



## Scottish Motor Racing Club News

By Richard Thomas

NO MATTER WHAT the cynics may say about Ingliston it still provides the best motor racing in Britain, and the May meeting was certainly no exception. Indeed, it was probably the finest meeting seen at Ingliston since the beginning. Even visiting firemen like Castrol's Roger Willis admitted that they hadn't seen racing like that for years. At the same time it was a great meeting for Graham Birrell, who further proved that in saloon cars and open sports cars there are few to beat him.

For some reason the May meeting attracted a good entry though there were still a number of non-starters. Perhaps the anticipated arrival of Brian Muir in the Wiggins Teape Camaro stirred everyone into entering, and certainly the arrival of Alec Poole with the Complan Mini added to the already interesting field.

The first surprise was the late entry of Jock Russell with his Lotus 70 who must have been dead beat after driving all the way from Castle Coombe in Wiltshire overnight. Jock, however, was taking things easy in practice but demonstrated the potential of his car. There appeared to be few problems at scrutineering save that Bill Taylor and Donald Heggie were running about the paddock like chickens with their heads chopped off as they had both forgotten their competition licences. Luckily a friend arrived with them. In even worse trouble was rally man Gavin Waugh whose little boy flung his competition licence on the fire the night before so that he was only left with the charred remains. He made up for this misfortune in the race, however.

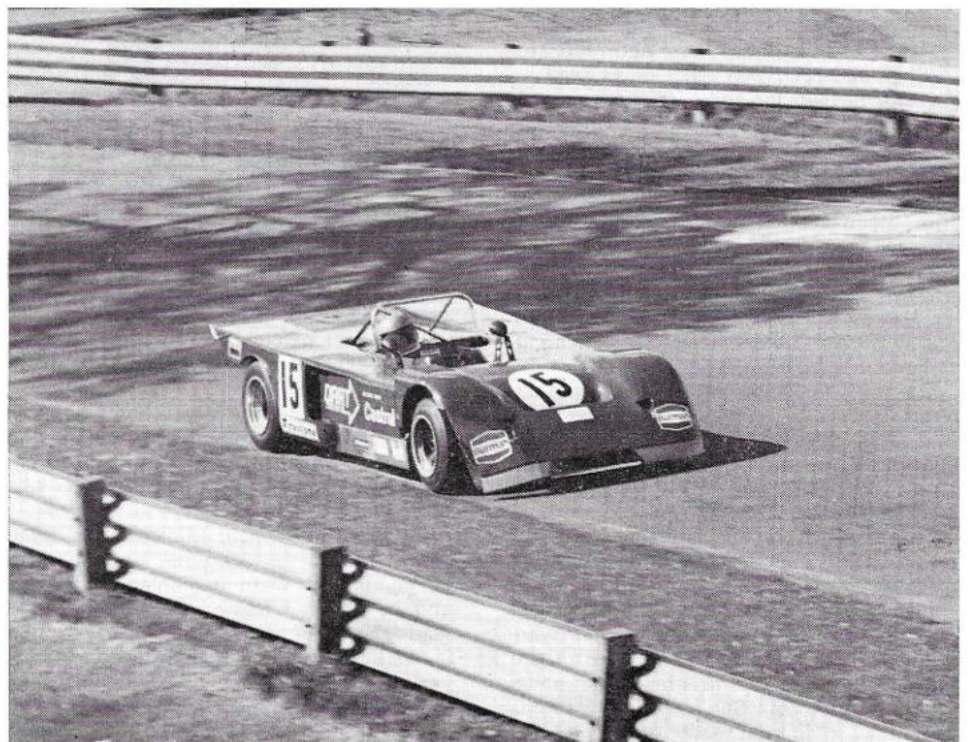
In practice Douglas Thompson blew a piston in the Ecosse Imp after some very spirited driving. Douglas will do well in his class with the car. Brian Nelson, Brian

Cullen and Tommy Reid representing the Irish brigade in the Libre event were all running well, but the coloured immigrant in the woodpile was Graham Birrell with the DART Chevron B19. John Miles was a non-starter in the other DART car but Denys Dobbie looked pleased with the way Graham was going.

