

CHRIS NIXON

KINGS OF THE NURBURGRING

DER NURBURG-RING: A HISTORY 1925-1983

INTRODUCTION

To the best of my knowledge the Nurburgring is the only circuit in the world that bestowed a title upon those who excelled on it. Quite when the term *Ringmeister* was first coined is lost in the mists of time, but it came about because the Nurburgring was a circuit unlike any other, snaking for more than 14 miles through the Eifel Mountains in a bewildering series of twists and turns, climbs and falls that left the driver both breathless from its complexity and thrilled by its challenges.

To call such a circuit a level playing field would appear to be a fine contradiction in terms but essentially, that is what it was, for the Nurburgring provided a constant and unequalled challenge to several generations of racing drivers. Many were able to shine there, but only a handful really dominated the circuit and made it a showcase for their remarkable skills. The members of this exclusive club are my Kings of the Nurburgring.

Surprisingly, there has never been a book, in English, about this fabulous circuit. Clive Stroud, my publisher at Transport Bookman, Ltd., is frequently asked for anything on the Ring but, until now, has had nothing to offer, so he suggested that our next project, after *Sportscar Heaven*, should fill the gap. That also seemed appropriate as the Nurburgring played a large role in three of my previous books, *Racing The Silver Arrows*, *Rosemeyer!* and *Shooting Star/Dick Seaman*.

Rather than just ramble through the circuit's history I decided to present it through the achievements of the drivers who had become acknowledged as *Ringmeisters*. This would embrace both Grand Prix and sportscar racing via the German GP, the Eifel GP and the 1000 Kms (with, as it turned out, the Marathon de la Route and the 500 Kms thrown in for good measure). The circuit's name was originally written as Nurburg-Ring (and occasionally Nurburg Ring) and then as one word, which is why it is in two versions on the cover. Just for the hell of it, I have used Nurburg-Ring in the early chapters up to and including the war years, and Nurburgring thereafter.

So what makes a *Ringmeister*? In my opinion, to qualify for the title a driver must have won at least one major race on the *Nordschleife*, but winning one race does not automatically make him a *Ringmeister*. In addition he must have put the circuit's myriad challenges together like a jigsaw puzzle, lap after lap after lap and on the very edge of disaster.

My choice may well cause some controversy, as readers will have their own ideas as to who should be included in any such list, and I will surely be accused of omitting several 'obvious' *Ringmeisters*. However, I felt I had to be ruthless in my selection, otherwise the value of the accolade, which is unique in motor racing, would be diluted, so I have restricted my choice to 14 drivers. By coincidence, the Nurburgring is 14 miles round, or thereabouts, so I have one driver per mile, which provides a nice symmetry.

Selecting my Kings of the Nurburgring was not the work of a moment. I spent many happy hours poring over race reports, delving back into history via the bound volumes of *The Autocar*, *The Motor*, *Motor Sport* and *Speed* for the 1920s and 30s and adding *Autosport* and *Motoring News* in the '50s, '60s and '70s. Reading three or four reports of each race gave me a firm idea as to who my *Ringmeisters* must be.

And it was not just the drivers and their races that interested me, but also the history of the circuit itself, for the Nurburg-Ring was a truly remarkable feat of engineering, made even more so by the fact that it was wrought in the midst of the depression that gripped Germany in the 1920s.

From the beginning, motor races had been run on public roads or specially-built circuits such as Brooklands, Monza and Montlhéry. No-one had ever contemplated building a road specifically for racing, which was precisely what was envisaged by the remarkable man who became known as the Father of the Nurburg-Ring, Dr Otto Creutz, the *Landrat/Commissioner* for the Adenau District in Germany, in 1925.

The story of the Nurburgring is a fascinating one. After establishing itself as the greatest road circuit in the world in the 1920s and '30s, the Ring survived the perils of World War Two and retained its reputation throughout the 1950s and '60s. However, at the end of the latter decade it attracted a great deal of controversy, as the ever-increasing speed of the cars made many drivers decide that the great circuit was unsafe, so much so that the German Grand Prix moved to Hockenheim in 1970.

Happily, the Nurburgring authorities spent a great deal of money that year carrying out improvements, as requested by the Grand Prix Drivers' Association and in 1971 the Grand Prix was back in its rightful home. But not for long, as speeds went on rising and in 1976 Niki Lauda's almost fatal crash ended Grand Prix racing on the *Nordschleife* forever. The 1000-km sportscar race continued to be run, but that came to a halt after the 1983 event, as a 'new' Nurburgring, was being built in the shadow of the old, which was finally deemed too dangerous for Grand Prix and sports-car racing.

The marvellous *Nordschleife* survives today, but is used mainly for testing by car and tyre manufacturers. Races are still held there, to be sure, and countless enthusiasts pit their skills against the circuit that helped forge the legends of the men who are my Kings of the Nurburgring. However, no modern Grand Prix (sorry - F1!) driver has ever raced there, and none will ever earn the title *Ringmeister*, a title which would set him apart from his peers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book is dedicated to my friends Bernd and Helga Schneider, of Cologne, and with good reason. Early in 1992 I received a letter from Bernd, saying how much he had enjoyed MON AMI MATE, my biography of Mike Hawthorn and Peter Collins. I replied and he wrote again, saying, 'I understand from your letter that you intend to come over to Germany soon. What about staying with me in Cologne on your way to Stuttgart? That would mean a lot of advantages: good rest; good food (my wife is a good cook) and a trip to Hemmersbach Castle where Taffy von Trips lived.'

In the event I went to Stuttgart first, then took the train to Cologne where Bernd met me on the platform, clutching his copy of MON AMI MATE so I would recognise him. That was the beginning of an enduring friendship with him and Helga and their children Roland (who scanned many illustrations from his father's archive) and Bettina, a friendship which has proved invaluable in the production of this book.

Bernd started going to the Nurburgring as a schoolboy and recalling the thrill of sitting on the hillside on the run-up to the Karussell and hearing the cars blasting through the forests long before they came into view still brings a beatific smile to his face. That schoolboy has since become President of the Cologne Automobile Club.

Over the years Bernd has been an avid collector of Nurburgring memorabilia and has acquired an unmatched fund of knowledge of the circuit. All this he made available to me, feeding me information, photographs (including two rare-ashen's-teeth colour pictures of the 1939 Eifel GP), translations and introductions while Helga (who is indeed a fine cook) fed me with lunches and dinners on my frequent visits to their home.

Bernd proved to be a tireless researcher and the prize of his enquiries was the discovery that Dr Otto Creutz's daughter was living near Stuttgart. Frau Gisela Herbstrith turned out to be a charming and vivacious lady of 82 - going on 55 - who was delighted to learn that I planned to write

about her father's achievements and insisted that I mention her mother, Hedwig, too. She produced her parents' photo albums and Guest Book from the 1920s and allowed me to make copies of certain things of interest. Although she was only a child when the Nurburgring was built, she provided much valuable information about her father and his remarkable project.

Back home, my research was simplified by the fact that all the magazines I mentioned in my Introduction are now owned by Haymarket Publications and I must thank the firm's former Chairman, Simon Taylor, for giving me access to them.

By virtue of its very location in the Eifel Mountains, the Nurburgring is a circuit like no other and in order to bring its true flavour and the achievements of my chosen Kings to life I felt it absolutely necessary to quote - often at length - from the reports of the day. It was equally important to credit the writers responsible, for without their colourful and insightful comments a book such as this would be much the poorer. I am most grateful to Peter Foubister, Managing Director of Haymarket Autosport and Classic Publications, Ltd., for giving me permission to do this. And I must thank Simon Taylor for allowing me, yet again, to raid his own library of magazines on many occasions.

I have also quoted from several autobiographies and biographies and my thanks to the following publishing houses for giving me permission to do so:

HarperCollins Publishers: *A Turn at the Wheel*, by Stirling Moss and *Challenge Me The Race*, by Mike Hawthorn.

Haynes Publishing: *My Racing Life*, by Juan Manuel Fangio, *A Racing Driver's World*, by Rudolf Caracciola and *Alf Francis Racing Mechanic*, by Peter Lewis.

Motor Racing Publications: *Stirling Moss* by Robert Raymond.

Thanks also to Mrs Bette Hill, who kindly gave me permission to quote from Graham's autobiography, *Life at the Limit*, and to Mrs Betty Peddie

For Bernd and Helga, without whose generosity,
knowledge and enthusiasm
this book could never have been written.

(Jim Clark's sister) for allowing me to quote from *Jim Clark at the Wheel*. I am happy to say that seven of my Kings of the Nurburgring are still with us and I am most grateful to Sir Stirling Moss, Tony Brooks, Phil Hill, John Surtees, Vic Elford, Sir Jackie Stewart and Jacky Ickx for their memories and comments about the world's most demanding circuit, which they mastered with such insolent ease. I was intrigued to learn that whereas six of them loved the circuit and rated it the best ever, the seventh hated it and was always greatly relieved to return home unscathed.

Initially, my seven Kings posed a dilemma: which of them should I ask to write the Foreword? No matter whom I chose, the other six would doubtless feel miffed at not being asked, but my problem was solved when Bernd introduced me to Frau Herbstrith. As the daughter of the Father of the Nurburg-Ring she provides a unique link to the creator of the circuit over which my Kings reigned, and once she had happily agreed to do the honours there could be no complaints.

One of the many great things about the Nurburgring is its visual beauty. Luckily, from the beginning, most photographers were well aware of this and framed their pictures accordingly, placing the cars in the context of the grandeur of the scenery. I determined, therefore, to show this and, where possible, with pictures that have not been seen before. For this I have to thank a number of people, beginning with Maria Feifel and Stan Peschel of the DaimlerChrysler Classic Archive in Unterturkheim; Klaus Parr and Jens Torner at the Porsche Archive in Stuttgart; Lothar Franz at the Audi Archive in Ingolstadt and, of course, Bernd Schneider, who made his private archive available to me.

Under the baton of Peter Higham, Haymarket Publishing has done a remarkable job in preserving the photo archives of *The Autocar*, *Autosport*, *Motor Sport* and *Motoring News*. I am most grateful to Peter, Tim Clarke, Kevin Wood, Kathy Ager and Ian Marshall for their unfailing help. Other sources were Jim Sitz; Alexis Callier; Neil Corner (The Robert Fellowes Collection); Motor

Presse; Frau Gisela Herbstrith; Karl-Gunter Peters; Bernhard Volker; Franz Turnwald; Manfred Forster; Gunther Molter; Annette and Hans Joachim Retterath; the Adenau Museum; the BP Photo Archive; the BP Video Library; DDAC Motorwelt; Ullstein Bilderdienst; Goodyear Dunlop; Don Grant; Mick Woollett; Heinrich Esch; Quentin Spurring and Brian Joscelyne. Nigel Dutt was kind enough to send me some colour photos taken by his late father, Charles Dutt, in 1961. Having twice commissioned Michael Turner's superb paintings for previous books I now make use of them again, as well as several of his excellent colour photographs.

Thanks also to Alan Mann and Ian Scott Watson for their memories of Jacky Ickx and Jimmy Clark. Bill Kaye and Duncan Adamson at Blowup did their usual excellent job of scanning and far away in New Zealand Mark Holman has, once again, proofread my text. (Nothing like having a friend on your doorstep!)

A very large 'thank you' is due to Brandon Wang who, a few years ago, enabled me to enjoy a wonderful Nurburgring experience - a couple of laps beside *Ringmeister* Tony Brooks in the very Aston Martin DBR1 which he and Noel Cunningham-Reid drove to victory in the 1957 1000 Kms. Unforgettable!

Kings of the Nurburgring has been superbly designed by Simon Loxley, on the recommendation of Mick Walsh of *Classic and Sportscar*. My thanks to them and finally, to Clive Stroud, who has taken on, with equal distinction, the mantle of publisher at Transport Bookman worn by his late father, Frank.

Chris Nixon,
January, 2005.

FOREWORD

How much would it have pleased my father, Dr Otto Creutz, that after so many years the Nurburgring has not lost any of its fascination. His efforts were not in vain. His vision has been fulfilled.

Chris Nixon's wonderful book, *Kings of the Nurburgring*, tells the complete story of this magnificent race track, which my father built as *Landrat* of Kreis Adenau.

I am certain that the Nurburgring will continue to enthral motor racing enthusiasts for many years to come.

Gisela Herbstrith



**ALTHOUGH THIS BOOK IS PRIMARY ABOUT
THE EXPLOITS OF MY 14 KINGS
IT IS ONLY RIGHT TO BEGIN WITH
THE HISTORY OF THE CIRCUIT UPON WHICH
THEY EARNED THE TITLE
RINGMEISTER**

**THE NURBURG-RING WAS THE MOST
RENARKABLE AND DEMANDING
ROAD CIRCUIT
THE WORLD HAVE EVER SEEN,
A STAGE FIT FOR HEROES.
THIS IS ITS STORY...**

**DER NURBURG-RING-
A HISTORY 1925-1983**

PHASE ONE: 1925-1939

'Do you wish to be thrilled? Do you want to feel speed in excelsis; to motor as you have never dreamed possible?

Strap your goggles on tightly then; button up your coat. Climb in beside the grim, unsmiling driver in his huge Mercedes. Keep out of his way; one arm behind him, the other gripping the side of the body. Tuck your feet away, too, somewhere in the dark maze of the cockpit, where air pressure pumps will bruise your shins and the brake adjuster will scrape your calves.

No time to withdraw now. You're off, gathering speed so fast that your head is forced back by the rush of air. In a few seconds the car is rushing towards a wall of trees. You hold your breath and hang on for dear life. It is a left-hand curve and because it is a left-hand drive car, you feel that you will «get it» first if it overturns.

But the brakes grip reassuringly, the tyres screaming on the concrete. Then the car heaves its bulk round and you are flung against the driver as he forces the car into the right-hand loop. You come out of it slightly sideways and, as the whine of the supercharger rises to a shrill scream, you tear down a narrow stretch of concrete parallel to the starting straight and only separated from it by a narrow strip of grass.

Whoosh! Those were the backs of the pits, and here is that rather terrifying-looking banked curve to the left. But you take it fairly slowly, only to gather speed on yet another bend to the left. "Splendid!" you shout in the driver's ear.

"Wait!" he replies.

Down, down, down! Faster and faster! Help, the man's mad! A hundred miles an hour down a 1 in 10 hill with a downhill turn at the bottom! We are round. The car gave a kick of its tail, we seemed to float a bit, but here we are, ringing the changes on second and third gears, swooping up the Quiddelbacher Hohe and round the Flugplatz where, as the name suggests, we seem to shoot straight off into the sky. Then down again, steeper

and steeper descents, sharper and sharper turns. The road seems never straight for more than a hundred yards at a time. For four crazy miles this dizzy downhill dash continues. We don't know where on earth we are: just hurtling, rather uncomfortably, through space.

Suddenly we swing round a sharp right-hand turn, banked just a little to help us, and we look right down on the roofs and streets of Adenau, gleaming wet in this beastly drizzle that stings one's face like a whiplash and soaks one to the skin.

We know what to expect. So does the crowd that huddles in the rain on the hillside. We plunge down, steeper than ever, but decelerating. At the bottom the car jumps sideways like a live thing as we shoot over a bridge. Then a short swoop and, just like a zooming aeroplane, we climb a 1 in 10 gradient on so sharp a turn that we see only the leaden sky ahead of us. "That's where Junek was killed two years ago!" our driver bellows as the engine roar drops between two gear changes.

A short dip, and a seemingly vertical concrete path confronts us. Not up that, *surely*! - No, we slide almost sideways to the right at the bottom, and climb steeply. Had we gone straight on we'd have been on the 1 in 3.5 test hill!

Now we're for it! Diving right into the ditch! Nothing can save us! But round we go in safety and tear downhill again. That was the Karussell - the "merry-go-round" - the only really artificial-looking turn on the Nurburg-Ring and so designed to prevent the drivers overshooting the hairpin bend and rolling over and over, till death claims its own, down the steep, rocky hillside.

A gust of wind catches us and only a quick jerk of the driver's wrist saves us from being blown off the road as we come to the Wippermann turn, one of the highest points of the course. Down we tear again, taking completely blind turns on which a single mistake, a single failure of the driver to remember the precise nature of the bend would send us crashing, for the last time on earth, among

the tree-trunks, or shooting rocketlike into space.

But here we are at last coming down to the great straight, the fastest part of the course. The supercharger whine has reached so high a pitch that our ears can barely stand it. One hundred, 120 - 130 miles an hour! There are two bridges under the course, each of them as "blind" as many a road bridge. We brace ourselves for the bump. We leave the seat and hang on for dear life. Up the hill we shoot, catching a glimpse of a sea of faces on either side of the road. Then under the concrete bridge at Antoniusbuche and the roof of the grandstand heaves in sight.

«Well, what do you think of the course?»

«Unbelievable!»

That breathless account of a lap of the Nurburg-Ring appeared in *The Motor's* report of the 1931 German Grand Prix. In the fashion of the day the report was anonymous, but it was the work of Sports Editor Humphrey Symons who, writing as *Grande Vitesse*, compiled the magazine's regular sporting column, 'On Road and Track'. That year marked the first time that either *The Motor* or *The Autocar* reported the race at first hand, having previously resorted to a few paragraphs from the wire services.

However, *The Motor* had already told its readers about the Nurburg-Ring in February, 1926, with a one-and-a-half-page article, which began: 'A huge new permanent course on which motor races may be run is now in progress of construction near Adenau in Western Germany, some little distance south of Cologne. Measuring 17.4 miles round, with many corners and numerous severe gradients, it presents not only a most interesting course over which long distance road races can be run, but also a testing road available all the year round on which manufacturers can try their cars to the utmost without any interference from public authorities or other traffic'

The article gave full details of the circuit, but said nothing of the man who made it happen, Dr Otto Creutz, who was the *Landrat* (Head of Administration) of Landkreis Adenau. However, also involved in the project was Franz Xaver Weber, owner of Cafe Weber in Adenau, who later wrote this detailed account of how the Nurburg-Ring came into being:

'After World War One, from 1924 to 1926 the ADAC (Allgemeiner Deutscher Automobil Club) organised the Eifel races on the roads through the towns of Nideggen, Vlaten, Schmidt and back to Nideggen, Day One for motorcycles, Day Two for touring cars and Day Three for racing cars. There





was great enthusiasm from the spectators but, unfortunately, there were many accidents, some fatal.

Hans Weidenbruck from Bonn, who had the hunting rights in Nurburg, invited Hans Pauly, the Mayor of Nurburg, and me to visit the race in Nideggen, where the roads were closed to the farmers and their cattle. This proved difficult because the cattle were used to crossing the roads from one field to another. We walked round the circuit on roads that were very dusty and bumpy. Later, we talked about their inadequacy and the problems of racing through the villages where the farmers were forced to stay on their farms and could not move around. Clearly, such a race was impossible for the future, so Weidenbruck said, "If you can move the race from Nideggen to Nurburg that will be fine, because the Nurburg area is beautiful and the race deserves to be seen by a greater number of people."

