family after winning a race in Ravenna. The Countess Baracca offered Ferrari the black horse emblem in recognition of his brave driving which reminded her of her son, a flying ace from the first World War who had been shot down in battle. Ferrari merged the emblem with the yellow background of his home town, Modena, and today this has become one of the most universally recognised symbols in any sphere.

Why has it endured so successfully? Ultimately the answer lies in Ferrari's unique commitment to motor racing. In many ways the Ferrari story is almost the opposite of Alfa Romeo and Maserati. Both had their seasons of glory, and were very much part of racing's aristocracy, but both faded from the top levels of the sport and have never regained the positions they once occupied. Ferrari, at the beginning of the period under discussion in this exhibition had been very much the newcomer and, despite the successes of the early years, was no more likely to survive than any number of continental or British teams. Clearly there were a number of financial crises which called into question his continuance. By the end of 1953 there were real and public warnings of the difficulties of funding the racing operation. The Mercedes effort of 1954-55 put the much smaller and far less well funded Maranello concern into sharp relief. The Fiat backed handover of the Lancia cars to Ferrari in 1955 allowed the team to field a competitive car for 1956, but the 1957 Grand Prix season had proved a barren one for Ferrari.

Ferrari has always attracted criticism on any number of grounds. Engineering conservatism, personal callousness towards drivers, political manoeuvrings with everyone inside and outside the Scuderia, the list covers most areas of human activity. No doubt to some degree they all carry weight, but seen against the background of this exhibition it is very striking that it is only Ferrari which can point to an unbroken history of competing at the top level of the sport to the present day. The odds on such an outcome must have been very long during this period.

The particular piece here by Edward Eves captures so much about Ferrari. After the death of his son Dino in 1956 he never attended another race, but made an annual appearance at the Saturday practice at Monza each year. He remained stubbornly convinced that the engine was the heart of a car, for far too long ignoring advances in other areas, aerodynamics, brakes, suspension, the whole chassis design. Even with the emergence of the lighter, better handling rear engined Coopers he stuck with the traditional front engined design until the end of 1960, stating that the "horse comes before the cart".

Whilst this particular exhibition celebrates

the rise of the British racing teams, seen over a far longer perspective the single fact which stands out is that sixty years on the battle at the top remains essentially the story of Ferrari against the British teams. It rather suggests that there was a little more to Enzo Ferrari than his critics sometimes gave him credit for.

60.

John Cooper, photograph by Nigel Snowdon.

With the withdrawal of Vanwall at the end of 1958, the baton of British Grand Prix hopes passed neatly to Cooper. It may be said with complete confidence that they performed their leg quite superbly.

In many ways Vanwall had been an operation run along similar lines to those of the great continental houses of Mercedes, Maserati, Ferrari and Alfa Romeo. Whilst not a car producer in its own right, nonetheless Tony Vandervell's engineering factory was well set up to provide the facilities and expertise needed to mount a serious challenge at GP level. Cooper was really coming from a slightly different direction, originally a garage operation with a growing sideline in the production of racing cars. The team was perhaps the first of the "garagistes", as Enzo Ferrari referred to the British teams after Vanwall.

The Cooper Car Company had come a long way by the end of the 1950s. Moving on from its initial success as the major builder of the 500cc F3 cars early in the decade, it had continued to produce customer cars in Sportscar and F2 categories. It had taken the plunge and entered GP racing in 1957 and, as we have seen, in the first two races of 1958 the Rob Walker entered version of the Cooper F1 car had taken two wins. By 1959 the works team fought a season long battle with the Walker car driven by Moss and the works Ferraris for the title, which it won with driver Jack Brabham, a feat to be repeated in 1960.

These were the glory days for the Surbiton team. Charles and John Cooper had forged a quite remarkable enterprise. By now the production racing cars and the works team effort had been separated, the latter moving about quarter of a mile away, just enough to give the father and son a little breathing room after one of their heated discussions. Charles Cooper was the original rough diamond, shrewd in business, but an innovative engineer in his own right.