First event on the programme was the Newcomers Tankard second heat which again attracted a motley crew of rally and autocross drivers. Much was expected of Heggie and Taylor in their Escorts, but Bill Taylor did just one slow lap before retiring and Donald Heggie was not running as well as expected. Most of the cars are prepared for rally events so tend to look much more unstable than the

tied-down racers. If the truth be told, it was a pretty dull race enlivened only by the remarkable performance of Gavin Waugh, who started at the back of the grid and weaved his White Horse Whisky-sponsored Mini right to the front. Indeed, he finished 17 seconds ahead of A. A. Macfarlane's Mini Cooper S with Donald Heggie's Escort in third.

Next came the Gold Leaf Trophy race for Special GT cars, sports cars and clubmen's cars, and despite all these various classifications there was not a terribly large entry. If we forget about Graham Birrell for the moment, it was a good race which produced some good dicing in the ruck, but the aforementioned Birrell decided he had a train to catch and



A brilliant performance from Graham Birrell in the DART Chevron B19. Birrell won his race, but only after a protest had been sorted out.

# WHEELSPIN

departed from the grid rarely to be seen again by those chasing him. Derek McMahon, the only man likely to give him a run for his money with the Royale, was a non-starter and so behind the dark blue DART Chevron there came a gaggle of cars.

The two Watson Mallock U2s were well up as was Edward Labinjoh with the latest Fisher Spyder. It looked like being a great battle. Unfortunately, Sandy Watson, who was out in front of John Mackie's sister car, was having trouble with a locking brake and on the fourth lap he spun at the left hander right in front of his team-mate and they collided. This was a rotten bit of luck. It was made even worse when committee member Graham Gauld picked up an Akai video-tape recorder and shot the ensuing 'discussion' between the two drivers. (He later heard that Sandy Watson wanted to see him; presumably to burn the tape!). With this fracas nobody noticed that Graham Birrell had pulled further into the lead and had set a new class lap record at 49.4 seconds, which is a ridiculously fast time for a closed wheeler at Ingliston. In the other class Edward Labinjoh also broke the class record with a 56. Labinjoh, however, was surprised to find George Temple breathing down his neck in the early model Chevron. George overtook and finished second one lap and twelve seconds behind Birrell. Further down the field Peter McNaughton was driving a fine race in his Lotus 7, holding off Robin Smith who did well to keep control of the Attila-Chevrolet. Keith Robertson's Landar was even further back.

Of all the classes at Ingliston Formula Ford is always the most heavily subscribed. It is an ideal circuit for the cars and Damien Magee, the reigning Formula Ford King's Cup Trophy holder, came all the way from Castle Coombe for the meeting. He was obviously going to have to work for his money as both Richard Mallock and Neil Ginn were going well.

From the flag the three of them set off determined to make a meal of things, but Richard Mallock in his frog-like Mallock U2 nipped into the lead whilst everyone was sorting out wheels and suspensions after the esses. Into second place went Damien Magee in his Palliser, with Neil Ginn wedging his white Lotus up Magee's tail. On the opening lap McLean retired his Hawke at the esses and Preston his one at the left-hander, the latter appearing to have lost his brakes.

Up front, however, there was drama as Richard Mallock lapped a tail-ender and Neil Ginn got caught up in the melee, dropping back slightly towards the next group consisting of John Sheldon in another Palliser, Donald McLeod with a locking brake on his Mackinlay's-sponsored Dulon, and Bernie Hunter showing a lot of oversteer in his blue Hawke.

Half way through the race Hunter was overtaken on the inside by Sheldon, who had earlier dropped back, and in the tight spot he ran on to the grass and spun right in front of Geoff Todd's March. How they didn't hit each other no one



We always knew those grass verges at Ingliston were there for a purpose. Here the Kam Racing Mini of Ken Allen does a 'wall of death' ride after coming unstuck at the hairpin.

It was a great day for Bill Borrowman in BOX 1. The car went well and at the end of the race Bill pipped Andy Barton for first place. A pity for Barton, who made a classic lap counting error, however.



will know, but the race was continued with Hunter catching up and taking sixth place. Geoff Oliver in the Car Bargain Centre DRW 8F is not as fast as he was last season when he saw a lot of people off, and D. S. Langley drove well in the Crossle having moved into FF racing from his usual modsports racing in the MG Midget.

By the end Richard Mallock was quite happy about the lead he had built up as his brakes were beginning to act up and he scraped home with an 8 second lead ahead of his arch-rival Neil Ginn in the Lotus, who overtook Damien Magee and relegated the King's Cup Champion to third. We could do with more FF stuff like this. For Mallock, then, the Firestone

Trophy—I hope he was on Firestone tyres!