We were all delighted by this idea and it was agreed that Weidenbruck should put the plan to the ADAC in Cologne and that we should form an automobile club in Adenau. The plan was made public and I invited people to join the Adenau Automobile Club.

The Head of Administration for the Landkreis Adenau was *Landrat* Dr Otto Creutz. He was invited to the first meeting of the Club because the roads would have to be prepared and repaired before and after the race. This would cost between 30,000 and 50,000 Marks which should be paid by Kreis Adenau (the local district) and the Government. For that reason it was felt that the *Landrat* should become the Chairman of the Club and he agreed.

On July 10, 1925 there was a test run on the roads from Breidscheid to Dottingen, Virneburg, Boos, Kelberg and back to Breidscheid. Local businessmen put up the prizes. Later, the head of the ADAC came to talk with us about the racetrack in Adenau and he was not optimistic. In 1922 the Lord Mayor of Cologne, Dr Konrad Adenauer (who was to become Chancellor of Germany after World War Two) had wanted to build a 4-km racetrack in Cologne, but the plan could not be carried out due to inflation. Later, the Munstereifel district offered some land, but refused to pay for the track. Apart from that, the Government did not want to give any money to the project, nor did the ADAC, so the plan fell through.

However, Weidenbruck had talked to the officials in Cologne with such enthusiasm that they came to Nurburg and climbed up the famous tower to have a look at the area. There was much gesticulating as they looked around and then we all went to the Eifeler Hof hotel in Adenau where we

discussed how the racetrack should be used, how it should be laid out and which of the existing forest roads should be incorporated. All this had to be agreed by the local government in Koblenz. It was clear that no farmers or cattle should be allowed on the racetrack and that after each race the roads should be repaired by the Kreis (District Council).

Weidenbruck came up with a number of variations of roads on which to hold the race and even the local politicians proposed various plans to Dr Creutz as to how the roads could be built and maintained at low cost, but Dr Creutz was not happy with any of them, saying forcibly, "I don't want my cattle to be run over. As *Landrat* I am here in the first place for the farmers and in the second place for the motorists."

With these words the discussion seemed to be finished and nobody dared argue with Dr Creutz. The officials from Cologne were deeply depressed, as the same thing had happened there and in Munstereifel and they had expected the same again in Adenau. There followed a long pause. Weidenbruck and others didn't say a word, because Dr Creutz's feelings were absolutely correct. Eventually, Dr Creutz broke the silence and everyone listened very carefully.

He now suggested a racetrack the like of which nobody had even dreamed of until then. He spoke of a completely new track, running around the hills of Nurburg, going over and under existing roads, so that no farmer should be inconvenienced and no cattle should have their grazing disturbed. Also, no farmer and no vehicles were to be allowed on the racetrack, which would be completely separate from the existing roads.

Herr Weidenbruck and the officials from the ADAC were astonished and thought he was joking, but when Dr Creutz repeated his ideas and enlarged upon them they became very excited and the Sports President, Herr Schleh, said,

"Herr *Landrat*, this is the best racetrack we could wish for, but who is going to pay for it?"

Dr Creutz replied, "Leave that to me, I will arrange it."

With that the meeting finished and everybody went away with mixed feelings: Dr Creutz's plan was exciting, but after the failure of the plans for Cologne and Munstereifel nobody believed his would work.

Nevertheless, Herr Altenberg, the building engineer from the ADAC, later had a meeting with Dr Creutz to develop a financial plan for a 12 to 15-km racetrack. They came up with a cost of 1.8 million Marks, the financing to be arranged by Dr Creutz.

However, after World War One Germany had high inflation and the following years were bad

for everyone. There was no Government support for the unemployed, who were helped by local governments without having made any contribution themselves, and everyone was looking for a big building project.

So, in the middle of 1925, when the financial index was at its lowest ever, Dr Creutz took his project to the Welfare Ministry in Berlin and was greeted with open arms, for it offered many workers the chance to earn money. However, the officials were a bit sceptical about the cost of 1.8 million Marks and only after long discussion was it agreed to give the project the go-ahead. This was just as well, for by this time Dr Creutz had already spent 600,000 Marks on the layout of the racetrack and digging up the stone material for it.

Now that the track had been officially approved a new estimate of 3.5 million Marks was produced. The officials in Koblenz were not surprised at this because experience told them that with all big projects the estimate always increases. Also, there would be many rainy days when people could not work, but would have to be paid just the same. Many people applied for work in Adenau and the surrounding areas and many came in their Sunday clothes without ever having seen a shovel or a pickaxe.

The money eventually came through and the layout of the track was then increased from the original 15 km to 22 and a new estimate of more than 5 million Marks was given to the Government. The District Committee was very angry with Dr Creutz about this and spent weeks deciding if it should give the 5.5 million or stick with the original 3.5 million, but they knew that if they did that the project would probably not be completed and nobody wanted to take responsibility for that.

Then began a critical time. A new estimate of 7 million Marks was produced and the Government's patience was at an end. Most people in industry had not given much thought to the racetrack as they did not believe that it would be completed. There was much debate in the Reichstag in Berlin and the state and the Reich sent representatives to Adenau to check that the racetrack really would cost 7 million Marks and that it could be completed for that sum.

Three months before the finalising of the project, the Chairman of the representatives of German industry agreed to send cars to the Nurburg-Ring for testing. With the motor industry on board, Dr Creutz felt that a great weight had been lifted from his shoulders. Now that the project was finalised the financial responsibility was taken out of his hands. Major Alex Dohmer, Vice President

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of the Kolner Automobil Club and a good friend of Dr Creutz, was recommended by the Automobilclub von Deutschland as his successor, to smooth out the final details.'

So much for the politics of planning: the circuit was described in more detail by *The Motor* in 1926: 'The largest motor racecourse in the world, the Nurburg-Ring will have a continuous length of 17.39 miles and will pass over or under all public roads, footpaths, etc, while all streams will be suitably bridged. The width of the track will measure at least 26 ft, with an extra allowance on each side, so that the total breadth will be about 30 ft at the minimum. Every 200 yards round the course recesses will be constructed in which cars that have broken down in the course of a race may be placed out of the way.

'The plans for the course have been elaborated so as to allow the use of three courses differing in size as well as in degrees of difficulty they present. The large course has a length, as we have already stated, of 17.39 miles, the medium course, which is a part of the larger one, about 13.6 miles and the smaller, which is situated on the other side of the straight portion where the grandstands will be erected, has a lap distance of about 5.6 miles.

'The starting and finishing straights are side by side, so that in the course of a long-distance race spectators will see competitors pass twice on every lap. The neighbourhood of the starting and finishing place comprises a territory of about 9,000 square metres and can be reached easily by special roads from all directions. On this ground, near a magnificent beech forest and entirely enclosed, there will be two covered grandstands, with seating accommodation respectively for 5,000 and 10,000 persons.

'The administration of the Adenau district is making all arrangements for the conveyance and accommodation of the large number of spectators that is expected to attend races on the new track. The principal streets and roads in the town are being widened and special roads are being built for the passage of traffic to and from the track. The railway station will be enlarged and sidings arranged for the accommodation of special trains, which may even be carried to a railway station inside the grounds of the track, which may be built next year. The Hotel Eifeler-Hof at Adenau has been completely rebuilt, and is said to provide excellent accommodation.'

In the event, of the two covered grandstands only one was built, seating 2,500 people. And the railway line was never extended to within the circuit.

Dr Creutz's plans were stunningly ambitious, for his idea was not just to build a race course for the Adenau Club, but one that would represent Germany on an international scale. Initially, the project was known as 'Die Erste Deutsche Gebirgs-, Renn- und Prüfungsstrecke im Kreis Adenau', or 'Germany's first Mountain, Race and Test Track', but Dr Creutz realised that this was far too clumsy for public use and organised a competition to find a new name for the circuit. The winner was Dr Kruse, formerly Chief Administrator of Bad Godesberg, whose entry was 'Der Nurburg-Ring', after the ruins of a castle - Nurburg - which had been built in the village of Nurburg by Count Theodore von Are und Hochstaden in 1167. The ruin dominates the area; from its height of 2210 feet a wonderful view of the whole region of the Eifel Hills is obtained and, in good weather, it is possible to see the twin spires of Cologne Cathedral, some 40 miles to the north.



The drawings were ready by the end of April and on the 27th of that month 60 men began work on the survey for the *Sudschleife* area, marking the true birthday of the Nurburg-Ring. Early in May the contract was signed between Kreis Adenau and the ADAC in which the Kreis agreed to build the circuit and the ADAC guaranteed to run three or four races there every year. At the same time the ADAC made contact with the Kolner Automobil Club, which had links with the Automobilclub von Deutschland with the result that, to this day, the AvD and the ADAC share the racing calendar: the German Grand Prix being organised by the AvD and all other events by the ADAC.

In June the engineering office of Gustav Eichler of Ravensburg was commissioned to build the circuit. Herr Eichler was a gifted construction engineer who would turn Dr Creutz's ideas into reality. In 1952, at the time of the Nurburg-Ring's 25th anniversary, he wrote about the birth of the circuit in the Automobilclub von Deutschland's magazine, *Automobil Revue*.

He recalled that there were many people involved in the making of the Nurburg-Ring but, just as it took a man with the courage of Christopher Columbus to discover America, it took a man with the vision, energy and forceful personality of Dr Otto Creutz to build the circuit. At the time the Adenau area was poverty-stricken and Dr Creutz realised that the construction work would bring money to the area. The circuit would continue to do so once built, in its capacity as a race and test track that could not be bettered anywhere in the world.

I was asked to prepare the plans for the circuit,' wrote Herr Eichler. 'I had never been to the Eifel before, but I had built mountain roads in the Black Forest and in Switzerland. This new task was something very special and I studied the maps of the area very carefully and made innumerable cross-country walks. I became well acquainted with the Eifel hills and fell in love with them.

'I gathered together a team of supervisors and we were all very excited about what was clearly going to be a once-in-a-lifetime experience. We found that the Eifel countryside was so beautiful that we almost spent more time there than we did in our offices. The idea for the racetrack was to incorporate all the best aspects of European roads with steep climbs and drops and fast and slow corners, following the natural contours of the countryside with no compromises made for safety or to make things easier for the drivers. (After the Nurburg-Ring had been completed, a group of university professors told us that if the Government had known exactly what we were planning, they would never have given us permission.)

'Also, the weather conditions in the Eifel district varied so considerably, with extremes of heat and cold, with rain and snow and sunshine, that it would be an excellent venue for testing the vehicles of the German motor industry.'

Construction work began on July 1st, 1925 but there was considerable opposition from nature lovers, who thought that the environment and the landscape would be damaged and that the wildlife would be frightened. Dr Creutz decided to invite the protesters to a meeting at the top of the Nurburg. This took place on July 10, when an open forum was attended by 110 objectors from the surrounding areas and Dr Brandt, the official from Koblenz (who was in favour of the circuit) listened to all the complaints and rejected them.

The land for the racetrack was bought from the owners and, in some cases, purchased compulsorily, particularly in Herschbroich (the village near Adenau Bridge), and Wimbach and at Wehrseifen and Breidscheid. Originally, the plan was to locate the start and finish area at the lowest point of the circuit, Ex-Tal, near Adenau, but the owner of the mill that is Ex-Muhle refused to sell for a long time. For this reason the area was moved to the highest point of the track, at Nurburg, by the castle, because it was very flat, with plenty of room for the pits, grandstands and car parks.

Dr Creutz celebrated the official birthday of the Nurburg-Ring on 27th September, when Dr Fuchs, President of the Rhineland Province, laid the foundation stone of the start and finish area. Late in October a model of the new circuit was displayed at the Berlin Motor Show and three days after that the name was officially registered as *Der Nurburg-Ring*.

In April, 1926 Dr Creutz launched a monthly magazine of that name devoted to all motor sport. It was also a tourist guide to the area. (In common with the circuit, over the next few years the name of the magazine and race programmes was variously *Der Nurburgring*, *Der Nurburg-Ring* or *Der Nurburg Ring*. In 1952 it became simply, *Nurburgring*).

During the next two years some 2,500 men worked on the circuit, many of them living in specially constructed barracks at Quiddelbacher Hohe, Breidscheid, Nurburg and Hohe Acht. The Nurburg-Ring comprised no fewer than 172 corners - 88 left handers and 84 right-handers - and rose from 1017 ft/310 m above sea level at Breidscheid to 2020 ft/616 m at the start and finish area. The larger circuit, *die Nordschleife*, was 22.8 km/14.2 miles in length and the smaller *Sudschleife*, 7.8 km/4.8 miles.

To complement his magnificent racetrack Dr Creutz built an equally magnificent pits/paddock/

grandstand complex, the latter overlooking 50 pits and the three-storey Continental Tyres building, which housed the timekeepers and officials. Built into the grandstand was the Sport-Hotel, with 30 bedrooms and a restaurant. Many drivers stayed there, rather than have to drive into Adenau or one of the other nearby towns.

Beside the grandstand was a vast, square paddock with 70 lock-up garages and, eventually, a concrete surface. Access to the pits was via a tunnel under the track. The entire circuit was 22 ft/6.7 m wide, broadening out to 66 ft/20 m at the start/finish area, and was linked by 16 main telephone posts and 72 smaller ones, so accidents and incidents could be reported and dealt with immediately. The total cost of this colossal undertaking was 14.1 million Marks.

It is truly remarkable that this 17.6-mile/28.3-km circuit was built in just two years and, although not entirely finished, the Nurburg-Ring was officially opened over the weekend of

June 17, 18 and 19, 1927. The first race meeting was known as the *Eifelrennen* and the ADAC assembled a huge entry, which included no fewer than 99 motorcycles (to run in six classes); 17 sidecar combinations (two classes) and 65 cars, all of which were to race over the *Grosse Rundstrecke* (both circuits combined). In order to give competitors a chance to get to grips with the 17.6 mile/28.3 km lap there were two-hour practice sessions for motorcycles and then cars every day from Tuesday, June 14 to Friday the 17th and a 90-minute session for each on the Saturday, starting at 6 am.

Naturally, the newly-formed company of Daimler-Benz was well represented, the entry organised by Dr Ferdinand Porsche. Their Technical Director was Ing. Alfred Neubauer and in charge of Press, Propaganda and Photography was Dr Richard Voelter. Three cars were entered, two supercharged, 6.2-litre S class Mercedes-Benz sports-cars for Rudolf Caracciola and Adolf Rosenberger and an 8-cylinder, 2-litre racing car for Christian Werner. On Monday, June 13 the party set out from Stuttgart to the Nurburg-Ring in five vehicles: a Sportwagen for Werner, Rosenberger and Hemminger; another for Otto Merz and Caracciola; a 2-litre racing car; a truck and a car for Herr Neubauer. Everyone was to stay at the Hotel Pauly in Nurburg.

The festivities began on the Friday, with an evening party for special guests in Koblenz and several functions in Adenau. On Saturday the Guests of Honour arrived from Koblenz at 10 am, followed shortly by the official opening of the circuit by Dr Otto Creutz, now known as the Father of the Nurburg-Ring. He and his wife, Hedwig, then

led a parade of cars carrying the guests around the test road, which comprised the start/finish area, the South and North Turns and back to the start again. Lunch was taken in the grandstand restaurant at 1.30 pm and an hour later the very first race at the Nurburg-Ring - a five-lap event for motorcycles - got under way. The whole afternoon was taken up with motorcycles, the cars being held back for Sunday. At 7pm on Saturday there was a dinner for the Guests of Honour in the Hotel Eifeler-Hof in Adenau and the day ended with a firework display.

Sunday began with a church service in Adenau and at 10 am the 12-lap race for sports and racing cars got under way. The 65 entries ranged from the 6,240 cc Mercedes-Benz of R. Caracciola of Berlin to the 500 cc Hanomag of H. Butenuth of Hannover. Caracciola was the overall winner, covering the 211 mile/340 km in 3hr 33 mins 21.0 secs at 59.96 mph/96.5 kph. Poor Butenuth took 5 hrs 36 mins 19.4 secs to cover the same distance at 37.7 mph/60.6 kph. At 5pm the official results were announced and at 5.30 a souvenir of the Nurburg-Ring was given to every entrant. That evening the prizegiving dinner took place in the town of Bad Neuenahr. The whole weekend was pronounced a great success and now everyone looked forward to the German Grand Prix, to be held a month later.

DR OTTO CREUTZ: THE FATHER OF THE NURBURG-RING

That inaugural meeting was the beginning of Rudolf Caracciola's remarkable reign as King of the Nurburg-Ring. In the entire history of motor racing you would be hard-pressed to find another racing driver who dominated a circuit for so long yet, in his autobiography, *A Racing Driver's World*, he has absolutely nothing to say about that meeting, his victory, the circuit or the man who built it, Dr Otto Creutz.

This is all the more surprising because Rudi and his first wife, Charly, became close friends of Dr Creutz and his wife, Hedwig. In June, 1931, the Caracciolas were staying at the Eifeler Hof for the Eifel GP (which Caracciola won, on the *Sudschleife*) and two days before the race they were guests at the *Landrat's* official residence (now the Adenau Post Office) just down the road from the hotel. Rudi wrote this poem (which he and Charly signed, opposite) in the Creutz Guest Book, which is now owned by their daughter, Gisela:

Unfortunately, the sky is not always blue in Adenau but call in on *Landrat* Creutz and his wife and one will quickly forget practice on the Nurburgring and be merry and cheerful until raceday begins.'

The poem loses something in the translation, to be sure, but nevertheless it is a charming token of the friendship that existed between the two couples. Gisela was only a child at the time but she recalls that her parents and the Caracciolas were indeed close, and that her own friendship with Rudi's sister, Herta, continued until the latter's death in the early 1960s. So why does Caracciola completely ignore the man whose monumental achievement, the Nurburg-Ring, played such an important part in his career? Perhaps the answer is to be found in the misfortune that befell Dr Creutz in 1935.

The Father of the Nurburg-Ring was born in Cologne in June, 1889, the son of an eye specialist. He studied law in Freiburg in the Black Forest and Bonn and became a Doctor of Law. He was made *Landrat* of the Eifel district in 1924. After Major

Dohmer had taken over the running of the Nurburg-Ring in 1927, Dr Creutz involved himself in several other projects, including a silver fox farm and a company building wooden houses in the depressed area of Adenau. For some reason questions were raised in Berlin about his handling of their financial affairs and, more importantly, those of the Nurburg-Ring. However, no charges were made and the matter was dropped.

In 1932 the borough of Adenau was dissolved. For financial reasons some 15 smaller boroughs were merged into larger ones, Adenau being absorbed into the borough of Ahrweiler. This meant that Dr Creutz was out of a job and at the end of the year he and his family moved to Berlin, where he worked as a civil servant.