John took both the business and engineering skills on a step further, eventually becoming heavily involved in the Mini Cooper project, indeed suffering a serious accident whilst driving one in 1963.

Cooper was a tremendously "hands on" type of operation, the workshop really being at the centre of it all. Stories are legion of the small, dedicated crew working endless hours in primitive conditions, Charles' natural aversion to unnecessary spending meaning that the place was freezing cold and badly lit. Despite the conditions loyalty was strong, essentially the same core staff developing the team throughout the latter part of the decade.

The two World Championships with Jack Brabham in 1959-1960, with the Constructors' title also gained in both seasons, were an achievement unthinkable even until two or three years previously. John Cooper's trademark forward roll as his drivers took the chequered flag became part of the racing tradition just as Colin Chapman's cap throwing would a few years later. A mixture of determination, practicality and fun characterised John Cooper.

Although it was certainly not seen in this light at the time, perhaps the greatest tributes to the Cooper approach to motor racing came from their two most illustrious "graduates". Jack Brabham left to found his own team which took two world titles in 1966-67. Team mate Bruce McLaren stayed with Cooper until 1965 before he too started his own GP team, which went on to such remarkable heights.

The age of the garagistes had arrived.

61.

Jack Brabham, Cooper, Monaco, photograph by Jerry Sloniger.

Jack Brabham had made a name for himself on the dirt tracks of Australia, where his driving skills allied to the engineering knowledge he had gained as a technician with the RAAF during the war and from subsequently running his own engineering and car preparation business, soon took him to the top. Persuaded to come over to Europe after showing well against Moss and co on their winter tours to Australia and New Zealand, Brabham effectively moved into the Cooper workshop. Not an employee he simply worked on his own cars there and gradually seemed to become part of the operation.

61. Brabham, Monaco 1959



From Red to Green

He made his GP debut as early as 1955, in a one off appearance at Aintree, scene of Moss' maiden win, but it was in 1957 that he became a regular on the grid, driving for both the works team and on occasions for Rob Walker. He showed strongly at Monaco, where third place looked likely until he ran out of fuel, pushing the car for some way uphill to eventually finish sixth. Although the Coopers showed great promise, their 2.2 litre engines meant that they struggled on the faster circuits against the 2.5 litres of Vanwall, Maserati and Ferrari.

For 1959 Coventry Climax had produced a new 2.5 litre engine and Brabham was to make good use of it. Opposition was to come from Moss driving the similar car entered by Rob Walker and from Tony Brooks, now at Ferrari. Here at Monaco, the opening round of the championship, Jean Behra led the early stages for Ferrari before retiring. Moss then led convincingly, building up a forty second lead over Brabham before hitting gearbox troubles which put him out. Brabham then had to fend off a late race charge from Brooks to take his, and the Cooper works', first GP win.

It was to be the beginning of two successful seasons for Brabham and Cooper, the partnership taking both Drivers and Constructors titles in both years. The strange little cars with their rear engine configuration, built in the makeshift Cooper works had managed to overcome the GP establishment.

62. Stirling Moss, Cooper, Monaco, photograph by Edward Eves.

With the withdrawal of Vanwall from racing, Moss and Brooks found themselves seeking alternative employment. Whilst Brooks went to Ferrari, Moss joined the Rob Walker equipe, although he was also to drive a BRM for the British Racing Partnership team for two GPs.

Famously only ever dealing on the basis of a handshake, Moss and Walker made a well matched team. There was something in the private team status which suited Moss, the natural fighter quite at home in the role of underdog against the works teams. The image should not be taken too literally as the Walker team's standards of preparation were second to none,

but they certainly did not enjoy the factory resource of a Ferrari or even the works Cooper by this stage.