Talking of sponsors, Auto Auctions, who hold their regular Thursday car auctions at Ingliston, were again out in force to sponsor the up to 1,000cc saloon car race which is usually a Barton or Bell benefit; this time the record played a different tune.

It goes without saying that special agent 'Dick' Barton took the lead and it looked like the ball was on the slates right from the start. However, Jim Howden in the Chamois Coupe slotted into second place and began harrowing Barton, towing Bill Borrowman and Brian Coyle behind him. For once Bill Borrowman looked thoroughly happy with everything and it was obvious he was going to have a



Jennifer Birrell in Wylies "club Escort" leading Bill Dryden in the SMT Viva GT. Bill Dryden's car went well for the first time, and he pressed Mrs. Birrell very hard, but Jennifer drove a calm and collected race for third place.

The field for the Modsports class was a good one, but no one could live with John Absolom's Ginetta. Miles Hopperton's Midget was fastest of the ruck, taking second place after an exciting race.



real go. The surprise man, however, was Brian Coyle who has built a very quick Imp and proved that he can drive it, too. Not only did he take third place in the race but set up the fastest lap; poaching in Barton's preserves. For Jim Howden, however, it was an unlucky race as the lead came off the coil and he trailed to a halt, eventually getting going again and finishing tenth.

Of the Mini drivers Ken Allan was giving of his best with a spin on the first lap and then a bit of dramatic driving to catch up. He contented himself with fifth behind the ever improving Rob Leckie. Indeed, Hillman Imps are making something of a comeback in this class as John Fyda took sixth in his Agra-Imp.

The real drama, however, came on the last lap when Andy Barton for some reason thought the race had finished. Bill Borrowman, never one to miss an opportunity like that, leapfrogged into the lead with the Moir & Baxter/Sports Tune orange Mini and won the event. Though one must sympathise with Barton, the sight of Bill Borrowman's face on winning after so long was well worth waiting for.

Next came the Adam Wyllie Memorial Trophy Race, the formula libre event in the Burmah meeting. The cars were slightly different from usual, Graham Birrell having the DART Chevron out and Tommy Reid being joined by fellow Irishmen Brian Nelson and Brian Cullen. Nelson's Crossle 18F was in effect the factory car

—Brian, however, owns the engine! — whilst Cullen's BT30 was, like Reid's similar car, beautifully prepared. Against them was Willie Forbes, whose Lola gets bigger and bigger every meeting, and Jock Russell, a welcome late entry with his dark blue Lotus 70. This Formula 5000 uses the latest Boss Mustang V8 engine prepared by Falconer & Dunne and it is a most impressive looking tool. In practice Jock's disappearance from the Inglis-ton scene for two seasons was noticeable. He was easing his way in with a car which is a pretty powerful handful. David Thompson was a non-starter, having blown a piston in the Ecosse-Imp, but the field was added to by the two Pallisers of John Sheldon and Damien Magee.

At the flag there was a flash of crimson and green as both Reid and Cullen dived for the Esses with Graham Birrell in tow. Cullen made it first and the crocodile file followed on. But in the stretch up to Caravan bend Willie Forbes leaned on the DART car and as a result the bodywork of Birrell's car nipped the tyre valve on the Lola and so Willie Forbes retired with a puncture—it is interesting that in the April meeting Willie ended his race with a puncture after a similar incident with Tommy Reid. This incident caused a scrape on the DART Chevron which was to be crucial in a protest later in the afternoon.

Whilst Cullen pulled steadily ahead Reid held off Birrell until braking for the hairpin the Blue Chevron got past. Then we saw Birrell at his best as he hauled in Cullen's car and began to scheme how to get past. Again it came about at the hairpin, but the circumstances led to a protest by Cullen's entrant. Though the official Stewards' reasons were not generally released, the argument seemed to be whether Cullen spun out of pressure from Birrell or whether he was helped on his way. The dent from the earlier incident with Forbes came into the proceedings, but at the end of the day the protest was scrubbed and Birrell remained the winner. It was a pity this should happen after such a wonderful race.