Early in 1933 Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party came to power. Dr Creutz was a member of the Zentrum Partei, a Christian organisation despised by the Nazis, who decided to revive all the old, unsubstantiated charges against him. He was so upset by this that he asked to be allowed to retire, although he was only 44 years old and would be left without a pension. In 1934 the family moved to Dusseldorf and Gisela remembers him listening to the races on the radio. "He thought of the Nurburg-Ring as his child, a part of himself."

The next year the Nazis stepped up their campaign against him, in particular accusing him of stealing money from the Nurburg-Ring when he was *Landrat*. He was put on trial and, being very short of money, could not afford a lawyer and so had to have legal aid.

The Nazis went out of their way to try and prove that he had spent the Nurburg-Ring's money unnecessarily. Dr Creutz had done a brilliant PR job by inviting many foreign journalists to Adenau to see the new circuit and just what it was doing to improve conditions for the very poor people in the area. To cite one ludicrous example of the Nazi's methods, they accused him of fiddling his



expenses when entertaining the press by buying six cutlets when he only had four guests to lunch. They also claimed that he had made unauthorised trips to Italy and France to talk with officials at Monza and Montlhery.

Roland Freisler, a lawyer in the Nazi Party's Ministry of Justice, wrote to the judge presiding over Dr Creutz's trial saying that he must be found guilty. The judge did as he was told and Dr Creutz was sentenced to one year in prison in Dusseldorf, with no family visits allowed. (He was lucky: in 1942 Freisler was appointed President of Hitler's notorious Peoples' Court in which he frequently humiliated the accused and found some 90% of them guilty. Most were executed within 24 hours).

Dr Creutz had a good friend in Siegfried Doerschlag, one of Germany's top journalists who had covered the building of the

Nurburg-Ring. He wrote a regular newsletter for the German motor industry called *Doerschlagdienst*, and in this he defended Dr Creutz and pointed out that although he was entitled to a pension from the Nurburg-Ring he had not received it and his family was very short of money. This persuaded people in the German motor industry to provide them with something to live on. Professor Ferdinand Porsche personally tried to persuade Adolf Hitler to release Dr Creutz, but without success. Luckily, however, he was freed after completing his one-year sentence.

After the war the AvD held its first International race meeting at the Nurburgring in 1950, but Dr Creutz was not invited. He was convinced that this was because of the accusations made against him by the Nazis. A year later, aged only 62 but completely exhausted by all that had happened to him, he committed suicide in a hospital in Freiburg, in the Black Forest. He was buried there, but the townspeople of Adenau and the Adenau Automobil Club paid for his reburial in Adenau in March, 1951. A newspaper report stated that 'a huge crowd of mourners came from the Eifel and the Ahr valley, including most of his former staff, a delegation from the Nurburgring company, many racing drivers, people from the motor industry, automobile clubs and tourist offices... On all official buildings flags flew at half-mast as the funeral procession went through the streets of Adenau, passing the *Landratsamt* (the official residence) on its way to the cemetery.

The Mayor of Adenau praised Dr Creutz, saying, "It is thanks to his great energy and strong will that the world's biggest race and test track was built. Apart from that, during his period of office he was always willing to listen, was good-hearted and supported people in their difficult times. Nobody asked for help in vain."

Ludwig Kramer of the ADAC remembered Dr Creutz as "always being a happy and carefree *Landrat* who, with the Nurburg-Ring, produced a unique achievement for German automobile sport and the automobile industry."

The people of Adenau produced a Book of Remembrance, with more than 200 signatures, to thank him for all he had done for them.

Dr Creutz's persecution and imprisonment by the Nazis may well be the reason why Caracciola ignored him in his autobiography, which was first published as *Mein Leben als Rennfahrer* in Germany in 1939. Although he was a long-time resident of Switzerland he (and, more to the point, his publisher) probably felt it wiser to omit any mention of Dr Creutz, rather than incur the wrath of the Nazi Party by writing of their friendship and praising Dr Creutz's astonishing achievement in the Eifel Mountains. However, in 1955 G.T. Foulis published the book in English as *Caracciola, Mercedes-Benz Grand Prix Ace* and it was republished in 1963 by Cassell's Motoraces Book Club as *A Racing Driver's World*, having been revised and expanded by Caracciola himself, shortly before his death in 1959. With the world now free of Nazi tyranny, Caracciola had a splendid opportunity to sing the praises of the friend who had built the circuit which formed the bedrock of his remarkable career. Sadly, he did no such thing. Dr Creutz was still ignored and Rudi made no mention of the Nurburg-Ring until his account of the 1931 German Grand Prix, which he won - and that was his fourth victory there! It is a sad and incomprehensible omission.

The very first German GP had been held in 1926 at AVUS, the 12.2 mile/19.6 km circuit on an autobahn near Berlin. It had been a tragic affair; an Italian driver died in a practice crash and then, during the race, after only a few laps in pouring rain Adolf Rosenberger crashed, his Mercedes demolishing a timekeeper's hut and killing the three people inside. Several other cars skidded off the road and a number of spectators was injured. Rudolf Caracciola eventually won the 20-lap race, earning himself the title *Regenmeister* (rainmaster) in the process. However, the deaths and injuries caused a public outcry and motor racing came close to being banned in Germany.

So for 1927 the German Grand Prix was moved to the Nurburg-Ring and the inaugural *Eifelrennen* was used as a dress rehearsal. Held on July 17 the Grand Prix was run over 18 laps of the *Grosse Rundstrecke*, a distance of 316.54 miles/509.4 km. Otto Merz led Christian Werner and Willy Walb home in a Mercedes-Benz 1,2,3, but perhaps the outstanding performance of the day was that of 27 year-old Elizabeth Junek, who finished third

in her Bugatti and won her class. Sadly, her husband, Cenek, was killed during the 1928 Grand Prix, whereupon Madame Junek gave up racing, but by then she had established herself as the foremost lady driver in the world.

The Grand Prix continued to be run over 18 laps of the *Grosse Rundstrecke* for the next two years, but the Wall Street Crash of 1929 affected Germany very badly and there was no race in 1930. The following year the GP was back and now confined (which is hardly the right word) to the *Nordschleife*, where it remained, with the exception of 1933, when the economic situation again meant that there was no race. In 1931 the distance was 22 laps, increased to 25 in '32. In 1934 it was 25 again, but for 1935 this was reduced to 22 laps, where it stayed until the outbreak of war, late in 1939.

The Eifel Grand Prix meeting was moved to the *Sudschleife* in 1928, where it remained until 1932 when it, too, went back to the *Nordschleife* and was run over 14 laps. This was increased to 15 in 1933 and '34, but for 1935 it was reduced to 11 laps and then 10 for 1936, '37 and '39 (there was no race in 1938).

As we have seen, the circuit was finally brought properly to the attention of British motor racing enthusiasts in 1931, when the scribes from *The Motor* and *The Autocar* were clearly bowled over by what they found in the Eifel mountains (which, strictly speaking, are nothing more than hills).

'When the Nurburg-Ring was planned, an intoxicated giant must have been sent out to trace the road,' wrote W.F. Bradley, Continental Correspondent of *The Autocar*. 'To drive around it is thrilling. To be whirled around by a Varzi, a Chiron, or a Caracciola is a sensation never to be forgotten.'

And in his preview of the race in *The Motor*, Humphrey Symons also waxed lyrical: 'Built in the heart of the densely-wooded Eifel mountains, it winds up and down like a snake in and out of the forest, up hill and down dale, abounds in hairpin bends and sharp turns and has many quite formidable gradients.

'One can picture the cars, in imagination, hurtling round the S-bends amidst the pinewoods, the blare of their exhausts echoing up the mountain sides. One can see them skidding downhill corners at break-neck speeds, slowing, with squealing tyres and quivering wheels, for a hairpin bend, changing down, changing up again, accelerating furiously up hill...

'For six long hours the air will shake to the bellow of exhausts and vibrate to the whining shriek of superchargers. Big and little cars will flash past the grandstand, along the wonderful double road, disappearing down the mountain-side, vibrant

KINGS OF THE NURBURGRING

splashes of colour against the sombre pines. Violet and yellow flames from the white-hot pipes; blue smoke; the heady scent of castor oil... Everything that stands for speed, skill and dash!

By now the German Grand Prix at the Nurburg-Ring was vying with the French Grand Prix at Montlhery as the Race of the Year. Despite the Depression brought about by the Wall Street Crash, both *The Motor* and *The Autocar* reported that more than 100,000 spectators made their way from all parts of Germany to watch the race, which was won by Rudolf Caracciola in his 7-litre Mercedes-Benz SSKL.

By this time the German economy was in such a parlous state that the impoverished nation was fertile ground for Adolf Hitler and his Nazi party, which swept to power in January, 1933. A couple of years earlier, Hitler had met with racing driver Hans Stuck, who was very unhappy because the financial crisis had forced both Mercedes-Benz and Austro-Daimler to give up racing and he did not want to drive a foreign car. Hitler promised that when he achieved power he would make sure Stuck had a German racing car with which to compete.

He became Chancellor of Germany in January, 1933 and in March he opened the Berlin Motor Show. In his speech he made it clear that he wanted a German manufacturer to fill the void and go motor racing in 1934, when the new Grand Prix Formula, with its 750 kg maximum weight limit, would come into being. In May the new Chancellor went to see the AVUS GP, which Mercedes-Benz had won the previous two years, but this time the Grand Prix was won by foreign cars and drivers, two Bugattis and an Alfa Romeo filling the first three places.

Hitler never attended a race at the Nurburg-Ring, but a couple of weeks after AVUS he made his presence felt there in no uncertain manner, the eyes that mesmerised a nation staring out from a page in the programme for the Eifel GP Notable for its Nazi propaganda-style language and a forest of exclamation marks, Hitler's message was nothing less than an order to the nation - get Germany moving again!

'Remember the admonition of the Fuhrer!', was the headline. 'Work is an honour!' 'Creating jobs is a German duty!' 'Everyone must help get the wheels of the economy in motion again!' 'The job-creation scheme is the self-help of the united German people!'

The New Order had arrived and, just to press the point home, *Reichsminister* Hermann Goring was Guest of Honour at the meeting. There were the red, white and black flags of the Reich and swastikas everywhere, with SS troops on hand to sing the Horst-Wessel to spectators over the loud-speakers.

In common with Hitler at AVUS, Goring had to watch foreign cars and drivers - Tazio Nuvolari (Alfa Romeo); Earl Howe (Delage) and Hugh Hamilton (MG) - take the honours. He then made a speech, but there was no polite "Ladies and Gentlemen" as a greeting - instead he barked, "German men and German women!" However, he was on his best behaviour, congratulating the foreign drivers on their success and telling them and the foreign spectators present that they had seen how the new Germany was so hospitable compared to the old, disreputable one. "Today's event was a valuable one," he said, "because the new Germany was able to show that what people say about the old Germany is no longer true and that those Ger-



mans who slander Germany from outside have not the right to speak in the name of Germany."

Hitler's demand that a German manufacturer should enter Grand Prix racing was met by the old firm of Mercedes-Benz and a brand new one - Auto Union - both of which produced Grand Prix cars for 1934. He also brought all German motor sport under state control, placing it in the hands of Major Adolf Huhnlein. A professional soldier, Huhnlein was given the title *Korpsfuhrer* and headed the ONS (*Oberste Nationale Sportbehörde für die Deutsche Kraftfahrt*). He was responsible for the organisation of all racing, rallying and record attempts on German soil, but he had no hand in the racing programmes of Mercedes-Benz and Auto Union; that was left to the boards of directors.

From now on motor racing, and Grand Prix racing in particular, was run on military lines with a heavy military presence. As I explained in *Racing The Silver Arrows*:

'Nazi propaganda - of which the German Grand Prix programme was very much a part - was not just to impress the rest of the world, it was for home consumption, too. Paul Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's brilliant but evil Minister for Propaganda, had a positive genius for theatrical display and made sure - through Huhnlein - that events such as the German Grand Prix and the Eifel and AVUS *rennen* were not just motor races, but demonstrations of German power, panoply and efficiency. Nazi flags and banners flew everywhere; thousands of jack-booted soldiers lined the course and others goose-stepped up and down before the packed grandstands while the racing cars were lined up in front of the pits.'

Thus the Nurburg-Ring became a showcase for German technical excellence in the form of the cars from Mercedes-Benz and Auto Union, which dominated Grand Prix racing for the next six years.

The circuit was constantly improved, despite the economic situation. In 1932 an enormous amount of fencing was put up to protect the spectators. It must also have been to keep them off the track which, at 14.2 miles, was very hard to police, even when the Army took over in 1933. The next year the road surface was improved at various places and several corners were banked to one degree or another. In 1935 the 'Mercedes-Benz hill' at the North Turn was levelled because it obstructed the view of those in the main grandstand. The earth was moved to the South Turn to improve seating there.

Quite simply, there was nothing like the Nurburg-Ring anywhere in the world and a visit proved to be quite an experience, as *Motor Sport's*

un-named contributor informed his readers after the 1936 GP:

'We arrived at Adenau on the Friday night before the Grand Prix which was to take place on Sunday. Fortunately, we had taken the precaution of reserving a room in a private house on our way south a fortnight previously. As it happened we were a little apprehensive about finding the room still available, because the arrangement had been made with a voluble, smiling hotel porter with whom we had deposited "one English pound."

True to his word he greeted us on our arrival in the crowded village street and conducted us to a comfortable room in a house over a garage. Remembering the tales we had heard of all-night streams of traffic through the village we were glad to note that our abode was in a quiet side street. Just how quiet this street was to prove we discovered later.

'We tried the Krone for dinner, but no longer was it the sleepy little hotel of a fortnight before, The tables were crowded with excited Germans, eating as only Germans can eat. We endeavoured to show them, then and throughout the evening, that they are not the only people who can drink...

'The next morning a party of wan-cheeked enthusiasts congregated at the "Start und Ziel" of the Nurburg-Ring to watch the practicing. Motor racing in Germany is motor racing in style. The long restaurant under the grandstand, with tables outside as well, provides a "boulevard atmosphere", but the passing cars were doing a steady 150 mph instead of a top-gear crawl. Fortified by *Steinhagers* or *Enzians*, according to choice, we were able to take an intelligent interest in the proceedings and realised for the first time that at the next table a cheerful party was in progress consisting of Hans and Frau Stuck, the Rosemeyers and Prince zu Leiningen...

'Exciting noises in the paddock made us hurriedly gulp down our drinks, and armed with our official brassards we entered the holy of holies. The Ferrari Alfas were warming up and soon they shot through the tunnel up to the course. Richard Seaman was watching his works Maserati being checked on the weighbridge. It was found unnecessary to file off bits and pieces to make the weight limit. We followed the Alfas to the pits... Fascinated, we watched the great Nuvolari spend at least five minutes adjusting his headgear, making sure that his helmet was on securely and that the goggles were not too tight. While he was so engaged we examined the cockpit of his car and noticed the little wedges on each side of the seat which prevent him from rolling about. Brivio, Dreyfus, Severi and Nuvolari all covered several laps, coming past the pits at a fine bat.

'The Merc drivers put in one fast lap each, and then the cars were taken round several short circuits of the South Curve and back past the pits. Meanwhile, Wimille had covered several laps and then, after lunch, came a roar from the Auto Union depot behind the restaurant. With short, sharp barks from their stubby exhaust pipes the squat, silver projectiles appeared from their lair, and soon they were streaking round the Ring at terrific speed

'Chastened by our debauch of the previous evening we retired early, and it was just as well we did. At four o'clock we were wakened by the tramp of many boots, as of an army marching "at ease". Then from a loudspeaker suspended from a house a few doors away blared a military march, and the dreadful truth dawned on us. The first of the 120 special trains had arrived, and our quiet little side street was the pedestrian route from the station! The march changed to an announcement that that the train excursionists were to meet in the Marktplatz in the evening at 9-20 pm.

'This went on for an hour or so, and when we had heard the instructions about the Marktplatz for the hundredth time we decided to do some marching ourselves. The main street of Adenau was roped off each side so that pedestrians should not suddenly step into the path of the traffic, and wooden bridges across the road were erected to avoid holding up the traffic flow. What is generally known as "typical German thoroughness."

'On race days the six miles from Adenau to the "Start und Ziel" takes about two hours to cover, so we made use of our Press pass on the car to join the circuit at Adenau Bridge. The run round the Ring in the early morning was exhilarating. Thousands of spectators had camped out all night, and now they were breakfasting round camp fires. The loudspeakers disseminated cheerful music and the portable soup kitchens good cheer. Our arrival at the Karussell-kurve brought the spectators running to the railings and occasionally we received a cheer.

'At 7.15 am we were strolling round the paddock, where Guidotti was covering innumerable circles in order to warm up the Alfa Romeos' axle grease and gear-box oil. Sommer's Alfa was having its wheels balanced and the Maseratis were having a final polish.

'As the hour of the start drew nearer the crowd grew even more dense. The motor-cycle police arrived, lead by a band, and the black-helmeted ranks made an impressive sight. We took our seats in the grandstand just as the cars were pushed from the pits to the starting grid.

'Korpsfuhrer Huhnlein, Germany's motor sport leader, walked up to a microphone in the middle of the track. He glared around him for silence. Then, with incredible ferocity, he barked out his speech: "Men and women of Germany...."

'Engines were started and the noise grew terrific. There was much blue smoke and running about. The starter's flag was raised, dropped and with a thunderous roar the race was on...

'And so it was "Shrimp" Rosemeyer's race, and by winning he gained the title of champion of Germany. Frau Rosemeyer-Beinhorn that was - watched the race with Frau Stuck in the Auto Union pits, and the enthusiasm of the crowd was complete at the end of the race. Then the Nazi anthem was played, and a forest of arms swore allegiance to the *Fuhrer*. The mobile guards meanwhile lined the track with arms linked by rods of steel, and then marched past singing a song.

'All very impressive, but rather tedious when you have seen too much of it. But the organisation is undeniably perfect, and with all its amenities the Nurburg-Ring is undoubtedly the finest racing track in Europe.'

Where the reference to "Shrimp" Rosemeyer came from is a mystery, but he restored the German GP to its home country after Tazio Nuvolari's stunning victory the year before. Once Adolf Hitler's demand for a German manufacturer to enter GP racing in 1934 had been met by not one, but two companies, the Nazis doubtless expected the German Grand Prix to be won by a German car and driver as a matter of course, but they reckoned without a couple of foreigners. Hitler had no problem with his teams using foreign drivers (Luigi Fagioli, Louis Chiron and Dick

Seaman at Mercedes; Achille Varzi, Luigi Fagioli and Tazio Nuvolari at Auto Union) - it simply showed the world that the best drivers had to come to Germany for the best cars - but the idea that one of them might win the German GP at the Nurburgring never seems to have occurred to anyone. Step forward Tazio Nuvolari (1935) and Dick Seaman (1938).

In the event, these intruders were not too hard to accept, for although Nuvolari's genius enabled him to defeat the full might of Mercedes and Auto Union in an inferior Alfa Romeo, Italy was a Fascist regime whose dictator, Benito Mussolini, was friendly to Nazi Germany. Dick Seaman was an Englishman and by 1938 England was being decidedly unfriendly towards the Nazis, but at least he won the race in a Mercedes-Benz, and only because race leader Manfred von Brauchitsch was deprived of victory when his Mercedes caught fire in the pits.