The photograph here with Stirling's own caption tells the story of not only the Monaco race but the season as a whole. Here at Monaco a commanding lead as the race entered its final quarter was given up when the transmission failed. The look of resignation on the driver's face sums up so many of his performances. He had done the best job possible but the machinery had let him down.

The disappointment of Monaco was followed by more of the same at Zandvoort, where having got into the lead the car failed him three laps later. At Reims, on the BRM, clutch problems and a spin put him out. Second, again on the BRM at Aintree was better, but the German round at the Avus circuit was a disaster. Better form followed - two fine wins at Monza and on the street circuit of Oporto meant that he went to the season's finale at Sebring with a chance, again, of winning the title. The permutations between title contenders Brabham, Moss and Brooks were complex, but Moss, needing to win, typically seized the lead from the start and was driving away from the field when yet again the gearbox let him down. Thus the season ended as it had begun, with mechanical failure when in the lead of a race. Another possible title had eluded him but no other driver could be judged his superior.

63. Jo Bonnier, BRM, Zandvoort

By 1959 BRM had finally developed a car genuinely capable of challenging for a win. Although the original company had been sold to the Alfred Owen industrial group, both Raymond Mays and Peter Berthon were still very much involved. The P25 was actually a first rate car, Moss who drove one for two GPs during the season reckoned that it was one of the best handling cars he raced, in stark contrast to his experience with the v16 several seasons previously.

Swedish driver Jo Bonnier had been competing on the Grand Prix scene for a couple of seasons at the wheel of privately entered Maseratis. The multi lingual, urbane Bonnier enjoyed a comfortable lifestyle away from the track, but on his day could certainly put up a good fight on it. Joining Harry Schell and Jean Behra at BRM for the last two

62. Moss, Monaco 1959



From Red to Green

races of 1958, his big chance came the following season following Behra's departure for Ferrari.

The Dutch GP at Zandvoort followed the Monaco race and after the drivers had been paraded round the track in Mercedes Benz 190 SLs, each individually lettered showing the driver's name, and with Moss taking the loudest applause, it was Bonnier who took pole position, ahead of Brabham and Moss on their Coopers. Taking an early lead from Brabham, whilst Moss struggled to get past a most uncooperative Behra on his Ferrari, the Swede looked to be in control of proceedings, particularly once Brabham lost second gear. When Moss did finally find a way past Behra, he wasted no time in closing the gap to the leaders and took the lead, but only briefly before the troublesome gearbox let him down again.

This left Bonnier in front once more and he motored on to the finish to take a famous win, the traumas of the previous years temporarily erased as the BRM pits broke into huge celebration, a moment few would begrudge them. It had been a historic day for British motor racing, a first win for BRM, the Coopers of Brabham and Masten Gregory second and third, fourth place being taken by the Lotus of Innes Ireland. Jean Behra's Ferrari finished fifth, a lap down.

To complete the image of the changing tide in GP racing, the Autosport editorial the following week related the story of a young boy sat in the grandstand asking his father, "Why did they let the red cars run?"

Whilst BRM would endure another couple of challenging seasons they would eventually come good and win the 1962 championship with Graham Hill. For Bonnier this was to be his sole GP win, although he would remain part of the field for another decade.

He became a natural President of the Grand Prix Drivers' Association, where his diplomatic skills could be brought into the increasing safety campaigns. Ironically he was killed whilst driving his Lola during the 1972 Le Mans 24 Hours.

64.

Phil Hill, Masten Gregory,
Jack Brabham, Reims,
photograph by Geoff Goddard.

It may well be that instead of telling a story, this photograph rather disguises one. The wonderful Goddard shot showing the long straight along the public road of the Reims-Gueux circuit can only tell a part of the reality of this particular race.

Whilst the new Coopers were quicker in a straight line than their smaller engined predecessors had been the previous season, and were the quickest cars around a twisty circuit, the front engined Ferraris could still hold their own on the faster tracks. This shot offers a lovely perspective on the contrasting car shapes of the old and the new schools of design, the big Ferrari clearly the offspring of the classic GP approach, the Coopers just as obviously heralding the next generation.