Behind the leading trio Brian Nelson held fourth place and never was in contention, but behind him Ian McLaren drove very well in his Chevron B15 and obviously has the makings. He was followed by Brian Harrison, who seemed to be delighted to be ahead of the two Formula Ford Pallisers in his 1,000cc Imp engined Vixen.

Then came the Burmah Trophy race for big saloons, the race most people had been waiting for. Brian Muir was much fancied in his Camaro but local man Graham Birrell, who obviously was having one of those days when nothing would go wrong, was confident. Backing him up was Jennifer Birrell in the other Wylies Escort, and the dark horse was Alec Poole with his Complian Mini now sporting a new body but with wheels far wider than even that body could cover.

There were only eight cars in the race, and though there was a class for 1,300cc cars the expected entry dwindled away and rather ruined the argument for such a class division. First up through the Esses was Muir with the Camaro followed by the Birrells and Bill Dryden's Viva, now recovered from its ploughing demonstration in April. Muir played cat and mouse very well, going just fast enough to keep ahead of the oversteer-king. The

# WHEELSPIN

pair of them were going at it so hard, however, that they left the rest behind. Bill Dryden, driving one of his best races for a long time, pressed Jennifer Birrell hard for third place, but the lady refused to be flustered by it all and held station.

Meanwhile back at the ranch Alec Poole was doing the David and Goliath bit pulling his Mini up through the field. The trouble was a throttle which kept sticking. John McGillivray again drove very well in his Anglia, and it would be interesting to see him in action in a competitive Escort. He held off Poole until the closing stages when the red Mini finally went ahead and pulled out some distance. Up front Birrell saw his chance when Muir locked up his brakes on the lefthander, and from then on he scampered into the lead, broke the class lap record and won by 6 seconds.

The Modsports race which followed saw a vast gaggle of Midgets and Elans chasing the blue and yellow Ginetta driven by John Absalom. This is becoming one of the most competitive classes at Ingliston and Absalom drove brilliantly under pressure. Miles Hopperton's supercharged Midget was being driven with its usual brio and Miles had the satisfaction of pressing Alex Souter's Elan so hard that Souter spun his car at Caravan corner. Ian Hall in his Mark I bug-eyed Sprite is faster and is now very competitive, whilst still well worth watching apart from being one of our most travelled club members. Al Fleming had an off day with Bill Shepherd's Midget so it was left to Absalom and Hopperton to finish first and second break their respective lap records.

Most of the large crowd stayed on for the last event on the programme, the Hartley Whyte Trophy race for saloons. This brought out all the fast men and for 15 laps they set out to decide who was best. This time Brian Muir made no mistake, taking the lead and doing a flying wedge job of holding off everyone. He romped home the winner trailing Graham Birrell behind him, though for the whole of the race the Escort was almost in his boot. Again Jennifer Birrell held third until a tyre started to deflate, letting Bill Dryden through. Bill's next problem, however, was Alec Poole who came up from behind to pip him for third place in the race. In the 1,000cc battle Brian Coyle again drove brilliantly, taking second place to Andy Barton—counting the laps this time—and ahead of Jim Howden's Chamois Coupe. At the end of it all the Muir holding-off procedure was proved by the fact that fastest lap was shared by Andy Barton and Alec Poole.

For the second time this season Ingliston provided the type of racing which no other circuit in the country can offer.

THE SECOND MEMBERS' practice day in May was very successful with good weather and everyone having a chance to run round. With one of the Croft meetings the following day a number of members took the opportunity to try their cars out including Ted Dzierzeck with the Lola, Brian Harrison with his Vixen and John

Mackie with the beautifully prepared Mallock U2.

For the majority, however, it was ordinary club members with their own cars who took part. I'm sure some of the cars had been borrowed from dad, and I don't want to mention any names but one member driving a Renault 16 was having a real old go until he decided to leave his braking a bit too late at the hairpin. He didn't hit anything, but there was much drama and the smell of burning rubber before he got round. Roy Watt, normally seen in autocross cars, slunk round in an Escort Twin Cam whilst Jim Howden had his yellow Californian going well. Of the normal road cars being driven round, Iain Munro was very stylish in his big Vauxhall.

The Thomson brothers were the first ones to get down to business, one in the Riley Elf and the other in the ex-Murray McGrath Ecosse-Imp. Shortly before Doune Hill Climb in April Douglas Thomson and Ronnie Craik decided to buy the Ecosse-Imp, but at the end of the day it was Douglas who took delivery of the car and he is now the sole owner. He was getting down to some fast times with it despite discovering an oil leak from a chip out of the sump.