Sadly, the Germans continued to swear allegiance to Adolf Hitler and his Nazis, which would lead to catastrophe. Late in 1938, after Britain's Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, had returned from Munich claiming 'Peace in our time', there seemed to be some hope for the world, but by the time of the German GP in July 1939, that hope was fading fast. However, the worsening political situation did not prevent Rodney Walkerley from advising readers of *The Motor* to go to Germany and see the Grand Prix for themselves:

'An immense crowd is expected at the race, which is a sort of National festival (politics permitting), and quite half a million people have attended races there in the past. English enthusiasts toying with the idea of going over should not be deterred by thoughts of hostility from the populace. Adenau and the Ring are in a country district remote from civilisation, and everyone there is a racing enthusiast, from the Head Nazi downwards, and in motor racing there is a common bond which rises above frontiers, thank goodness. 'You can go to the race and back during a short week-end, leaving London on Saturday afternoon, returning Monday morning. I append some details of how to do it.

How to get to the Ring

Details from any travel bureau. Trains leave Victoria, July 22 at 10.30 am for Aachen (via Dover-Ostend), whence by motor coach to and from Ring. Train arrives back at Victoria July 24 at 7.20 am or 4.20 pm. First-class travel: £5-17s 4d; third-class: £2 15s 10d. Coach from Aachen 7s per head.

Stand tickets (from 2s 6d to 16s) from AA, RAC or travel bureaux.'

Anyone who took Walkerley's advice would have been well rewarded, witness to the last victory in the remarkable career of the greatest *Ringmeister* of all, Rudolf Caracciola. To date there had been 12 German Grands Prix (including the first one at AVUS in 1926) and German drivers had won nine. Six of those belonged to Caracciola (1926, 1928 with Christian Werner, 1931, 1932, 1937 and 1939), while Otto Merz (1927), Hans Stuck (1934) and Bernd Rosemeyer (1936) had scored one victory each. Only three foreign drivers had disturbed the German domination: Louis Chiron in 1929; Tazio Nuvolari in 1935 and Dick Seaman in 1938, but that situation was to be reversed dramatically after the war, for Rudolf Caracciola's victory in the 1939 Grand Prix was to be the last ever by a German driver at the Nurburg-Ring.



PHASE TWO: 1940-1949

It would be 11 years before the German Grand Prix returned to the Nurburg-Ring. During the war the circuit was left largely unattended, although in 1940 Auto Union spent 41 days there, testing four of their cars, doubtless in the hope that hostilities, would soon be over and motor racing would be resumed. Fat chance!

The circuit itself was used by the German military for driver instruction and vehicle testing. In time the Sport Hotel became a reception area for bombing victims who had been evacuated from the cities and later it served as a military hospital. The car park by the start/finish area was turned into farmland for cows and sheep and the Mercedes-Benz tower by the North Turn was used as stables for cows, pigs and chickens. In 1943 the 29 miles/35 km of fencing around the circuit was removed and used for the war effort.

On March 8, 1945 US Sherman tanks arrived in Mullenbach, the small town to the west of the *Sudschleife*. The Commanding Officer was aware of the nearby racetrack and realised that his tanks could get to the village of Nurburg far quicker if they used the circuit rather than going overland. At 3 pm the tanks entered the *Sudschleife* and headed east, their tracks tearing up the road surface. Thinking that there might be some German troops in the Sport Hotel, the CO split his force into two parts, the first heading direct for the start/finish area. On arrival the Americans searched the hotel and other buildings for any signs of military life, but found none. What they did find was an archive of racing photographs and documents.

Months later the Nurburg-Ring became part of the French zone of occupied Germany. Unlike the Americans, the French were well aware of the history of the circuit on which in 1929 their hero, Louis Chiron in his little Bugatti, had defeated the vast Mercedes SSK of Rudolf Caracciola to win the German Grand Prix. At the end of September, 1946, the French Military Government ordered that the Nurburg-Ring's *Sudschleife* be prepared for a race in May, 1947.

This caused consternation among the local officials for, as Herr Urbanus, *Landrat* of the Ahr-

weiler District, recalled in 1957, 'Those who knew the world's most beautiful racetrack before the war were horrified by the condition in which it had been left by the American "visitors" in 1945.

'Although the area was not mined, the road surface of the *Sudschleife* had been torn up by the American tanks and the Sport-Hotel and other buildings had suffered from their long German and US military occupation. Also, the trees around the circuit had been neglected for so many years that their uppermost branches almost touched each other above the track and poplars grew rampant out of the tarmac'

Putting this right was going to cost a lot of money, of which Germany had very little. However, in order to get the *Sudschleife* up and running again all the access roads would have to be repaired, which could only benefit the whole area, so some 300 workers were brought in to repair the track, the grandstand/Sport-Hotel, the garage square, the telephone lines and loudspeaker system.

It soon became clear that a race in May, 1947 was out of the question, so it was rescheduled for July 27. The French Military Government decided that it would be an international race on the *Sudschleife*, which meant that German cars and drivers were to be excluded, as they were not yet allowed to compete in international events.

This meeting was eventually cancelled but finally, on August 17, after a lull of eight years, the Nurburg-Ring was once again alive with the sounds of racing engines. However, the sounds were not those of V12 Mercedes and Auto Unions, as in 1939, but of motorcycle engines for the event, the *Eifelpokal*, was for motorbikes only.

The Race Director was Willy Seibel (who had raced Bugattis in the twenties and thirties) and Sportcommissar was pre-war motorcycle ace, Hans Soenius. Two stars from the past, Schorsch Meier and H.P. Muller, provided a big attraction for the sports-starved fans, more than 80,000 of whom turned up to see their beloved Nurburg-Ring reborn. Admission cost five Marks, which also bought a coupon for wine, bread and sausage.

The success of this event persuaded the German authorities that the *Nordschleife*, too, should be brought back to life, as it would invigorate the entire Eifel population, just as Dr Otto Creutz had foreseen in 1925. There was no racing in 1948 while the work was in progress, but on August 7, 1949 the Eifel GP was held for German competitors with racing cars, sportscars and motorcycles. Next on the agenda was the first post-war German Grand Prix.

PHASE THREE: 1950-1969

All the reconstruction work paid off in 1950 when the German Grand Prix returned to the Nurburgring on August 20. As there were no German cars available to race in what was then known as Formula A, the GP was run for Formula B, unsupercharged cars of up to 2 litres and entries were received from both Scuderia Ferrari and Officine Maserati.

In *The Autocar* Gordon Wilkins wrote: 'The announcement that 400,000 people paid to see the 13th German Grand Prix on Sunday will cause more surprise here than it did in Germany, for huge crowds are a feature of post-war racing in the Western Zones and a similar crowd gathered for the races on the Solitude circuit near Stuttgart the previous week. However, to foreign observers seeing racing in post-war Germany for the first time it was astonishing to watch the thousands coming from the bombed cities of the Ruhr and the rolling country of the south by car, bus, bicycle and on foot to converge on the remote Nurburg Ring in the Eifel Mountains for 24 hours before the racing began. On Saturday night their camp fires twinkled on the hillsides for miles around and the sound of singing and accordions was borne on the evening breeze to the great grandstand, which is also an hotel, where many of the hundred drivers gathered for the meeting were billeted.

'It was a great occasion, for it sealed the re-admission of Germany into free competition in the international car races of the West (the motor cycles do not come in until next year) and it gave the Germans a chance to match their new cars, the Veritas, AFMs, Monopolettas, the Scampolos and the hosts of specials built from BMW and Volkswagen parts, against the cars of Western countries. Ready to drive them were world-famous prewar stars like Hermann Lang, Manfred von Brauchitsch and Hans Stuck, alongside new drivers already famous in Germany, like Ulmen, Riess, and the Gloecker brothers.'

The Nurburgring celebrated its 25th anniversary in 1952 and Alberto Ascari marked it in style by winning the German Grand Prix for the third year running in his Ferrari, the first driver to score a hat-trick of victories in the race.

'If anyone wants to see how a circuit can be dressed for a Grand Prix we recommend the Ring,' wrote Rodney Walkerley, in *The Motor*. 'We have never seen it in so gay a mood, this being the Jubilee year, of course. Messrs. Continental Tyres put up some 400 huge banners to make the approach road a triumphal avenue, each banner 12 ft by 3 on 20ft poles, and around the start area the stiff breeze which blew the flags and banners properly, made a complete backcloth against the sky. In the gardens behind the Sporthotel (which is part of the 2,000-seater grandstand) there was a nostalgic display of racing cars which we gazed upon with many memories seething in our cold and feeble brain: Lautenschlager-model 1914 Grand Prix Mercedes with its sharp-nosed radiator, the 1936 short-chassis 4.5-litre eight-cylinder (which was, we always thought, the prettiest if most unstable) and the 1938-1939 two-stage V12 model, plus a beautifully polished chassis and engine of the big VI6, 6-litre, 600 bhp Auto Union of 1937 looking brand new and ready for a motor show. We were a little surprised to hear persons asking in bewilderment what on earth these cars were. Verily new generations have peopled the earth. We felt our age and tottered sadly to the nearest bar.'

A new generation of Mercedes-Benz sportscars was also present at the Nurburgring that weekend, in the shape of the sensational 300SLs, which romped to a 1,2,3 in the main supporting race for the Grand Prix. The new Silver Arrows had very nearly won the Mille Miglia in May and had finished first and second at Le Mans in June. With German sportscars and drivers back on the winners' rostrum the ADAC was keen to host an event that would rival the long-established Mille Miglia and Le Mans 24 Hours and they were already making plans for a 24-hour race at the Nurburgring. It was scheduled for September 7 and entry forms were printed, only for the event to be cancelled at the last minute. Evidently, the Club had second thoughts about letting high-powered cars loose around the Ring at night.

The long-distance idea refused to go away, however, and the ADAC announced a 1000 kilometre race for 1953, one of seven events to count



towards the new Sportscar World Championship. Held on August 30, this proved to be a success, with victory going to Alberto Ascari and Nino Farina in a Ferrari 340MM. Mercedes returned to Grand Prix racing in 1954 and initially proposed to enter the Sportscar Championship also, with their new 300SLRs. A home win in prospect, the ADAC scheduled their 1000 Km race for August 29, only to cancel it just three weeks beforehand when Mercedes announced that their sportscars would not be ready to race until 1955.

Stirling Moss set the 300SLR's victory ball rolling with a stunning drive in the Mille Miglia and just four weeks later he finished second to Fangio in what was virtually a 500-km Mercedes demonstration race at the Ring. The 1000 Kms was scheduled for August 28, but then came the disaster at Le Mans and many races were cancelled in the face of the hysteria from the Press. Rather than do that, the ADAC reduced their event to 500 kms and limited it to cars of up to 1.5 litres. It was a dismal failure.

The 1000 Kms was reinstated for 1956, but the ADAC had a rethink and scheduled it for the end of May or the beginning of

June, where it effectively replaced the pre-war Eifel Grand Prix. And there it stayed, until it left the *Nordschleife* for good in 1984.

Mercedes-Benz made their post-war comeback to Grand Prix racing in 1954 and almost as if to mark the occasion, Dunlop of Germany erected their superb scoreboard tower at the Nurburgring's start/finish line. This not only showed spectators the race order, but also the ongoing position of the leading car on an electronic map of the circuit.

In 1956 the curves at Aremberg and Schwalbenschwanz were reconstructed to make them safer; in 1957 a great deal of resurfacing was done and in 1958 Schwalbenschwanz was again altered, as was Wippermann. In 1963 many trees were cut down at the

Karussell to improve the drivers' vision there and improvements were made at Bergwerk. In 1967 a chicane was added to the end of the three-kilometre straight, as cars were now capable of taking the bends at Tiergarten at around 150 mph, which meant that they were passing the pits at very high speed. The left-right-left chicane increased the lap times by some 8 to 10 seconds and reduced the speed past the pits to around 85 mph.

In 1968 a new Press Centre was opened in the main grandstand and in '69 a long stretch of road at Flugplatz was resurfaced and the Hatzenbach area was improved. Also, a guard-rail was installed in front of the pits. This was a sensible safety move, but it drastically reduced the width of the track.

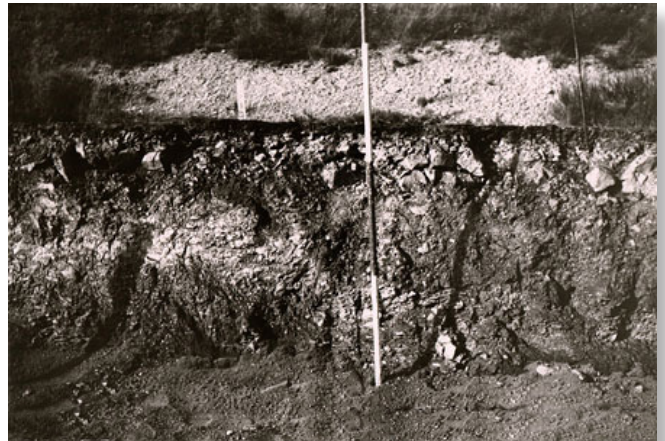
PHASE FOUR: 1970-1983

All the improvements were not enough to prevent the Nurburgring from losing the German Grand Prix in 1970, when the Grand Prix Drivers' Association, led by Jackie Stewart, decided that it was too dangerous.

'Last week a bald statement in the national press announced that the German Grand Prix at the Nurburgring was off,' wrote Peter Gamier in *Autocar*. 'The Automobil Club von Deutschland had decided that the changes to the circuit required by the GPDA could not be made in the three weeks available. The requirements are understood to number 18 different points and include the erection of over 10 miles of Armco barriers, the felling of various trees, filling in of ditches and changes in road camber, as well as the provision of more firefighting equipment at strategic points manned by expert crews. The cost of installing the barriers alone is estimated at around £100,000.'

As a result, the Grand Prix was moved to Hockenheim, but on the very same weekend the AvD held an F2 race at the Ring, where only the previous year Stewart had won the F2 Eifel GP at just over 104 mph. The reaction to this was varied and interesting, to say the least. *Motoring News* published an Editorial headed, 'The Drivers' Disgrace', expressing sympathy with the aims of the GPDA, adding, 'There is no denying that motor racing is going through an exceptional and very sad time, and we support everything reasonable that is being done to make the cars safer and to improve the safety amenities of the circuits... We need to keep matters in perspective, and good sense advises that the cars are no less safe than they were two years ago, when Jackie Stewart won the German GP in simply appalling and very dangerous conditions, while the circuit and its safety facilities are better if anything. To threaten any sort of extreme action merely suggests that the top drivers are losing their nerve in the face of recent losses...

'Cancellation of the Nurburgring venue makes us mindful of the "bad old days" when cars were entered by factories and team managers were gods. Woe betide the driver who told Alfred Neubauer that he "didn't feel like racing at the Nurburgring." He might as well have retired on the spot.



Luckily motor racing still has such characters as Commendatore Ferrari, from whose drivers one never hears any outspoken protest, and John Wyer, who between them manage to control a very disciplined bunch of go-anywhere sports car drivers.'

In *Motor Sport*, Denis Jenkinson predictably had a go at the GPDA, having railed against what he called "milk and water" racing drivers when the 1969 Belgian GP was cancelled because the Spa-Francorchamps circuit did not meet the GPDA's safety requirements. In an Editorial he wrote, 'I am well aware that motor racing, or any other form of racing is dangerous, bloody dangerous, but that is what makes it exciting for spectators and competitors alike, and I know we have recently had a series of nasty accidents but, for goodness sake, we must not get hysterical. The song of the GPDA at the moment is "spectator safety", an entirely new song, I might add. Their main objection to the Nurburgring, if (Jackie) Stewart is to be believed, is that there are places where a crashing and blazing car could go into the crowds, and if that happened at the present moment when some Continental newspapers are ticking about motor racing deaths, it could damage or even stop motor racing in Europe. A very laudable and noble thought, but is it the concern of the GPDA?...

'Certain Grand Prix drivers, I cannot say the GPDA as a body, are doing a great job, well done, but if they go on like they are doing we shall finish up as a reader suggests, with the British Grand Prix being held on the main runway at Heathrow Airport, with cars running one at a time and, in the interests of "spectator safety", there will be no spectators allowed.'

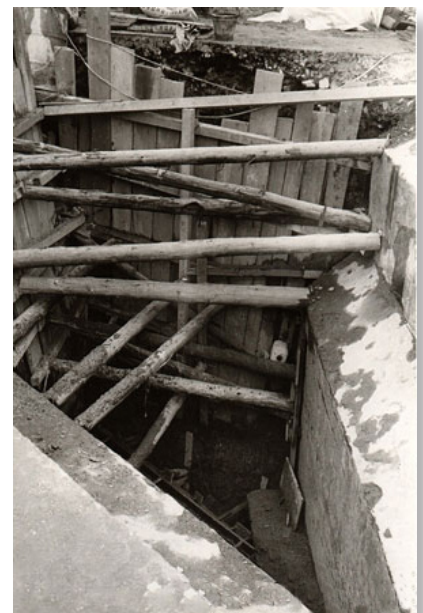
Autosport's Editor, Simon Taylor, saw the matter in an altogether different light, pouring scorn

on Jenks and those who thought like him: 'Now that the GPDA have been responsible for the German Grand Prix's near cancellation, and its move from that most challenging of circuits, the Nurburgring, to the less demanding Hockenheim, Formula 1 drivers will no doubt be subjected once again to a deluge of abuse from motor racing enthusiasts who think that Jackie Stewart and Jochen Rindt are cowards who want to be paid large sums of money and don't want to risk their necks doing it...

'Denis Jenkinson and his followers would not matter if it weren't for the fact that Jenks, very rightly because he is one of the finest motor racing journalists in the world, has a vast following... One is loath to resort to sensationalism to plead one's case, but if motor racing is the poorer with fewer trees and more fire extinguishers round the Nurburgring (which we do not accept), it is infinitely the poorer without Martin Brain, Dick Brown, Richard Colley, Piers Courage, Denis Dayan, Jimmie Dunne, Hans Laine, Sigi Lang, Stuart MacQuarrie, Ido Marang, Bruce McLaren, Talmadge Prince, Jean-Luc Salamon, Herbert Schultze, Tom Sulman, Andre Willem or Derrick Williams. All these 17 drivers have died competing in events in the past four months.

'Motor racing is a wonderful activity. We know it is dangerous, and the drivers take part in their chosen sport of their own free will. But to dress up these sombre statistics in romantic nonsense about ancient helmets and sleeveless shirts, and to call the reigning World Champion a "milk-and-water" driver because he wants to reduce unnecessary risks, is criminal stupidity.'