What the photograph cannot show is just how hot it was on this day in Reims and the effect that heat had on the road surface and on the drivers. By the time the race started at 2 pm, the temperature was well over a 100 degrees fahrenheit and drivers were to be seen throwing cold water over themselves as they prepared to race. The heat was already melting the asphalt in some areas and the combination of melting tar and flying stones, added to the heat, was to make this a test of physical endurance as much as racing ability. Jack Brabham writing some years later recalled how the low down Coopers seemed "to cop more of it, (the flying tar) than the others, particularly at windscreen height"

This photograph comes from early in the race. Brooks' Ferrari, from pole position, had taken the lead at the start and was never headed, he alone seemingly able to cope with the conditions, going on to claim the most emphatic of wins. Team mate Phil Hill, seen here, came second but had an awful ordeal. Early on he was hit in the face by a stone and he thought that he had lost his nose, as he could see the blood but could not feel anything as his face had been numbed. The heat in the cockpit became so great that he was to be seen standing up at times in an attempt to get cooler air.

Masten Gregory, the talented but often erratic driver from Kansas was enjoying his only season as a

works driver, but on this day even this small but tough competitor had to bow to the elements. He retired after eight laps, completely overcome by the heat. Brabham soldiered on to claim third place, but had to be lifted out of the car at the end by his mechanics.

The third Cooper driver, young New Zealander Bruce McLaren, had a similarly harrowing experience en route to fifth place,

"The chequered flag was never more gratefully received. I climbed out of the cockpit, took my helmet off.....and cried my eyes out. I don't know why, but wept uncontrollably for several minutes. This was the first race Mom and Pop had seen in Europe and they were staggered to see it turn into a bloodbath."

Other than the remarkable Brooks, virtually every other driver finished battered and dehydrated. For Jean Behra who had been unable to cope with the pace set by Brooks, or indeed Hill and latest Ferrari recruit Dan Gurney, it was all too much. After the engine in his Ferrari had blown, there was a major altercation in the Ferrari pits between the mercurial Frenchman and manager, Romolo Tavoni. A well aimed right hook from Behra connected with Tavoni's jaw and the driver's short career at Ferrari was over.

65.

Tony Brooks, Vanwall,
Aintree,
photograph by Edward Eves.

This piece could well prove a difficult quiz question. Why does Brooks, now at Ferrari appear at Aintree for Vanwall, a team no longer competing? In many ways this portrait is as revealing of the changing balance of power as any. Ferrari were suffering from serious labour action at the factory which meant that the team were unable to prepare or send any cars to the British GP. Tony Vandervell on learning of the situation offered to put a car at his former driver's disposal, so Brooks was entered on car number 20, the same number as his car on that historic day at the same circuit two years previously, when he had handed it over to Moss who had gone on to claim the great victory. Loyal mechanic Norman Burkinshaw was also on hand to ensure the car was properly prepared.

Unfortunately the event proved to be a

disappointing one for both car and driver. As Jack Brabham led from start to finish, ahead of Moss in one of his BRM drives, Brooks was the first retirement with a persistent misfire which had dogged the car throughout the meeting. So disappointed was Tony Vandervell that Brooks later received a letter from him apologising for the car's poor performance and containing a cheque for £850 which had been the entry fee Vandervell received. It is difficult to see Brooks' full time employer Enzo Ferrari performing a similar gesture!

66.

Tony Brooks, Ferrari,
Avus.

Back in a familiar car, but on an unfamiliar track, Brooks and the Ferrari team were in commanding form on the unpopular road track at Avus, in West Berlin.

Comprising two sections of dual carriageway with one end linked by a steeply banked section and the other by a flat hairpin, the venue was generally considered a very poor alternative to the majestic Nurburgring the normal home of the German GP, and a track on which Brooks had always excelled.