Brian Harrison did well at the Doune meeting—as did many of our SMRC members—and came along to wring out his Vixen-Imp. Brian has his eye on the very latest Vixen and would be tempted to buy it if any club members would like to bid for his present car. Of the change from the 850cc engine to the 1,000cc Imp engine he says, "... it's terrific and really goes."

Also out on the track in May was club photographer Colin Lourie—the man who took the picture of Graham Birrell climbing up into the air at Ingliston in the Ecosse Brabham last season. Colin had been experimenting with a Mini van, converting it into his own open car. As the engine had done some ridiculous mileage he was not trying to break any records. Also out was Graham Gauld in Jack Fisher's Fisher 1100. The intrepid scribbler is preparing notes for a story on the development of this attractive little car, and what better way than to drive it. Trouble was, like the owner, Jack Fisher, he was having trouble finding third gear and bobbed it in front of the pits, which sent Edward Labinjoh into kinks.

Thankfully there were no problems, no accidents, and the whole thing went off well, thanks to the calm organisation of John MacMillan, Jimmy Miller, Gordon Cumming and David Swinton, as well as the enthusiastic members who volunteered to marshal out in the boonies. At the end of the day over 60 members took part.

A WELCOME VISITOR to Ingliston earlier this season was Jimmy Mackay from Scrabster, who was one of Scotland's finest unsung racing drivers. A hotel owner up in the north, he raced a Lotus VI at Charterhall around the time these cars were just beginning to be seen. To date it further, he used a Ford Consul engine in it. He later bought a Lotus Eleven which was tuned by Hugh Shannon, and though Hugh's name has been linked to many drivers I personally think his work with Jimmy Mackay must have been amongst his most successful and enjoyable.

Though he came into racing at an age when many people think of retiring, he was one of the hardest men to beat; and if you look back the record books you will find that Jimmy held the class lap record at Brands Hatch with the Lotus Eleven which, when you think about it, is quite a feat in that home of Lotus cars. His son briefly raced at Ingliston during 1965, but the Mackays then retired into their home in the North. I know, however, that if you are ever in the hotel in Scrabster and ask for Jimmy you will always have a pleasant hour chatting about racing.

Ronnie Mackay, who comes from the same area, is not, as far as I am aware, related to Jimmy, which makes it a fascinating thought that two drivers with the same surname from the same neck of the woods should be so successful in racing.

AT the last SMRC committee meeting Jimmy Miller reported that a new set of circuit warning flags had been bought on the strength of the club's winnings in the Castrol-Dunlop Quiz earlier in the year.

It is also planned to run a Range Rover as an additional fire vehicle on the inside of the circuit. Bill Stein was pleased to add that it would be carrying Porta Power equipment to unsquidge any bent metal. Few will forget Bill's own terrible experiences at Brands Hatch when he was trapped in the Ecosse Tojeiro-Ford for over half-an-hour before the car could be pulled apart for him to be rescued. The offer of the Range Rover came from Rossleigh's by way of committee member Tom Sleigh.

In the course of the discussion John Romanes reported that he was soon to attend a demonstration of new fire fighting chemicals and would bring back any information which might be useful for Ingliston.

The committee also extended sympathy to the relatives of club member John Rae, who was killed in a road accident on his way home from Croft. John had recently bought the ex-Ron Harris Techno-BRM and had hoped to compete at the Ingliston meetings with it.

The new club cuff-links were displayed by the chairman—he being first in the queue—and are on sale at £1.10 per pair.

Chairman Bill Dryden raised the subject of running a 1,300cc saloon class in the big saloon car race during the May meeting and John Romanes, donning his Scotcircuits hat, pointed out that it was being considered favourably. (As it transpired, there was such a class.)

An interesting point was raised as to whether on timing the cars at Ingliston the wheels or the nose cone were taken as the actual time of finishing. It was pointed out that 'whichever came first' was the answer, and the remark passed about the competitor in the novices race who crossed the line backwards was accepted as just cause for raising the question in the first place. In that event his tail lights would constitute his completion of the race.

Amongst the new members of the club is one familiar to Charterhall fans, Nairn Ferrier, who drove a number of cars including a Lola-Climax and a TVR. Welcome to the club, Nairn.