But, as Jenkinson had also pointed out, not every member of the GPDA was in agreement with



the boycott of the Nurburgring. As John Surtees told *Autosport*: 'I think there's a lot to be said for taking action to improve circuits. At the same time I believe there are ways to do things and ways not to do things. I think this year and possibly the year before have been ideal examples of the way not to do them. You cannot go along and give one example of a dangerous circuit. Personally, I consider that the Mexican Grand Prix was far more dangerous than racing on the Nurburgring.'

'Certain features of the Nurburgring can certainly be improved, but at the same time I think the way it was handled was disgraceful, especially the fact that it was only done a short while before the race, and I cannot agree with that. I can only agree with people who make a statement when the calendar is published and not when the season is here.'

Another who disagreed was Jacky Ickx, who resigned from the GPDA in September, explaining in the French paper, *L'Equipe*, that he was not against the views of the GPDA, but against their political methods and that he felt strongly against the part the GPDA played in the cancellation of the Belgian Grand Prix at his home circuit of Spa, and the removal of the German Grand Prix from the Nurburgring, a circuit on which he particularly shone, to Hockenheim.

And it was not until mid-September that GPDA President Jo Bonnier told a press conference in Paris that in June, 1968, they had presented the organisers of the German GP with a list of modifications to the Nurburgring required to protect both drivers and spectators. In July 1970, they found that little more than 25% of the work had been done. Bonnier stated that had it been completed the GP would have been held at the Ring. When asked why some GP drivers, including himself, refused to drive F1 cars at Spa and the Nurburgring, yet were prepared to race 3-litre and 5-litre sports cars at similar speeds on the same circuits, Bonnier said he didn't see the anomaly, and that sports cars had more protection in an accident than F1 cars.

There is no question that the GPDA was its own worst enemy in many ways, as Philip Turner noted in *Motor*, 'When the GPDA was first formed, my old friend and rival Peter Gamier, who was then the secretary, used to put out a statement after every meeting on what had been discussed. Of late, however, the GPDA has become very secretive, so that unofficial leaks have replaced official statements with the result that the Association has gained some very bad publicity. If only the statement on the German GP had been issued last August instead of on September 15, then a great deal of confusion would have been avoided.'

Although Jo Bonnier, as President, was the spokesman for the GPDA, the driving force behind the boycott of the Nurburgring in 1970 was Jackie Stewart. From the beginning of his career he had become more and more concerned about the disregard of human life in motor racing. Safety was not really an issue, largely because when racing got going again after World War Two death had been such a commonplace for so long that people accepted it as part of daily life, so if you died doing what you really enjoyed - driving a racing car, for example - it was a much better way to go than being killed by an unseen enemy.

In the 1960s, however, that began to change and while it was accepted that danger was part and parcel of motor racing a few people decided that much of the danger was unnecessary and should be eliminated. Among the drivers Jackie Stewart was the leader of the band and he began a crusade within the GPDA, rightly pointing out that many men had died simply because the circuits left no room for driver error or mechanical breakage and had virtually no rescue or emergency medical facilities. Stewart in particular, an intelligent and eloquent advocate, was frequently vilified for his views, too often by journalists whose idea of taking a risk was putting a false claim on their expenses.

As we have seen, since racing had returned to the Ring after the war a good deal of cosmetic tidying up had been done, but nothing had been changed to deal with the ever-increasing speed of the cars, apart from putting the chicane in at Tiergarten. Speeds, however, had increased enormously: in 1958 Tony Brooks (Vanwall) had won the German GP at an average of 90.35 mph/145.8 kph and Stirling Moss (Vanwall) had set fastest lap at 92.9 mph/149.6 kph. In 1969 Jacky Ickx (Brabham-Ford) won at 108.4 mph/174.5 kph and set fastest lap at 110.134 mph/177.3 kph. The difference in both averages is almost 20 mph/32 kph, which is a very big difference indeed if you are having an accident and there are only trees and 50ft drops to slow you down.

Looking back after almost 35 years Sir Jackie Stewart recalls, 'Nothing gave me more satisfaction than to win at the Nurburgring, but it was so, so dangerous. I never did a single lap more than I had to there. Many people say they love the Nurburgring. Well, they're either telling lies or they never drove fast enough.'

'The Ring is a great environmental area and I christened it Green Hell. It was a very scary place. There were not enough medical facilities or medical teams. The circuit was 23 kms long, but that is 46 in reality, as you have to service both sides of the track, so racing there just didn't make sense any more.'

"And 1970 was a terrible year. We lost Piers Courage, Bruce McLaren and others and it was obvious that the Ring was no longer suitable, because there were no barriers anywhere and the crash banks were launching pads. The GPDA had a meeting at the Dorchester Hotel in London in June, right after the memorial service for Bruce McLaren. I pushed very hard for us not to race at the Ring because, if we did, we would sabotage all the things we were trying to do at other circuits. The organisers would have said, 'You want us to spend all this money, yet you still race at the Ring?' It was a very difficult meeting, but we agreed to boycott the German GP and that was a very controversial decision which brought an immense amount of criticism from the media."

It is interesting to note that Stewart alternated with Jacky Ickx as winner of the German GP at the Ring from 1968 to 1973:

Stewart - Ickx - Stewart - Ickx - Stewart. Jackie hated it, whereas Jacky loved it, although he looks back on it with incredulity.

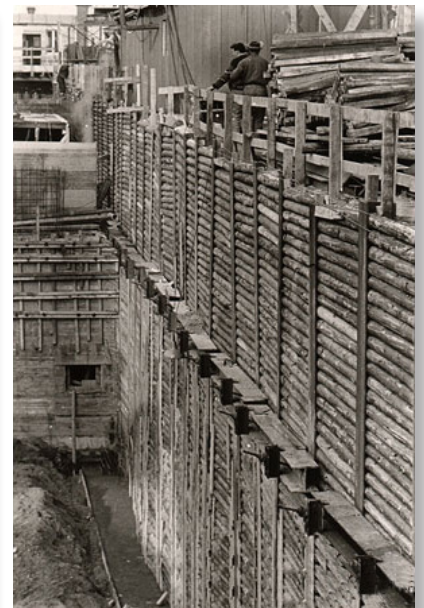
"With Spa, it was my favourite circuit, but in 2003 I went back and after 30 years I could hardly understand how someone reasonably intelligent could race on a course like that. You had to be a maniac, a little bit crazy, but at the time it was absolutely normal. Now there has been such an evolution in safety that the circuit looks ridiculous, unbelievably narrow and unadapted for racing. At the time you really needed to be brave, young and stupid!"

Although he resigned from the GPDA over the Nurburgring affair, today Ickx acknowledges that he was broadly sympathetic to the Association's demands. «I never really joined the GPDA in a way (every GP driver was automatically made a member). I did not argue against the goals they

were trying to reach, through Jackie Stewart, about cars and race course safety, but I was definitely against the way they were trying to reach those goals, such as banning the German GP six weeks before the race in 1970. I always agreed with the principle and appreciated what Jackie had done. He is responsible for where we are today in safety, he gave it the launch it needed. The GPDA was a good idea but, in the early days, the way they were ready to go on strike or boycott was not for me.»

At the time, many doubted that the German Grand Prix would ever return to the Nurburgring but, happily, in 1971 the teams assembled once again in the garage square of the fabulous *Nordschleife*. Ray Hutton described the changes to the circuit in *Autocar*: 'A year ago not many people would have predicted with any confidence that the 1971 German Grand Prix would return to the Nurburgring. The 1970 race had been held at Hockenheim, following the drivers' boycott of the Ring on safety grounds, and had been a considerable financial success. That the Grand Prix did return to its rightful home where it was first held in 1927 is to the great credit of the Nurburgring circuit owners.'

'Although the profile of the 170-odd corners themselves has been little changed, many of the more hazardous changes in camber have been corrected and the road flattened at such places as Brunnchen and the Flugplatz, where cars used to fly high in the air. A large section of the 14.2-mile circuit has been resurfaced and mile upon mile of double-height Armco barrier erected. The changes have actually benefitted the spectator, for wherever trees have been felled there is generally a much better view than before and a number of new car parks has been laid out. The total cost of the work



was nearly £800,000, but a large slice of this must have gone to the erection of a proper fence outside the spectator enclosures. The investment should have produced some extra profit, for a greater than usual proportion of the 250,000 spectators who are reported to have watched the race will have had to pay this year.

'From the drivers' point of view the circuit has taken some relearning, not so much because the corners have changed but because reference points used over the years have disappeared. All are agreed that it is safer now and the wider run-offs and other safety provisions are a psychological help in going faster. And the circuit is certainly a lot faster: in the first race on the revised circuit, May's F2 event, Ronnie Peterson set a time of 7 mins 57.1 secs, over seven seconds quicker than the previous F2 record, while Jacky Ickx set a new outright circuit record during the 1000 Kms sportscar race with a Ferrari 312P at 7 mins 40.8 secs, 110.62 mph. This broke his previous record, set on the way to victory in 1969 with the Brabham BT26, of 7 mins 43.8 secs. Since the 1000 Kms only small further changes have been made, including the installation of some high, sloping curves.

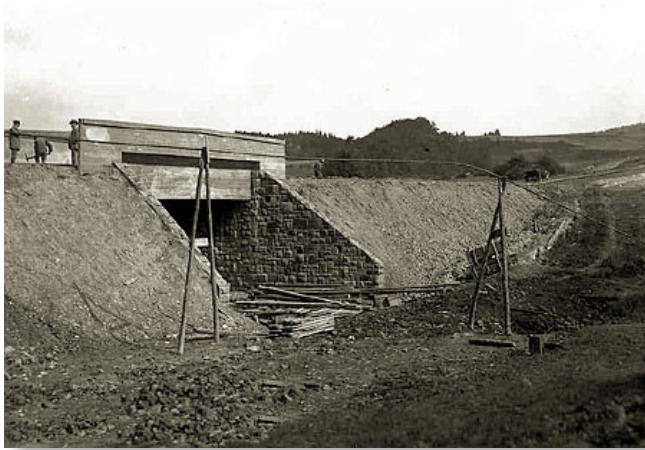
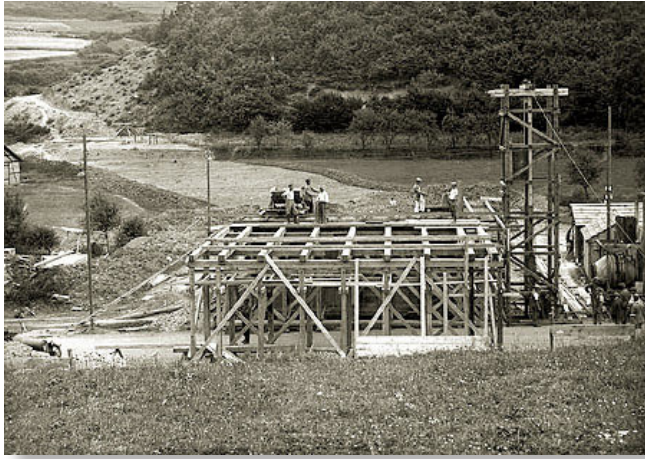
'It would be wrong to think that the Nurburgring is now an easy circuit. It is not. It is still very hard on both car and driver and, for example, though the spectacular high jumps have gone, GP cars still leave the ground in five places. It is one circuit that quickly shows up basic deficiencies in cars and sorts out the men drivers from the boys.'

Today, Jacky Ickx concurs: «On the old Ring there were not only 175 corners or so, but also 17 jumps (which I counted in 1967) and honestly, mistakes were not allowed, because you were immediately in a meadow, in a forest or in a ditch and that could have a dramatic result. When they changed the Ring in 1970, cutting down all those trees, putting in the Armco and adding runoff areas everywhere, it did not lose any of its original challenge. Perhaps, instead of having 17 jumps we had 12 or 14, but it was still a thrill. All the modifications made it totally different, but still very challenging. It was the most difficult and demanding race course and winning there really meant something.»

And so the Nurburgring was reprieved, but not for long. The alterations to the circuit meant that the cars were going faster than ever and the 1975 German GP was won by Carlos Reutemann (Brabham-Ford) at an average speed of 117.7 mph/189.5 kph, with fastest lap going to Clay Regazzoni (Ferrari) at 119.8 mph/192.8 kph. In third place was Niki Lauda, who had won pole position in his Ferrari with a sensational lap in 6 mins 58.6 secs, the first time anyone had officially broken the seven-



KINGS OF THE NURBURGRING



minute barrier, although in a private Ferrari test session the previous year he had unofficially recorded 6' 58.2". In view of what was to come, it is deeply ironic that the man who finally brought Grand Prix racing at the Nurburgring to an end should hold the record for the fastest-ever lap of the *Nordschleife*.

Young Lauda had made his debut at the Ring in 1972, driving a March-Ford. He would never win the German GP at the Ring and would never become a *Ringmeister*, but his name is forever *entwined with that of the circuit as the man who put the Last nail in its coffin* - after very nearly finishing up in a coffin himself.

Shortly before the 1976 German GP, the baby-faced Lauda gave a lengthy interview to *Autosport's* Pete Lyons and the principal subject of conversation was the Nurburgring. Lyons began by pointing out that the forthcoming German GP had very nearly been moved from the Ring (as in 1970) because many drivers did not want to race there. However, a three-to-two majority of the five drivers on the Safety Committee saved the location, but for that year only. 'For next year', wrote Lyons, 'they are all adamant that the forbidding 14.19-mile mountain circuit, already massively rebuilt only a few years ago, must receive further alteration, perhaps even shortening, or they definitely will not go.'

Niki Lauda lost no time in condemning the circuit. 'My personal opinion is that the Nurburgring is too dangerous to drive on nowadays. Because, if I go to Paul Ricard or any other permanent circuit and something breaks on my car, the wing falls off, the suspension fails, I have a 70/30 per cent chance that I will be all right or I will be dead. Because of the circumstances of the circuit... If I make a mistake and I kill myself, then tough shit. (At the) Nurburgring, if you have any failure on the car, hundred percent death.

'I look at other circuits, where the safety facilities provide a much easier, a much safer driving, and I compare to the Nurburgring with 260 kph jumping - only God saves you. So therefore I think it is too dangerous. I was against the Nurburgring because I think it should be like any other circuit, up to the standards. Why do they do the work if the Nurburgring *doesn't*?... *The best thing is to shorten the place. Leave in as many jumps as you want, leave in as many hairy places as you want, but just make the guardrail to be back 30 metres. So if really something happens, you don't go like Hailwood straight in (Mike Hailwood's career was ended when he crashed his McLaren into the Armco at Pflanzgarten in 1974)... need run-off. All I want is to have, the more dangerous it is, the wider I need run-off area.'*

Lauda's command of English was none too secure, but his fears were all too clear and it was deeply ironic, therefore, that he should crash heavily on lap two of the German GP a couple of weeks later. The race had begun with everybody on rain tyres except for Jochen Mass. He had noticed the rain clouds dispersing and elected to start with his McLaren on slicks, with the result that he had a lead of 29 seconds at the end of the opening lap. Most of the other runners, including Lauda in his Ferrari, then stopped to change to slick tyres. Half-way round the next lap, on a flat-out left-hander that leads to the right-hander at Bergwerk, Lauda inexplicably lost control and crashed, being struck by the Hesketh-Fords of Guy Edwards and Harald Ertl and the Surtees-Ford of Brett Lunger.

The Ferrari was ablaze, but those drivers and Arturo Merzario braved the flames and pulled Lauda free. He was taken to hospital in a critical condition, suffering from burns to his head, several broken ribs and severely damaged lungs, due to the inhalation of toxic fumes from the fire. It was feared that Lauda would die or that, even were he lucky enough to survive, his racing career would be over. Happily he made an astonishing recovery and was back racing again at the Italian GP six weeks later. However, the fact that he was the World Champion and had crashed and so nearly been killed at the circuit he had so recently criticised for its dangers meant that the Nurburgring was doomed as the home of the German Grand Prix.

In his race report Pete Lyons noted that, 'The point about the Nurburgring which is missed by many of its critics is that for some people it represents every romantic justification for the endeavour they call motor racing. Yes, it's too long to be easily managed; sure, much of the safety apparatus is sub-standard; granted, its kind of challenge is increasingly outside the mainstream of modern short-circuit racing. The fact remains that hundreds of thousands of people go there every year and further hundreds of thousands wish they could. They sleep on rain-sodden ground and endure grey rainy mornings and they line the 14 miles of fencing on both sides and face the track and pay attention... The Ring is a special place. It is a place that holds our imagination and which, rightly or wrongly, we believe offers the greatest test of those we hold to be heroes. The Ring is a place where we can watch and truly understand that we could not do this thing ourselves.'

Two weeks later, Maurice Hamilton posed the question, 'Has the fate of the Nurburgring as a Grand Prix circuit finally been sealed?' During the Grand Prix weekend, he had been driven round the circuit by three-times winner Jackie Stewart in a BMW 628CSi and had been completely gob-

smacked, as he recalled in *Autosport*:

'I had studied maps of the Ring many times, but once we had passed Aremberg I was lost. I was amazed at Stewart's computerlike spewing out of gearchanges, speeds, lines and landmarks. The one overriding feature which left me speechless was the number of occasions on which Stewart announced that the F1 cars were in fifth or flat in fourth. And not on the straights, either. Places like the Foxhole, for example. That just blew my mind. "This is taken flat in fifth at about 175 mph... Flat," emphasized Stewart. He had obviously seen my dazed expression. I mean, it is a series of fast downhill sweeps disappearing into the pines. It was frightening. And then there was the descent to Adenau Bridge. "This is what I regard as the most difficult part of the Nurburgring." Once again, it was fast, sweeping downhill curves - with adverse camber in places this time! "It is all fifth gear again." I was getting accustomed to hearing that. Not accepting it, you understand, just getting used to hearing it. There is no doubt that had it been anyone else talking I would have thought that they were mistaken, simply confusing the corners... It began to dawn on me just what this place was all about. It was beyond my wildest dreams. It was magnificent - a driver's circuit. No way should they stop Grand Prix racing here.'

Back in the Elf hospitality unit, Hamilton asked Stewart how he felt about this possibly being the last German Grand Prix at the Ring. 'For once Stewart did not seem to have a ready answer. "I don't know really. I have mixed emotions. It is a unique circuit. I can go to as many Grands Prix as I want, but I came here this weekend because it is possibly the last time we shall see the Ring used for the Grand Prix. It is very sad. While it is a tremendous challenge, there is no doubt that it is very dangerous in places." Stewart went on to reflect on his three victories in 1968,

1971 and 1973. "I look back on my wins as being *technically* satisfying. It was a great achievement to bring a car in first. It's strange, but I used to sit by the fire during the winter months and fantasize about my drive the previous August. I got tremendous satisfaction from it. But, I'll tell you this, once the beginning of August came round again and I left home for the Nurburgring, I seriously wondered if I would ever see home again. When I arrived, I was scared. I did as few laps as I possibly had to. And each time I returned to the pits, the relief was enormous. I literally thanked God."