Tyre concerns were a major issue and due to fears that the rubber would not survive the forces generated by the high speeds anticipated it was decided to run the race as two heats, with the result being decided on aggregate. To add to the general air of foreboding, during the supporting sports car race on the Saturday afternoon, Jean Behra lost his life in a dreadful accident which saw his Porsche lose control on the banked section and hurtle over the barrier. Despite his occasional losses of temper, "Jeannot" had been respected by his fellow drivers and was popular among racing fans for his flamboyant, devil-may-care approach to driving.

The GP itself was a curious affair. During the first heat Masten Gregory gave valiant chase to the more powerful Ferraris until his engine blew in the biggest possible way. Thereafter the event turned into a Ferrari benefit, the eventual result being Brooks from the hugely impressive new star, Californian Dan Gurney with Phil Hill in third.

It was to prove the last time that a front engined car would win a GP over a full field. The following year Phil Hill would triumph at Monza, but

From Red to Green

most of the British teams had withdrawn over a disagreement on the use of the banked circuit. Avus 1959 marks the real end of the classic front engined single seater GP car. It had been fighting a rearguard action throughout 1959 and although it could more than hold its own on the power circuits of Reims and Avus, it was struggling on many other circuits, and the results during 1959 owed much to the skills of Hill, Gurney and above all Brooks.

Postscript The 1959 World Championship.

As noted above, as the drivers lined up for the championship decider at the newly instituted United States GP, held at the airfield circuit at Sebring, Florida, Brabham, Brooks and Moss were all in with a mathematical chance of the title. There had been some doubt as to whether or not the race would take place, Cooper having already clinched the Constructors' title at Monza, but in the end Ferrari decided to contest the event.

Needing a win and a fastest lap to secure the title, Moss set off at a terrific pace but was soon out. Brooks was hit at the start by team mate von Trips and stopped as a precaution to check for damage, before continuing. Brabham looked set to win, but ran out of fuel on the final lap, allowing Bruce McLaren to cap a fine season with a win, making him the youngest ever to do so, a record he would hold until Fernando Alonso broke it in 2003. Brabham pushed his car over the line to take fourth and with it the world title.

It was the first year a rear engined car had won the title. Cooper had won five races in all, Ferrari two and BRM one. From the first win in a round of the world championship by a British car, at Aintree in 1957, there had taken place the most astonishing reversal in Grand Prix motor racing.

The Sportscar season 1959.

The Sportscar championship had got off to a familiar start at Sebring where Phil Hill and Olivier Gendebien scored another of their classic victories. There was no suggestion that the magnificent Testa Rossa cars would not continue to another successful season.

The next two rounds were to raise questions however, as Ferrari were humiliated at the Targa Florio by the Porsche team. As one disaster after

another befell the Ferraris, the smaller Porsches, with their 1500cc engines proved perfectly suited to the twists and turns of the Targa and finished in the first four places.

Ferrari were to be beaten again at the Nurburgring 1000 kms, victims this time of another assault by Stirling Moss. After a long opening stint, equivalent to the length of a Grand Prix race, during which Moss had reduced the Sportscar lap record by twelve seconds, he handed the Aston Martin over to Jack Fairman with a lead of over five minutes, equivalent to half a lap of the 'Ring. He had to watch as Fairman began to lose time to the Ferraris, a situation exacerbated as rain began to fall. At the half way point, 22 laps, the situation worsened as Fairman failed to come round and reports reached the pits of the Aston Martin stuck in a ditch off the track. Moss was soon changing out of his racing gear and preparing to leave when Fairman appeared with a remarkably intact car! Having spun the car into the ditch he had redeemed himself by somehow managing to push the car back onto the track. A surprised Moss rapidly got back into his racing suit and set off on his mission. The Ferraris, despite their array of top line drivers, Brooks, Hill and Gendebien, simply had no answer and with four laps of the race left the Aston Martin was again in the lead en route to a famous win.

Thus, as Le Mans approached, Ferrari, Porsche and Aston Martin had one win apiece to their names and there was the expectation of a truly classic confrontation.

67. Aston Martin, Le Mans, photograph by Nigel Clegg.

Battle is soon to be commenced as the cars are lined up ahead of the famous Le Mans start. Drivers would sprint across the track, leap into the cockpits and hope that they make a clean getaway. Appropriately enough Aston Martin number 4 is the Moss/ Fairman car, Moss as usual designated to start the race in which he will attempt to act as the team "hare", setting an early pace which will lure the Ferrari drivers into going quicker than is prudent for the twenty four hour marathon. It is a role he has performed for Jaguar in the past, with great success for the team.

67. Aston Martin, Le Mans 1959



From Red to Green

Logically one may wonder why such a well known tactic would be of any use, but this is to underestimate the competitive nature of the Grand Prix driver in a Sportscar arena. No matter that a twenty four hour endurance race requires a different approach than a two to three hour GP, there have been countless examples of drivers who were simply unable to bide their time as a competitor sped off in front.

1959 was to be no exception. Moss performed his role perfectly, taking an early lead. Jean Behra, needing little encouragement in front of a home crowd took the bait, and after a fumbled start tore through the field, setting a new lap record in the process. Aided and abetted by Dan Gurney, the Ferrari took the lead, but was soon out. The tell-tale rev counter on their car showed 9200 instead of the pre-race agreed 7500! Moss too went out with a broken engine as the race proved even more one of attrition than normal. The works Porsches surprisingly failed. Ferraris began to suffer from overheating. The large assortment of privately entered Lotuses, Jaguars, MGs, Triumphs and the French DB Panhards all fell by the wayside.

As the race entered its final quarter the Hill/Gendebien Ferrari, more sensibly driven than its stablemates, was in the lead from the surviving two Aston Martins., but at around 11 am Gendebien realised that his Testa Rossa was losing power and suffering from the same overheating problems which had hit the other Ferraris. The race was effectively over. Now the two leading Aston Martins of Roy Salvadori and Carroll Shelby, followed by the sister car of Maurice Trintignant and Paul Frere were the only real works cars left in the race. The tactics worked out before the race and supervised during it by Reg Parnell had worked perfectly and the Salvadori/ Shelby car won, a lap ahead of the second team car. The nearest challenger, a privately entered Ferrari GT car, was twenty five laps in arrears.

68.

Aston Martin win Le Mans

The relief and joy can be seen on the faces of the Aston Martin crew as Carroll Shelby, seen clutching the champagne, sits next to company owner David Brown as they ride along the pit lane aboard the winning car.

It had been a remarkable journey for all. Aston Martin had been trying to capture this race for almost the whole decade, finishing second twice, in 1956 and 1958, which only made the sense of frustration all the greater. David Brown had committed substantial resources to achieving racing success, with Le Mans very much at the centre of his thinking. The team had actually launched a GP car during the '59 season which, despite initial promise, had not really worked. It was a traditional front engined car, launched at a time when the rear engined revolution was in full swing.

Sportscars, and Le Mans in particular, were arguably even more important to a team which depended on selling high performance road cars for its survival. This was no less true of Ferrari to whom the prestige of winning the major endurance events would remain an article of faith for another fifteen years, at which point Maranello accepted that GP racing needed to be the sole focus of its efforts.

Ultimately the 1959 Le Mans win would remain Aston Martin's only one at the famous 24 Hours event. At the end of the season David Brown would effectively wind down the racing operation, although there would continue to be a sporting presence in the GT class for the team .

For Carroll Shelby this was to remain a driving career highlight. At the end of the year he was diagnosed with angina and advised to stop racing. He did so, but turned his competitive drive into team ownership and car development, creating some of the most iconic racing cars of the following decade including the Cobra programme and then being instrumental in turning the Ford GT40 into another Ferrari beating Le Mans winner.