In the end, of course, that was the last German Grand Prix to be held at the Nurburgring and it was a shame that the GP never got to celebrate its 50th anniversary there, as it should have done in 1977. Instead, in March that year Niki Lauda and



John Watson inspected the circuit on behalf of all the GP drivers and, as *Autosport* reported, 'You will not be surprised to learn that they did not find the track to be suitable for this year's German Grand Prix.'

Curiously, the circuit now deemed too dangerous for F1 cars was still acceptable for F2 machines, which raced there intermittently for the next six years. In the last F2 race before the circuit was shortened in 1983 (to make way for the new one), both the winning speed and the fastest lap were faster than those of the 1976 Grand Prix cars! And nobody, apparently, raised an eyebrow...

For 1977 the German Grand Prix was moved to Hockenheim, where it stayed until the new, 4.5-km Nurburgring was ready for it in 1985. The circuit was officially opened in May, 1984 and on that occasion the organisers did the right thing and invited Dr Otto Creutz's widow, Hedwig, to the event, as her daughter, Gisela, recalls:

"My mother was 88 years old, but in top condition. We were given seats in the Press stand and it was bitterly cold. After the opening ceremony there was a party in the hotel beneath the grandstand. We were invited, but nobody paid any attention to my mother, so I sought out the organiser and told him that she was the widow of Dr Creutz, who had built the Nurburgring and that during the opening ceremony in 1927 she had driven several Ministers around the start and finish area. He was very embarrassed and when I introduced him to my mother she embarrassed him further by reminding him that her husband had built the old 28-km Nurburgring in two years -virtually by hand - and it had taken the same time to build this little 5-km circuit!"

I covered the opening for *Autosport*. The magnificent old grandstand and Sport Hotel (to be demolished in 1988) stood proudly overlooking the brand new pits, with their VIP lounges above and there was a host of great names present from the circuit's glorious past, including Manfred von Brauchitsch, Hermann Lang, Juan Manuel Fangio, Stirling Moss, Phil Hill and John Surtees. They were not overly impressed, as I reported:

'Anyone with fond memories of the old, 22-km circuit who might be hoping that that the new circuit would retain some of the real Ring's characteristics had better stay at home. The new one is a brilliantly executed, ultra-modern racing plant which, when it has had time to settle down and smooth over the rough edges, will doubtless provide a maximum of 150,000 people with some excellent racing in comfort and safety.

'But in the view of one racing driver at least, it is "incredibly dull and completely lacking in surprises!" Today's racing drivers may feel that with the speeds their cars are going they have their

hands quite full enough without having to look out for surprises, but the words are those of one of the greatest of all *Ringmeisters* - Stirling Moss. "It's a wonderful facility," he went on, "but all the corners are of constant radius, there are none of the marvellous swoops and climbs that were such a feature of the old circuit and while I'm sure it's as safe as houses, I found it very boring."

It is all too easy to criticise from the journalist's chair, rather than the driver's seat, but I found it almost beyond belief that such a bland and boring circuit could have been built in the shadow of the awe-inspiring and heart-stopping original. One would have thought that the designers of the new Ring would have been inspired by the old and would have incorporated some of its challenges into their plans, with the benefit of modern safety measures, but not a bit of it. They went out of their way to avoid giving drivers any kind of challenge or sense of achievement. The new circuit was utterly devoid of any of the greatness of the *Nordschleife* and those responsible set a pygmy beside a giant. At a stroke the term *Ringmeister* was made redundant.

But the deed was done and the German GP moved to the new Nurburgring in 1985. Happily, the 1000 Kms sports car race remained on the *Nordschleife* until 1983 but, following the accidents that year to Stefan Bellof and Walter Brun, it was moved to the new circuit in 1984 and reduced to a six-hour event. As I write, twenty years on, no major international Championship events are held on the *Nordschleife* but there is still a great deal of activity, including 24-hour races for touring and sports cars. The circuit is also frequently used by car and tyre manufacturers, for it is still a wonderful testing ground, as was Dr Creutz' intention back in 1925. And when it is not in use for racing or testing it is open to the public, as ever. However, the great days are long gone, never to return, and we shall never hail another driver as King of the Nurburgring.



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The Nurburgring has more than 30 named features, some more famous than others. Following the circuit clockwise after the South and North Turns here are the names, translations and explanations, compiled by Ben Lovejoy of www.nurburgring.org.uk with some corrections and additions by Bernd Schneider.

Hatzenbach (Hatzen Brook): a small brook running to the left of the track.

Hocheichen (Great Oaks): some large oak trees had to be cut down here in order to build this section of the circuit.

Quiddelbacher Hohe (Quiddelbach Height): the highest point of the village of Quiddelbach.

Flugplatz (Flying Place): gliders used to be launched from this hill, but many feel that the literal translation is the perfect description of the feeling you get when you 'take off' on this part of the circuit.

Schwedenkreuz (Swedish Cross): a stone cross dating back to 1638, said to be a memorial to Hans Friedrich Datenberg, Mayor of Kelberg and tax collector for Adenau, believed to have been killed by some deserters from the Swedish army. The cross fell down and broke about a century ago and the surviving parts are now held together with iron clamps.

Aremberg (Arem Mountain): Named after the nearby village and volcanic hill.

Fuchsrohre (Foxhole): Apparently a frightened fox dived into a drainpipe during the construction of this section and so the workers named it Fuchsrohre.

Adenauer-Forst (Adenau Forest): speaks for itself.

Metzgesfeld (Metzges field): the point where the circuit crosses a field so named for reasons unknown, but an 1860 map apparently calls it Mertgendsfeld, so it may be a corruption of 'a field belonging to someone called Mertgend'.

Kallenhard (Kallen Forest): in old German 'hard' means mountain forest, a wooded range of hills.

Wehrseifen (Defence Valley): Wehr means defence or protection. The local militia, the 'Burgerwehr' used to practice in the small valley at Wehrseifen Bridge.

Breidscheid (a wide forest clearing): The bend closest to the town, which is the lowest point on the circuit, '-scheid' means a forest that has been cleared for settlers.

Ex-Muhle (Water Mill): named after the water mill which still exists, behind the ARAL petrol station situated just before Adenau Bridge as you leave the town. Ex- is from the French Aix which, in turn, is from the Latin Aquis, meaning waters. Originally it was planned to build the start/finish area at this point, which is conveniently close to Adenau, but the mill owner refused to sell the necessary land. The mill itself closed in the mid-fifties.

Lauda-Linksknick (Lauda Left-kink): unofficial name for the slight left-hander between Ex-Muhle and Bergwerk where Niki Lauda had the horrendous crash that ended Formula 1 racing on the *Nordschleife*. His Ferrari burst into flames after crashing into the Armco at Bergwerk. Locals sometimes refer to this as Grill Kurve...

Bergwerk (Mine - mountain work): named after the lead and silver mine worked here until around 1900.

Kesselchen (Little valley): Talkessel means the bottom of a valley and 'chen' is a diminutive, meaning little.

Klostertal (Convent Valley): There used to be a convent (kloster) here in the 14th century, nestled in the valley (tal).

Steilstrecke (Steep Stretch): not a curve at all, but the 33-degree test hill that runs up to Hohe Acht.

Karussell (Carousel): obvious once you have driven or ridden round the 270-degree banked curve. It is now known as the Caracciola-Karussell.

Hohe Acht (High Lookout): There is a nearby mountain of the same name which is the highest point in the Eifel district. The Gallic 'Mons Achon' means stone rock, so *Hohe Acht* could mean High Rock. It is also said to be named after the lookout hut to be found here. *Hohe Acht* is the second highest point on the circuit, slightly lower than the original start/finish area at the bridge after the *Shikane*, next to the modern GP circuit.

Hedwigs-Hohe (Hedwig's Height): a well-hidden sign on the right at the start of Wippermann, which Dr Otto Creutz - the Father of the Nurburgring - named for his wife.

Wippermann (Seesaw Man): this section was apparently very bumpy before it was smoothed out.

Eschbach (Ash Brook): another bend named after a nearby brook, in turn apparently named after one or more ash trees.

Brunnchen (Little Wall): this section includes a bridge over a creek which used to supply water for the village of Herschbroich.

Pflanzgarten (Plant garden): named after a plant nursery patronised by the Counts of Nurburg.

Schwalbenschwanz (Swallow Tail): the workmen apparently considered it to be in the shape of a swallow's tail.

Kleines Karussell (Little Carousel): a slightly banked bend, also paved with concrete blocks - so a little Karussell.

Galgenkopf (Gallows Head): the site of a gallows where public executions used to take place back in the middle ages. Kopf means head, but hills are often called kopf, and if you ever want to frighten yourself, wander up there when the Ring is closed and take a look over the Armco to the left!

Dottinger Hohe (Dottinger Height): the high point near the village of Dottingen.

Antoniusbuche (Antonius' Beech): named after the huge beech tree which used to stand here. Legend has it that there used to be a memorial at the foot of the tree dedicated to Saint Antonius. He is the saint of lost things, so you will find even non-religious Germans appealing to him for help when they lose something.

Tiergarten (Animal Garden): a pleasant-sounding name for a place where animals were buried. These animals were either: unfit to eat; the hunting animals of a nobleman; the pets of a nobleman or horses which died in combat fighting for the glory of Nurburg. Take your pick!

Hohenrain (Elevated Field-boundary): a rain is a boundary between two fields and hoh means that the boundary is raised.

Schikane (Chicane): this was added to the circuit in 1967 to reduce the speed of the cars as they passed the pits.



RINGMEISTER

1

RUDOLF CARACCIOLA



1927 - 1939

Quite simply, Rudolf Caracciola was King of Kings at the Nurburg-Ring. His reign lasted a remarkable 13 seasons and he dominated the magnificent circuit from start to finish, winning the main race at the inaugural meeting in 1927 and the German GP of 1939, which was the last before Europe and then the world became engulfed in Hitler's war. Between times, he won no fewer than seven more races there and his total of nine victories is unparalleled in the history of the Nurburg-Ring.

His first success as a racing driver came in 1922. He became a sales rep for Fafnir in Dresden and persuaded the company to let him race one of their 1.5-litre cars at AVUS, in Berlin, where he finished fourth. A month later he won the Opel track race with the same car. In 1923 he was introduced to Herr Hertzing, a director of the Daimler company and, following an interview in Unterturkheim, was given a job back in Dresden - as a salesman. Rudi was bitterly disappointed, thinking he had been interviewed as a future racing driver. However, he used his new job to advantage, persuading his bosses in Dresden to lend him a Mercedes to race. In 1923 he won 11 events (mostly hillclimbs) and the next year more than 20.

Two years later he met the first of the two remarkable women who were to play such an important part in his life. The Mercedes showroom was opposite the fashionable Europaischer Hotel and there, at a tea dance, Rudi met Charly. She was vivacious and charming - and married, but confided in him that the union was not a happy one and that she was planning to leave her husband. Over the next few months the romance blossomed and Charly obtained a divorce, but Caracciola was not about to rush into marriage, as he was earning only 100 Marks a month. He promised Charly that he would marry her, but first he had to make some money.

His opportunity arose in 1926 with the announcement that the first German Grand Prix

would be held at AVUS, with 17,000 Marks to go to the winner. With numerous successes now under his belt, Rudi felt sure that he would be in the Mercedes team for the race, but was stunned to learn that the company would not be taking part, but racing in Spain instead, hoping to increase their exports by winning the San Sebastian GP. Nevertheless, he and Adolf Rosenberger, a successful amateur driver, persuaded Mercedes to let them have a 6-cylinder, 2-litre car each for the German GP, which they would drive as private entrants.

The race proved to be a triumph for Caracciola and a tragedy for Rosenberger. On the fifth lap it began to rain heavily, which saw the beginning of Caracciola's reputation as a *Regenmeister* (rain master), for after stalling at the start and losing almost a minute, he drove his Mercedes superbly to win the Grand Prix. In stark contrast, poor Rosenberger crashed at the North Turn, demolishing a timekeeper's hut. The three occupants were killed and Rosenberger's mechanic was seriously hurt. There were several other crashes, in which drivers and spectators were injured.

Caracciola's victory was the talk of Berlin and the 25 year-old was hailed as Germany's Number One driver. Now a man of means, he married Charly and used his prizemoney to go into partnership in a Mercedes dealership on Berlin's fashionable Kurfurstendamm.

The tragedies in the Grand Prix meant that there would be no more racing at AVUS for the next five years, so it was fortuitous that the Nurburg-Ring should be opened in 1927 with the very first *Eifelrennen*, held over the weekend of June 18/19. Daimler and Benz had joined forces the year before and entered one 6-cylinder, 2-litre Mercedes racing car for Christian Werner and two of their vast, 6.2-litre supercharged S-type sportscars for Caracciola and Rosenberger.

In charge of the team was Alfred Neubauer. During an abortive attempt to become a racing

driver in the early twenties, Neubauer had been befriended by Professor Ferdinand Porsche and when the latter joined Daimler in 1923 he took Neubauer with him. Organisation, not driving, was Neubauer's forte and realising this, his bosses at Daimler put him in charge of the racing team once the two companies had merged. At AVUS in 1926 Neubauer was shocked to realise that his young friend Rudi Caracciola had no idea that he had won the German GP until he was surrounded by jubilant supporters. He resolved to do something about this and devised a system of signal boards and flags to be shown to Mercedes drivers when passing the pits. Team Management was born.

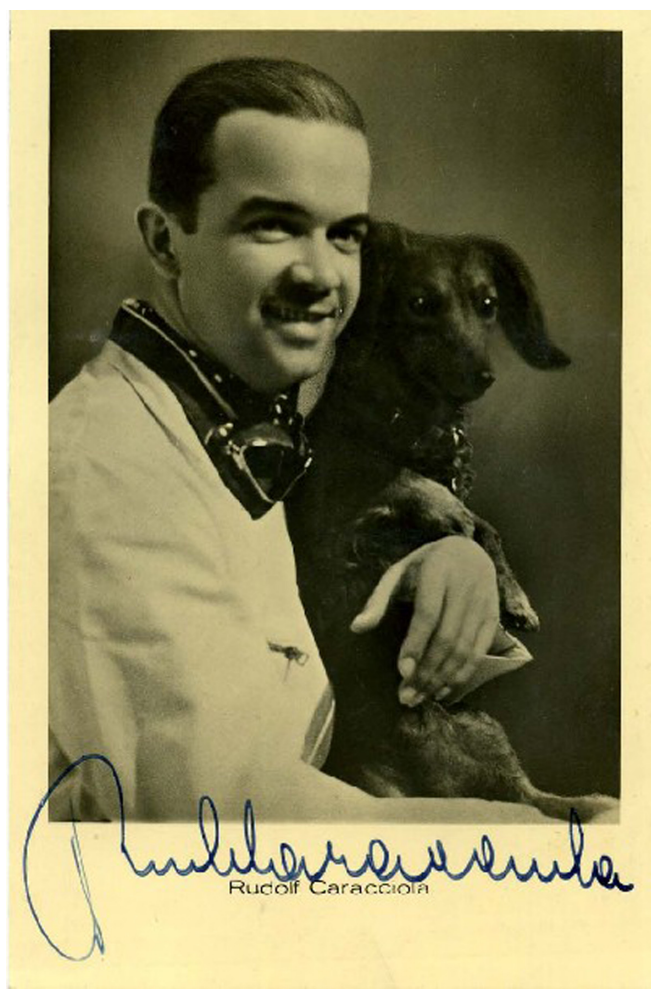
Run on the *Grosse Rundstrecke* (the North and South circuits combined), the inaugural meeting proved to be a triumph for the new company. Caracciola won the sportscar class, completing the 12 laps of the 17.56 mile/28.27 km circuit in 3 hours, 33 minutes and 21 seconds and setting fastest lap in 17 mins 11.1 secs. Rosenberger was second, more than 17 minutes behind Rudi and Werner won the up to 3-litre racing car class.

This was the beginning of Rudi's reign as King of the Nurburg-Ring and in the entire history of motor racing you would be hard-pushed to find another racing driver who dominated a circuit for so long yet, in his autobiography, *A Racing Driver's World*, he has absolutely nothing to say about that initial victory or the circuit itself. It is an astonishing fact that he makes no mention at all of the Nurburg-Ring until he recounts his victory in the 1931 GP, his fourth on the circuit!

A month after the inaugural meeting Mercedes-Benz returned to the Nurburg-Ring for the German GP which was run for sportscars, this time over 18 laps of the *Grosse Rundstrecke*. No fewer than seven S class Mercedes were entered, resplendent in white, their national racing colour and with their engines now bored out to 6.8 litres. They were to be driven by Caracciola, Rosenberger,



Georg Kimpel, Christian Werner, Otto Merz, Willy Walb and Prinz Max zu Schaumburg-Lippe. Some 75,000 spectators watched as Rosenberger led for the first lap, only to be overtaken by Caracciola and Merz by lap three. Werner then set about Caracciola and the issue was solved in his favour when Rudi pulled in to retire with engine failure at the end of lap five. Merz went on to win the race, from Werner and Walb. Werner set a new lap record in 15 mins 51.6 secs (66.49 mph/107.0 kph), which was a considerable improvement over Caracciola's best in the inaugural race.



Those two events of 1927 were the making of the Nurburg-Ring, for news of the exciting new circuit spread like wildfire and in 1928 the vast white cars of Mercedes-Benz were challenged by the little blue gems of Ettore Bugatti. The marque had won the Targa Florio and the GPs of Rome, Tripoli and Marne, among others and now there were no fewer than 17 entered for the German Grand Prix. As this was still for sportscars they were fitted with lights and mudguards. Four works cars were entered, two powered by 2.3-litre engines for Nando Minoia and Count Conelli and two with 2-litre units for Louis Chiron and Count Brilli-Peri. There were also two British entrants, Captain Tim Birkin with his unblown 4.5-litre Bentley and D.M. Marendaz in his 1.5-litre Marendaz.

Defending Germany's honour were four factory Mercedes SS (Super Sport) cars, now with 7.1-litre supercharged engines producing 225 bhp. These were for Caracciola, Werner, Merz and Walb, with the private entry of Kimpel to back them up. The regulations now allowed the changing of drivers, so Mercedes nominated all their drivers for all their cars.

With the Grand Prix properly established in the calendar, some 90,000 people descended on the

Nurburg-Ring in high summer, with the temperature in the 90s. No one envied the drivers, who were faced with more than 3,500 corners during the 316.5-mile/509.4-km race.

There were three classes, which were released at three-minute intervals, the big cars leaving first. The Mercedes of Werner,

Kimpel, Caracciola, Walb and Merz were followed by Birkin's Bentley. Walb slid off the road early on and Caracciola took the lead, setting a new lap record on his second tour with 15 mins 13.2 secs (69.34 mph/111.6 kph).

The Bugattis were not doing too well. Louis Chiron lost much time changing wheels in the pits, although Brilli-Peri cheekily passed the Mercedes of Walb and then Kimpel, to take third position, only to lose it when he had to stop for fresh rubber.

At the end of lap nine Werner pulled into the pits, 'his eyes gleaming white in his oil-smeared face,' wrote Alfred Neubauer in his autobiography, *Speed was my Life*. 'His left arm was hanging limp, dislocated by the steering wheel. Those who only know the modern car with its independent suspension, small wheels and low-geared steering may find this hard to believe. But the racing car of the nineteen-twenties was a brute to handle, especially on the corners and bends of the Nurburg-Ring.'

As a doctor was attending to Werner, Willy Walb appeared, having walked several miles from where he had crashed. Sizing up the situation immediately, he put on his helmet and took Werner's Mercedes back into the race.

No sooner had he done so than Caracciola came in with a tyre in shreds. Two minutes later he was off again, still leading from Merz and Walb. But the heat was relentless and at the end of lap 12 Rudi was back in the pits, where he collapsed, exhausted. 'I knew that he would soon recover,' wrote Neubauer, 'I was much more concerned about the race - only six laps to go and our leading car was in the pits. Then my eyes fell on Werner, who was still nursing his left shoulder. For a second I hesitated, then decided that this was no time for finer feelings. "Werner, old chap," I said, "Couldn't you take over Caracciola's car?"'

Reluctantly, Werner agreed and, his shoulder strapped up with insulating tape, he set off in the Mercedes. Now Otto Merz was in the lead, the only team member to drive without relief.

'We worked like beavers on Caracciola,' wrote Neubauer, 'cold compresses on his neck, a wet sponge for his face. The soles of his shoes were scorched and his feet were blistered. Half an hour later, when Werner stopped at the pits, Caracciola was still feeling pretty groggy, but with set face he climbed back into the car... I called Rudi in at the

end of the sixteenth lap. He was bathed in perspiration and breathing in short, hard gasps. He was all in. Yet he had not only kept second place, he had gained slightly on the leader, Merz.'

The burly Otto looked set to repeat his victory of the previous year, but halfway round the very last lap a tyre burst and the Mercedes went off the road at Breidscheid. Merz changed the wheel, but it cost him almost 10 minutes - and the race, for Werner passed him to win the German GP, with Caracciola, at an average speed of 64.56 mph/103.9 kph. Sadly, it was to be Werner's last great victory, for barely a year later he died of cancer.

For some reason the 1929 GP was given the title, 'Grand Prix of the Nations' and it attracted a truly international entry. There were four Mercedes SSKs (K denoting *Kurz*, or short), which now produced 275 bhp, for Caracciola, August Momberger/Count Arco, Walter Rosenstein/Adolf Rosenberger and Kimpel. Bugatti sent three supercharged 2-litre cars (complete with wings and headlamps again) for Louis Chiron, Guy Bouriat and Georges Philippe and there were two Alfa Romeos and two Maseratis, not to mention four Zs (for Zbrojovka) from Czechoslovakia.

In practice the Bugattis showed that they posed a real threat to the Mercedes, and so it proved in the race, for although Caracciola led at a furious pace initially, Louis Chiron drove superbly to take second place at the end of lap four, breaking Caracciola's lap record in the process with 15 mins 06.0 secs (69.97 mph/112.58 kph). On lap five he moved into the lead when Rudi's SSK came to a halt with a broken con rod. The Bugattis sailed on to a remarkable 1,2,4,5 victory, headed by the redoubtable Chiron, the first victory by a foreign car and driver in the German GR

Mercedes restored some pride in September, Caracciola winning a long-distance race for unsupercharged touring cars. He drove an appropriately-named Nurburg model.

The Wall Street crash in October that year forced Caracciola to close down his Mercedes showroom in Berlin. He and Charly moved to Arosa, in Switzerland, where they had already spent several skiing holidays. There was no German Grand Prix in 1930, but Rudi racked up an impressive number of wins, mostly in hillclimbs, in the Mercedes SSK.

Then came the bombshell. According to Alfred Neubauer, in November Caracciola received a letter from Mercedes, terminating his contract. Rudi and Charly went to Stuttgart, where Rudi had a long talk with Dr Wilhelm Kissel, Managing Director of Daimler-Benz, who explained that, due to the Depression, Mercedes could no longer

afford to go racing. Charly immediately suggested that Rudi drive for Alfa Romeo in 1931, telling Neubauer that Alfa's Team Manager, Aldo Giovannini, had already offered him a contract.

Shocked that Caracciola could even think of 'going over to the enemy', Neubauer tried to dissuade him, but Caracciola rightly pointed out that he couldn't be expected to give up his career just because Mercedes were pulling out.

'After they had gone,' wrote Neubauer in *Speed was my Life*, 'I racked my brains for a way out. The thought of Rudi Caracciola driving a red Alfa Romeo while I remained chained to my desk kept me awake at nights. Then at long last a plan occurred to me.'

The plan was that Rudi should buy a new SSK for the 1931 season at a special price, and Mercedes would provide Neubauer as Team Manager, with Wilhelm Sebastian as riding mechanic and Willy Zimmer as mechanic. The company would also pay for transport, fuel and repairs. Any prize money was to be shared fifty-fifty. Rudi agreed to this and Neubauer had little difficulty in persuading Dr Kissel to do the same.

It is interesting to note that Caracciola himself makes no mention of this episode in his book, probably because he had actually signed to drive for Alfa Romeo by the time of his meeting with Dr Kissel, as was revealed in *The Motor* in April, 1931.

'There has been a certain amount of excitement in Continental racing circles,' noted Humphrey Symons, writing as *Grande Vitesse*, 'because Caracciola, the famous German racing driver, apparently signed a contract to race Alfa Romeos during this season. Subsequently, it appears, he dismissed the Alfa Romeo contract from his mind and renewed his contract with the Mercedes concern, whereupon the famous Italian factory communicated with the Automobile Club of Deutschland, asking them to take disciplinary action with Caracciola on account of his breach of contract. The German club wrote to the Alfa Romeo concern: "We have severely warned Mr Caracciola for his light and incorrect behaviour. Mr Caracciola sincerely regretted his acting in such a manner and has promised us that the lesson will serve him as a guide in future." To this the Italian concern replied: "In a true sportsmanlike spirit, we consider the question as definitely closed, also out of deference to you and to the firm Mercedes-Benz" - which means to say that the Alfa Romeo concern has given back to Caracciola his freedom of action, having obtained the moral satisfaction of knowing that he has been reprovved.'

Caracciola then compounded his 'felony' by winning the Mille Miglia for Mercedes, the first victory by a non-Italian car and driver. He went on to win 10 more events in 1931, including the German Grand Prix which, for the first time, was run on the *Nordschleife* only, reducing the circuit's length from 17.6 miles/28.3 kms to 14.2 miles/22.8 kms. The race run over 22 laps.

Although Mercedes had quit racing there were four entered 'privately' for the Grand Prix, with Alfred Neubauer looking after them. They were for Caracciola, Otto Merz, Hans Stuck and Manfred von Brauchitsch. Over the winter chassis engineer Max Wagner had lightened Rudi's car to the tune of some 250 lbs, making it the first SSKL (Leicht) and the power was increased to 310 bhp. As the Grand Prix was now for racing cars, the Mercedes were stripped of their lights and mudguards.

By the time of the race, the other three entries had had the same treatment, but the cars still weighed 1,600 kg, more than twice that of the little 2.3-litre Bugattis and 2.5-litre Maseratis they were up against. Caracciola was Mercedes' only likely race-winner and he was faced with the formidable talents of Louis Chiron, Achille Varzi and Jean-Pierre Wimille in Bugattis and Luigi Fagioli, Rene Dreyfus and Tim Birkin in Maseratis. And then there was Tazio Nuvolari, making his Nurburg-Ring debut in an Alfa Romeo.

Neubauer reckoned that the lightweight Bugattis and Maseratis would not have to change tyres, so he organised some pre-race wheel-changing away from the circuit. 'We kept changing tyres - Merz, Stuck, von Brauchitsch and I,' wrote Caracciola in *A Racing Driver's World*. 'My mechanic, Sebastian, and I held the record. We succeeded in changing all four tyres within one minute and ten seconds. Afterwards we sat together at the wooden tables under the old pine trees and discussed our chances. "If it rains we're well off," said Merz, "but if it stays dry..." He shrugged.'

In *Speed was my Life* Neubauer claims that in 1931 Caracciola was the first driver to make use of the ditch in the Karussell to increase the car's speed through the semi-circular corner. Until then, everyone drove round on the road, but either Rudi or his mechanic, Sebastian, had the idea that by using the ditch the car would get through the Karussell faster. So, one evening after practice, Sebastian and Willy Zimmer drove his SSKL very slowly through the corner in the ditch to see if there was enough ground clearance. There was, and they then did another lap, this time heading straight into the ditch at a speed considerably

greater than they were able to travel when using the road. As a result of this experiment, Caracciola used the ditch throughout the race, saving several precious seconds every lap.

It is a very good story and has the ring of truth about it, for the photograph on page 48 shows him driving his P3 Alfa into the ditch during the Grand Prix of the following year, but Caracciola makes no mention of the incident in his book. In view of the fact that he describes practising wheel-changing in order to save precious seconds it is surprising that he ignores the discovery of the use of the ditch, which was clearly just as valuable in this regard. But sadly, *A Racing Driver's World* is a slap-dash affair in which he makes no mention of a great deal that happened during his career, so it is likely that he had just forgotten the incident.

However, in his race report for *The Motor*, Humphrey Symons describes a lap of the circuit as a passenger in one of the Mercedes racing cars (See *Der Nurburg-Ring - a History*) and his driver used the ditch. For some reason Symons did not name his chauffeur and as it was unlikely to have been Caracciola, it may well have been Sebastian. Whatever, he gives no indication that driving through the ditch was in any way unusual, which is curious, to say the least!

On race day it rained, heavily, which played right into the hands of Rudi Caracciola and Mercedes. 'Who was first off the mark?', asked Humphrey Symons. 'A low, red car with a brass radiator; a 2.5-litre Maserati with the dare-devil Fagioli at the wheel. Sir Henry Birkin, driving a car of the same type, made a splendid start and was in third place within the first hundred yards.'

'Away they went in a cloud of spume, spray flying in upright fountains above each wheel. So swift were the leaders that they had already taken the tight, slightly banked loop in the wood past the grandstand and were tearing past the back doors of the pits before some of the drivers of the smaller cars had had time to change into third...

'The crowd, close-packed on every bend, yelled its encouragement to Caracciola, their champion, as his short-chassis Mercedes screamed past, devouring the miles, overtaking, after short, fierce fights between the innumerable curves, the flower of the foreign race drivers which opposed him.'

'By an ingenious electric device the numbers of approaching cars were signalled to the public. You should have heard the shout that went up when No. 8 - Caracciola - was announced! As his white Mercedes shot, like a whistling bullet, past the stands, the crowd leapt to its feet and cheered its idol to the echo.'

On the fourth lap Tazio Nuvolari in the Alfa moved up to third place and then went after Fagioli, passing him into second place on lap six, by which time Caracciola had a lead of 62 seconds. Now Louis Chiron made his move in his Bugatti, overtaking Fagioli on lap eight and Nuvolari two laps later. At half-distance Caracciola made his stop for fresh tyres, Neubauer's practice work paying dividends by getting him back in the race after just 62 seconds.

Chiron then made his stop without losing his second place and, as Cyril Posthumus noted in *The German Grand Prix*, 'Chiron's chase of Caracciola continued, but the big, solid Mercedes held the ever-twisting, winding, plunging tarmac better in the wet than the light, skittery Bugatti and not until three-quarter distance could the driver from Monaco make any real impression. Then came the reprieve; the skies brightened, the rain eased off, the circuit began to dry and the Bugattis and Alfas found their feet at last. On lap 17 Chiron gained 15 secs, on lap 18 a further 18 and on lap 19, 14 secs. Varzi, too, responded, turning a record lap in 11 mins 48 secs and moved past Nuvolari into third place. But it was all in vain. Caracciola's brilliant wet road driving had taken him too far ahead, and he won to tumultuous applause at 67.29 mph by 1 min 18 secs from three masters of the Grand Prix art, Chiron, Varzi and Nuvolari.'

Rudolf Caracciola was now the acknowledged *Ringmeister*, with four victories to his name, but at the end of the year he was without a drive once more. The Depression was biting harder than ever and Mercedes were finally forced to pull the plug on their support for his racing activities. But he was lucky, for despite the fact that he had reneged on a contract with Alfa Romeo a year earlier, the Milanese concern invited him to join it for 1932. Both Caracciola and Neubauer recalled how this came about in their autobiographies and their accounts make interesting - and very different - reading.

'Caracciola invited my wife and me to spend a month at his villa at Arosa,' wrote Neubauer. 'One evening I returned from a long solitary walk to come face to face with Giovannini, the Alfa Romeo racing-manager. He seemed mighty pleased with himself. But before I could ask him what he was doing in Arosa he muttered something about having a train to catch and left.'

'If I hadn't guessed by then what was in the wind, the look of dejection of Rudi's face would have told me all I wanted to know.'

'Well, let's hear the worst,' I said, hoarsely, 'You've signed a contract with Alfa Romeo, have you?'

'Rudi stood with bent head like a schoolboy

up before the headmaster. "Yes," he muttered. "What else could I do? Starve?"

Just because there isn't a single firm in Germany that can afford to run a racing team?"

'There was nothing I could say. In any case, I doubt if at that moment I was capable of uttering a word.'

According to Caracciola, this is nonsense. He recalled that Neubauer was staying with him in Arosa in mid-December, when he received a phone call from Aldo Giovannini, asking if he had a contract for 1932. When Rudi said that he had not, the Italian announced that he would come and see him at the end of the month.

'He arrived in Arosa the last day of the year,' wrote Caracciola. 'Giovannini was a small, elegant man with blondish hair and shining brown eyes. With typical southern temperament he embraced me, slapped me on the shoulder and kissed both of Charly's hands.'

'When he spotted Neubauer he flinched... As we went in to dinner he whispered to me excitedly: «What's the matter? Is Mercedes going to race again after all?» I shrugged.'

After dinner Giovannini announced that he wished to discuss something with Caracciola in private, so they went into Rudi's study, where the Italian produced a contract. 'It was a decent offer,' noted Rudi, 'a small guarantee, the entire starting bonus and half the prizes for me. Only one point made me hesitate. It was a provision that I was to start outside the Alfa team.'

When asked for an explanation, Giovannini was clearly embarrassed, saying that the regular Alfa drivers, Tazio Nuvolari, Baconin Borzacchini and Giuseppe Campari, were of the opinion that Caracciola was used to the enormous SSKL Mercedes, so he might take time to get used to the little Alfa. As they pooled their winnings, they felt that he might also take some time to earn his share. (If this was so, why did Caracciola's contract give him 'half the prizes (prizemoney) for me'?) Eventually, Giovannini admitted that Campari was the main objector to his inclusion in the team. 'Could I really object to that?' wrote Caracciola. 'I myself didn't know whether I'd get used to the new cars.'

This seems to be an extraordinary lack of self-confidence in the man who was already acknowledged as one of the greatest racing drivers in the world. And it was almost certainly Caracciola's brilliance that prompted the Italian drivers to try and exclude him from the team. No matter, he signed with Alfa Romeo, but only after promising a shocked Neubauer that he would rejoin Mercedes, should they return to racing.

Caracciola then recalls that two months later he went to Milan, where he met with Giovannini and Vittorio Jano, designer of the legendary Alfa Romeo P2 and the 8C Monza. 'Then Jano showed me his newest model,' wrote Rudi. 'It was a graceful, racy one-seater, lightweight and easy to manoeuvre. I liked it at first sight. The next day we drove to Monza. Jano wanted my opinion of the new car. Driving it was totally different compared to my heavy SSK Mercedes. I drove without effort but I had to watch like a hawk in order to keep the fast little car under control.

«Well, how did she go?» Jano asked when I climbed out.

«As light-footed as a ballerina,» I said.'

That car was, of course, the P3, which would become one of the great GP cars of all time. It did not make its debut until the Italian GP at Monza on June 5th and, in the meantime, Alfa Romeo raced the 8C Monzas.

And driving one of these in sportscar form Rudi very nearly won the Mille Miglia for the second year running. He was leading at Rome and right up to Verona where, a mere 40 miles from victory, the Alfa dropped a valve and he was out.

His first Grand Prix that year was at Monaco, where he raced an 8C Monza in racing car guise, but painted white. His three Italian team-mates were so miffed at his signing that, to make it abundantly clear that he was not part of the official

Alfa team, they insisted that his car be painted in his national colour - white.

The red Monza Alfa of Nuvolari won at Monaco, but only just, as in the closing laps Caracciola was getting ever closer. On the final lap the white Alfa was almost beside the red one and there seems little doubt that Rudi could have won the race, but for some reason which he was never able to explain, he backed off and Nuvolari won by three seconds. Caracciola was jeered by the spectators, who smelt a fix, but the next day Aldo Giovannini told him that Nuvolari, Borzacchini and Campari were so impressed that they wanted him to join them in the team.

Nevertheless, his Monza remained white for the rest of its racing life in his hands. At AVUS he was second to the specially streamlined Mercedes SSKL of Manfred von Brauchitsch before moving to the Nurburg-Ring for the Eifel GP. His was the only Alfa present and he was up against three SSKL Mercedes of Hans Stuck, Broschek and von Brauchitsch, whose car was now back in unstreamlined form. They were never in the hunt and Caracciola had to deal with Rene Dreyfus, who had

recently left Maserati to join Bugatti, and Louis Chiron, also on a Bugatti. The latter had ignition problems and was never a threat to Caracciola, but Dreyfus certainly was.

The weather was cool, with occasional rain showers, which meant that tyre changes were unnecessary. Caracciola led from start to finish, but Dreyfus drove superbly and was only 22 seconds behind him at the end of the 14 laps, and on the last Rudi set a new record, lowering Varzi's 1931 time of 11 mins 48.0 secs to 11' 42.8».

The P3 duly made its debut at Monza in June, but only two cars were ready and they were given to Tazio Nuvolari and Giuseppe Campari. Caracciola and Baconin Borzacchini had to make do with 2.3-litre Monzas. Nuvolari won the Italian GP (from Fagioli's Maserati); Caracciola's Monza retired and he took over Borzacchini's car to finish third. Campari was fourth in the other P3.

Rudi finally got his hands on the new Alfa in the French GP at Reims a month later, where three cars were entered for him, Nuvolari and Borzacchini. The supercharged, straight-eight engine produced 215 bhp @ 5,600 rpm and the Alfa was unique in having twin propeller shafts in torque tubes, each powering a rear wheel. As at Monza the French GP was a five-hour race and, as at Monza, Nuvolari won, with Borzacchini and Caracciola following him across the line. They repeated the Alfa 1,2,3 at the Nurburg-Ring two weeks later, but this time it was Rudi who took the chequered flag first.

If the spectators at Monaco thought the race was a fix - and it wasn't - when Caracciola failed to overtake Nuvolari on the last lap, those at the Nurburg-Ring on July 17 were never told that the result of the German GP was! Quite simply, Alfa Romeo wanted Caracciola to win in front of his home crowd, so Team Manager Aldo Giovannini made sure that his pit stop took a lot less time than Nuvolari's did.