Roy Salvadori, missing from the photograph here but presumably in the driver's seat, continued to race with distinction for some years in Sportscars and single seaters. He stayed with Parnell for the Lola GP season in 1962, joining John Surtees in the team, and later went on to manage the Cooper F1 team of the mid-60s.

69.

Phil Hill, Ferrari,
Goodwood TT,
photograph by Geoff Goddard.

The TT event was to be the Sportscar championship decider. Aston Martin, Ferrari and Porsche all had a chance to take the title, so there was everything to play for and the entry was absolutely first rate, each team sending its front line driver line up. Aston Martin were, perhaps, favourites due to their traditionally strong showing on the Sussex circuit, but it was going to be close. The Ferraris were powerful and the Porsches, with their smaller engines, would run for longer between refuelling stops and be lighter on both brakes and tyres.

The one predictable factor was that S. Moss would set the pace, and so it was no surprise that Aston Martin number 1 came round in front after the first lap and stayed there throughout the first stint. We will return to this part of the story shortly.

The Ferrari team seemed to play a complicated game of "musical cars" as they desperately tried to hold onto their championship. The photograph inscription here tells its own story, drivers being put into car number 10 as it emerged as the best placed Testa Rossa. Brooks was put in for the final stint and although he set a new lap record it was not quite enough. Misinterpreting pit signals which he thought were telling him that he was ahead of von Trips' Porsche, Brooks realised too late that he was in fact behind him and just failed to close the gap in time, finishing two seconds behind the German car which meant that Ferrari could not get the necessary points to take the title.

70.

Tony Brooks, Dan Gurney, Ferrari,
Goodwood TT,
photograph by Ted Lewis.

Brooks was kept busy, driving both car number 10 and his original mount, Testa Rossa number 9. Gurney, the driving discovery of 1959, started the race, or at least tried to as the car was reluctant to fire up. Getting away last, the Californian worked his way up to third place before handing over to Brooks, who promptly spun the car before stopping

to investigate. Nothing obvious was found to be wrong, so he resumed only to spin again. It turned out that a brake caliper had been incorrectly fitted during the change. Eventually Gurney finished the race in this car, putting in another storming stint to make up for the lost time and finishing fifth.

It is a classic shot of the period Sportscar pit stop, the mechanic wielding the hammer to knock off the spinner caps on the beautiful wire wheels. It seems a long way from the modern GP three second stops, but this was the traditional routine which had been honed by mechanics from the early days of the sport.

71.

Stirling Moss, Aston Martin,
Goodwood TT,
photograph by Geoff Goddard.

As noted above, Moss led on Aston Martin number 1 until the first pit stop, when he handed over to Roy Salvadori. Roy held the lead but real drama occurred when he came in to refuel and hand back to Stirling. The car caught fire and the flames rapidly spread, igniting the Aston Martin pit roof which in turn brought down a fifty gallon fuel drum, at which point the Goodwood fire brigade stepped in to control proceedings. Salvadori was burnt on his hands and face and taken to hospital. Moss had a quick look to see if he could still drive the car, but it was by now beyond even his rescue ability and was pushed away.

Car number 2, with Jack Fairman at the wheel, was brought in and Stirling was put into it. A great cheer erupted from the crowd as they realised he was still in the race. Equally important to the team's hopes, private Aston Martin entrant Graham Whitehead, realising that the works team's pit was destroyed, volunteered to withdraw his car to allow the works use of his pit facility. It was a remarkable gesture which, together with the speed of Moss, saved the day for the Feltham team.

In yet another comeback drive, Moss overhauled the leading Porsche to resume the lead. At his last stop a bandaged Salvadori offered to relieve him, but Moss needed no help and went on to a memorable win.

Aston Martin had won the race and with it the championship. David Brown had realised his sporting ambition, his cars had conquered Le Mans, the Nurburgring and now Goodwood to beat Ferrari

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and Porsche in the championship. It was enough to satisfy him and the team left motor racing on the highest note.

It is, of course, not by accident that we end this exhibition with a photograph of Stirling Moss in action. Whilst we have tried to bring to light the achievements of men as diverse as Raymond Mays and Tony Vandervell, Reg Parnell and Rob Walker, all of whom made great contributions to the story of Britain's rise to motor racing pre-eminence, it seems only right that Stirling Moss takes his place here. His skills, demonstrated over a decade of top class motor racing and in a wide variety of cars, his competitiveness at all times and, not least, his commitment to British cars wherever possible ensure him a unique position in this story.

As well as being rich in photographic material, this period is also extremely well covered by writers. Most of the subjects of this exhibition have had a book, and in many cases several, devoted to them. Indeed only Farina comes to mind as not being specifically covered by a book in English. Any number of general books on the sport cover the period and the players. From a personal point of view William Court's two volume work on the history of Grand Prix racing and the continuing writings of Nigel Roebuck have always been a source of inspiration.

Important new works on the period continue to emerge, Tony Brooks' autobiography in 2012 being a good example. The problem soon becomes one of selection rather than scarcity, but in addition to the contemporary records of events in the relevant editions of Motor Sport and Autosport, the following have proved useful, informative and enjoyable.

BRABHAM, Jack	<i>When the flag drops. (1971)</i>
BROOKS, Tony	<i>Poetry in Motion (2012)</i>
COOPER EVANS, Michael	<i>Private Entrant, racing with Rob Walker (1966)</i>
COURT, William	<i>The history of Grand Prix racing, volumes 1&2 (1988, 1990)</i>
CROMBAC, Gerard	<i>Colin Chapman (1986)</i>
DONALDSON, Gerald	<i>Fangio, the life behind the legend (2003)</i>
GAULD, Graham	<i>Reg Parnell. (1996)</i>
GODDARD, Geoff and NYE, Doug	<i>Track Pass (1990)</i>
HAMILTON, Duncan	<i>Touch Wood. (1964)</i>
HAWTHORN, Mike	<i>Champion Year.(1959)</i>
HAY, Neville	<i>The Forgotten Stars, Rolt and Bira (2008)</i>
JENKINSON, Denis and POSTHUMUS, Cyril	<i>Vanwall (1975)</i>
LEWIS, Peter and FRANCIS, Alf	<i>Racing Mechanic (1957)</i>
LUDVIGSEN, Karl	<i>BRM v16. (2006)</i>
LUDVIGSEN, Karl	<i>Ascari.(2000)</i>
LUDVIGSEN, Karl	<i>Fangio.(1999)</i>
MCDONOUGH, Ed	<i>Alfetta. (2005)</i>
MCDONOUGH, Ed	<i>Peter Collins, All about the Boy. (2008)</i>
MOSS, Stirling and HENRY, Alan	<i>All my Races. (2009)</i>
MOSS, Stirling and NYE, Doug	<i>My cars,my career (1987)</i>
NIXON, Chris	<i>Rivals, Lancia D50 and Mercedes W196 (1999)</i>
NIXON, Chris	<i>Mon ami mate, (1998)</i>
NOLAN, William	<i>Phil Hill: Yankee Champion (1990)</i>
NYE, Doug	<i>Cooper Cars. (1991)</i>
PRITCHARD, Anthony	<i>Maserati, a racing history. (1976)</i>
ROEBUCK, Nigel	<i>Grand Prix Greats (1986)</i>
ROEBUCK, Nigel	<i>Chasing the Title (1999)</i>
SMALL, Steve	<i>Grand Prix Who's Who. (2012)</i>
WHYTE, Andrew	<i>Jaguar (1980)</i>
WILLIAMS, Richard	<i>The Last Road Race. (2004)</i>
YOUNG, Eoin	<i>McLaren Memories. (2005)</i>

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Monarch Works, Elswick Road, Fenton Industrial Estate, Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire ST4 2SH
www.theswiftgallery.co.uk