Three P3s were entered for Caracciola, Nuvolari and Borzacchini and they were up against the works, 2.3-litre Type 51 Bugattis of Louis Chiron and Achille Varzi, backed up by the privately-entered cars of Marcel Lehoux, Rene Dreyfus and the German drivers Paul Pietsch and Hans Lewy. Unfortunately, Varzi elected not to race, as he was suffering from an eye injury after a stone had broken his goggles in the recent French GP. Hans Stuck failed to appear in his Mercedes and there was no sign of an Alfa for Campari. A meagre field of nine cars lined up for the GP, with cars in 1,500cc and 800 cc classes behind them.

More than 150,000 people had come to see the race, but what they saw was not much more than a procession, with Caracciola leading Nuvolari and Borzacchini for almost the entire 25 laps. Louis Chiron briefly relegated Borzacchini to third place, but then his Bugatti developed ignition problems which cost him some eight minutes. That sorted, an oil pipe broke and he had to stop to have oil cleaned from his eyes. He got going again, only to come to a halt on lap seven with a broken rear axle.

Although clearly under orders to let Caracciola win, Tazio Nuvolari couldn't resist having a bit of fun at the German's expense and passed him into the lead, completing the 10th lap just four seconds ahead. Rudi soon put that right, however and was never again headed. Then Tazio made his scheduled pit stop, which should have alerted the spectators in the grandstand opposite to the fact that Caracciola was going to win. The normally highly efficient Alfa mechanics took 2 mins 40 secs to change his wheels and add fuel and oil, while Nuvolari, fully aware of what was going on, could only glare at them and stamp about impatiently. Next time round Caracciola came in and was out again in 1 min 35 secs and Borzacchini's stop was even quicker - 1 min 15 secs!

Towards the end Nuvolari made a quick stop to check his oil level and then the three Alfas won the German GP in style, Rudi having lapped fourth man Dreyfus. He had won the Eifel GP with the 2.3-litre Monza Alfa at 70.7 mph and his winning speed with the P3 was 74.13 mph. His Eifel lap record of 11 mins 42.8 secs was demolished by Nuvolari, who took the P3 round in 10' 49.4», all of which spoke volumes for the performance of Vittorio Jano's latest masterpiece.

Caracciola's victory, of course, was nothing of the sort, having been cleverly orchestrated by Aldo Giovannini. However, it meant that he was the first man to win three consecutive races at the Nurburg-Ring, although it was not a true hat-trick, as the three were not all the German Grand Prix, the second one being the Eifel GP. Still and all, he had now won six races in six years, and was the undisputed King of the Nurburg-Ring.

However, this prowess could not prevent him from being out of work for the third year running at the end of the season, when Alfa Romeo announced that they were withdrawing from racing. Back home in Arosa, Caracciola was advised of this by letter, which suggested that he join Scuderia Ferrari, which was going to run the cars in 1933. However, what the letter did not say was that the cars would not be the superb P3s, but the old 8C Monzas, as Alfa Romeo refused to let the newer cars out of the factory.

Also in Arosa at that time was Louis Chiron with his lady friend, Alice Hoffmann. Affectionately known as Baby, she was the wife of Freddie Hoffmann, who was heir to the Swiss Hoffmann-La Roche drug empire. He had sponsored Chiron early in his career and Louis' success led to him joining the official Bugatti team in 1928. He was also very successful with Baby and by 1932 they were accepted as a couple in the motor racing world and had become close friends with Rudi and Charly Caracciola.

In common with Rudi, Louis was out of a job, having been fired by Bugatti for frequently ignoring the instructions of his Team manager, Meo Costantini. He had a plan, which he put to Caracciola one day in Arosa. It was that the two of them should form their own team, Scuderia CC (Caracciola-Chiron), buy a couple of Alfas and go racing for themselves.

'His plan seemed a good one to me,' wrote Caracciola in *A Racing Driver's World*, 'Our names were known in all countries. Each of us had a long list of victories to show. As competitors we had fought each other in a sporting way and as friends we got along excellently. The factories no longer entered races; Chiron and I were unemployed; and thus the Scuderia CC came into being.'

At this time momentous events were taking place in Germany, for in January, Adolf Hitler was elected Chancellor. In March he opened the Berlin Motor Show with the announcement that he wanted to see a German manufacturer back in Grand Prix racing in 1934, when the new 750 kg Formula was to begin. Well aware of the effect the Depression had had on the motor industry, he offered 500,000 Reichmarks a year to the company that did his bidding. He got two for the price of one, for not only did the old firm of Mercedes-Benz take his bait, but so did the new concern of Auto Union, formed by the merger of Horch, Audi, Wanderer and DKW.

Mercedes produced a beautiful but conventional, streamlined, front-engined design which made the P3 Alfa look old-fashioned, but Auto Union went even better, with a futuristic, mid-engined, V16 racer designed by Professor Ferdinand Porsche. Hitler was delighted and, rather than give the 500,000 RM to each firm, he cannily divided it between the two.

Also in March, Humphrey Symons announced the formation of Scuderia CC in *The Motor*, noting that Caracciola and Chiron had purchased 'no fewer than three Alfa Romeos and two 2,300 cc Bugattis. The debut of the famous equipe will be in the Monaco Grand Prix, while

at Le Mans they will be co-drivers of an Alfa Romeo. The cars which the German will drive will be painted white, with a blue stripe, and those to be handled by the Frenchman will be blue with a white stripe - further evidence of this interesting Franco-German friendship.'

Caracciola recalled buying only two Alfa Romeos, with no mention of Bugattis, but he added that Daimler-Benz had generously loaned them a diesel truck as transporter. Sadly, this very promising partnership never got anywhere, for during practice for the Monaco GP in April, 1933, Rudi crashed at the chicane and shattered his right thigh. There followed months of painful recuperation but, in mid-November he was buoyed by a visit from Alfred Neubauer. He brought the tremendous news that Mercedes-Benz were going racing again in 1934. Would Rudi be ready to race for his old team?

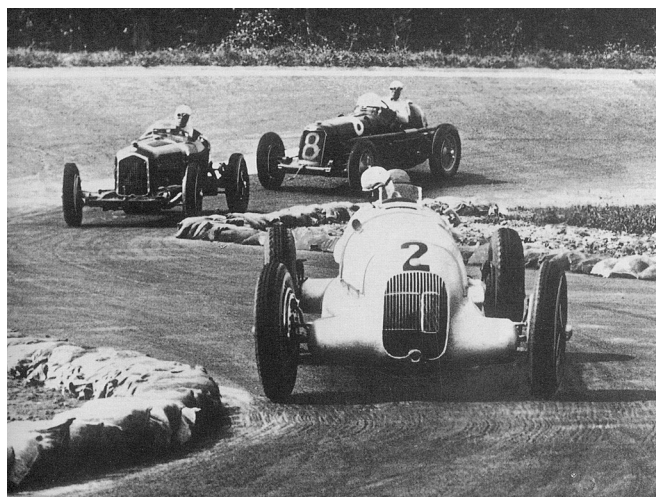
In January, Caracciola and Charly went to Stuttgart and he signed a contract with Mercedes. They then returned to Arosa and Rudi urged Charly to go skiing, which she had given up temporarily in order to look after him. As he was obviously now in much better health, Charly finally agreed and went to the slopes with some friends. She never returned. The group was struck by an avalanche and Charly was killed.

Among the first to Rudi's side were Louis Chiron and Baby. They stayed with him and did their best to help him through his grief. It was Chiron who suggested that he do a lap of honour at Monaco before the Grand Prix in April. Caracciola reluctantly agreed, but was overwhelmed by the standing ovation that greeted him and knew that he had to go racing again.

Alfred Neubauer was keen to help, but he had his doubts that Rudi could come back, after the terrible blows he had suffered. When Mercedes-Benz took their new Grand Prix cars to Berlin to practice for the AVUSrennen, Caracciola went too. The new Mercedes was the W25, a streamlined beauty with independent suspension all round and a supercharged, 3.9-litre, straight-eight engine which produced 314 bhp @5,800 rpm.

'When I arrived the others were already there - Neubauer, Nibel (the car's designer) and the mechanics,' wrote Caracciola in *A Racing Driver's World*. 'The car was there, too, small and white. It looked very racy, the kind of one-seater I had always dreamed of driving.'

'It was a lovely May morning. The sky was light blue. The sun shone down on the tops of the pines and there was a warm, resinous smell



1934 Italian gp - Rudolf Caracciola (Mercedes-Benz W25), Achille Varzi (Alfa Romeo P3), Tazio Nuvolari (Maserati 6C-34)

around us. I drove my car close to the racer, got out and went over on my cane. The mechanics helped me get into the seat. I felt my heart pounding in my throat...

'A mechanic started the motor and jumped back. I drove off. The first lap I drove carefully, feeling my way. The leg hurt a little, but it was bearable. I stepped down a little harder. The car developed speed. The woods to the right and left melted into a grey-green wall. The white band of the road seemed to narrow and the whistling wind rose to a high whine. Thank God, we were doing fine! I could still drive!'

Deciding that their cars were not yet ready to race, Mercedes withdrew from the AVUSrennen and Rudi wisely refrained from joining the team for its debut in the Eifel GP a week later. He made his comeback in the French GP at Montlhéry on July 1 and was in third place when his gearbox failed on the 15th lap. All the Mercedes and Auto Unions failed and the race was won, to great acclaim, by Louis Chiron, who had now joined Scuderia Ferrari and drove a P3 Alfa Romeo.

Caracciola's acid test came two weeks later in the German GP, when he returned to the Nurburg-Ring for the first time since his victory with the Alfa in 1932, and how things had changed since then! Only nine GP cars had started that race, none of them German, and now there were 19 on the grid - and six of them were from the Fatherland.

Caracciola recalled trying a white Mercedes at AVUS in May, as, of course, white was the German racing colour traditionally carried by Mercedes (the huge SSK and SSKL models had been cheerfully referred to as White Elephants). How-

ever, when the new cars had been weighed prior to the Eifel GP in June, Alfred Neubauer had been surprised to find that they were just over the 750 kg limit. Someone had the bright idea of scraping off all the white paint (and a considerable amount of filler underneath) which duly brought the W25 under the limit. The opposing Auto Unions eschewed tradition and never painted their cars white, covering them instead with a thin coat of aluminium paint. Now both the German teams presented silver cars and the term Silver Arrows was born soon thereafter.

The six Silver Arrows that lined up on the grid for the 1934 German GP comprised three, 3.9-litre Mercedes W25s of Caracciola, Luigi Fagioli and Hanns Geier (the latter a last-minute replacement for the injured Manfred von Brauchitsch, who had crashed in practice) and three, 4.4-litre Type A Auto Unions, which were in the hands of Hans Stuck, August Momberger and Ernst Burgaller.

Hoping against hope that the German cars would fail, just as they had at Montlhery, were Louis Chiron, Achille Varzi and Guy Moll in the Scuderia Ferrari P3 Alfas. Also present was Tazio Nuvolari, who had fallen out with Ferrari and was driving a works Maserati.

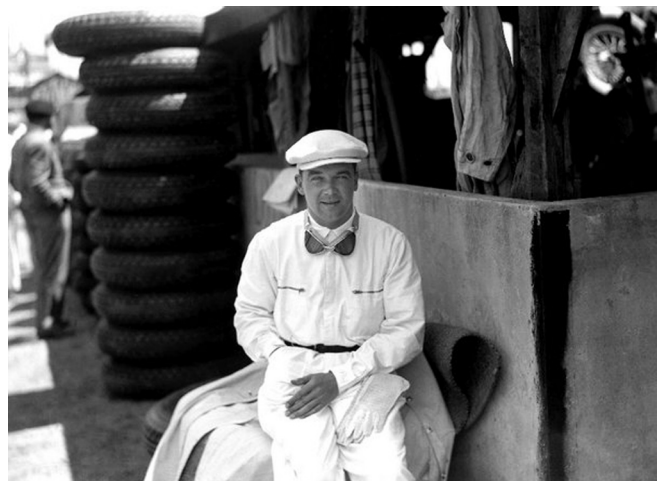
Louis Chiron made the best start and led the field away, but it was Hans Stuck in the Auto Union who was ahead at the end of the opening lap, with Caracciola's Mercedes right behind him and Varzi (Alfa Romeo) in third position. On the second tour Chiron passed Varzi, who now had Nuvolari (Maserati) on his tail. But the race was between Hans Stuck and Rudolf Caracciola and the battle between the mid-engined Auto Union and the front-engined Mercedes had the spectators hanging over the fences all round the circuit.

Rudi was the first to come in for fuel and new tyres, getting away in 1 min 10 secs. Stuck took 15 seconds longer, which cut his lead to just eight seconds. Caracciola then lapped in 10 mins 44.0 secs and, as Rodney Walkerley, *The Motor's* new Sports Editor, noted 'At half-time, during the thirteenth lap, Caracciola saw that his time had come for a tremendous spurt, by which he actually passed Stuck in a hair-raising second. The cheering of the crowd was indescribable, but terrible was the suspense, when in the following lap Stuck again returned in the lead. Two minutes passed and still nothing was to be seen of Caracciola. In his stead came Fagioli's Mercedes. It was a relief when the loudspeakers announced that Caracciola's engine had given out on the course and that he had not crashed.'

In his book *The German Grand Prix* Cyril Posthumus (who had access to some German race reports) revealed that Rudi had 'surprised Stuck on the Karussell by passing him on the outside road while the Auto Union was on the banked inner portion!' If true, this poses the idea that drifting round the Karussell on the road was faster than using the banking, a neat reversal of Rudi's 1931 theory!

But, as before, Caracciola makes no mention of this in his autobiography. Indeed, he dismissed his remarkable performance in just six lines, his main comment being, 'I had driven only half the race and again the question remained whether I could last 500 kilometres.'

Which is astonishing in view of the fact that after his Monaco crash the doctors had told him that he would never race again. Yet here he was, shattered physically with his right leg **now** two inches shorter than his left, and emotionally by the death of Charly, fighting for the lead during the first 12 laps of the German Grand Prix at the Nurburg-Ring! It was a phenomenal comeback and, although his car only lasted for half the race, Caracciola had made it absolutely clear that he was still the unchallenged King of the Nurburg-Ring.



However, this was about to change, for in 1935 two drivers - first a young unknown, then an old rival - combined to topple Caracciola from his Eifel throne, albeit temporarily. The first was Bernd Rosemeyer who, with just a couple of years on motorcycles under his belt, made his debut as a racing driver at the AVUSrennen, driving an Auto Union. He failed to finish and Caracciola can hardly have noticed him, but in his next race, the Eifel GP, young Bernd set the Grand Prix world alight with a performance that is barely credible.

Auto Union entered four of their latest B-Type cars for the race, their VI6 engines now enlarged

to 4.9 litres and giving 375 bhp. The drivers were Hans Stuck, Achille Varzi, Paul Pietsch and Bernd Rosemeyer. There were four of the latest Mercedes W25s, too, now with 3.9-litre engines producing 430 bhp and they were for Rudolf Caracciola, Luigi Fagioli, Manfred von Brauchitsch and Hermann Lang. There were also two Scuderia Ferrari P3 Alfas for Louis Chiron and Rene Dreyfus.



Rudi Caracciola. 1935 Tripoli GP

Initially, the race was dominated by Manfred von Brauchitsch, who led handsomely for the first half and after six laps was 62 seconds ahead of Caracciola. Rudi now had an Auto Union right on his tail and it must have come as a considerable shock when he realised that the driver was not Stuck or Varzi, but Rosemeyer. The shock must have turned to disbelief when Bernd, in only the second motor race of his life, proceeded to pass the King of the Nurburg-Ring on the eighth lap and show him the way round the circuit!

At the very end of the final tour Rosemeyer's inexperience caught up with him and Caracciola took advantage of it to beat him to the chequered flag by 1.9 seconds (See *Ringmeister 3*, Bernd Rosemeyer). Rudi's win was hailed as a great triumph, but he had won by the skin of his teeth and young Rosemeyer had given him the fright of his life.

Another failing of Caracciola's autobiography is that it makes no mention of this extraordinary race (nor of any others in 1935). However, in *Speed Was My Life* Alfred Neubauer recalls a fascinating vignette: 'A trivial, yet in its way revealing, incident took place that evening when Caracciola's victory was celebrated. I saw him, at one point, walk over to Rosemeyer's table and say a few words to him. I could not hear what was being said, but I had a feeling of uneasiness. Since his accident Rudi had become even more reserved than before, and there were many who thought him overbearing and arrogant. Moreover, I could well imagine his sense of triumph at having outwitted the cocksure youngster, Rosemeyer.'

'As I learned afterwards, he said to Rosemeyer rather patronisingly; "Well done, my dear fellow. But in future don't just drive round the circuit; use your head."

'And Rosemeyer, completely taken aback, found a swizzle stick pressed into his hand. For the next two years he wore nothing else in his buttonhole.'

By 1935 Rudi had made a remarkable recovery from his Monaco crash and this was in no small way due to his relationship with Baby Hoffmann, who was dividing her affections between him and Louis Chiron. Revitalised by her love and driving the superb Mercedes-Benz W25, Caracciola won no fewer than six Grands Prix and became the first European Champion. It was a stunning comeback after the catastrophes of 1933, yet all he has to say in *A Racing Driver's World* is, 'In 1935 luck was with me - with seven (sic) Grand Prix and two other races I had become German Champion and had earned the European Championship for Mercedes.'

Luck was not with him in the German GP, however. Auto Union and Mercedes fielded the same teams as for the Eifel GP, Hanns Geier being an addition to the latter and there were three Scuderia Ferrari Alfa P3s for Nuvolari, Chiron and Brivio. Caracciola led the race from the start, but by the end of lap two it was Rosemeyer who was on his tail - again - until Bernd hit a bank on lap six, losing three places when he stopped to change a wheel. Tazio Nuvolari now began his assault on Caracciola's Nurburg-Ring throne, which Rosemeyer had so ruthlessly undermined in the Eifel race.

Driving his three-year-old P3, Tazio produced a drive every bit as impudent as Rosemeyer's had been and when von Brauchitsch emerged in the lead after the pit stops, Nuvolari hunted him down mercilessly (See *Ringmeister 2*, Tazio Nuvolari).

ari). Caracciola was not having a good day, feeling unwell, according to one report, being troubled by fading brakes according to another.

Hans Stuck had made a bad start, but by lap 14 he was up to fourth place and catching Caracciola, who was losing ground to Nuvolari and race leader von Brauchitsch. As *The Autocar* reported, 'At eighteen laps the Mercedes control are not relieved by the fact that Caracciola - third - is dropping back also, so we have Nuvolari catching von Brauchitsch and now Stuck catching Caracciola. Neubauer now exhibits faster signals. There are only four laps to go... At nineteen laps Stuck still continues to catch Caracciola and at the Karussell is close behind him. Fever point once more!... Who will appear first? Here they are! Stuck has got by the Mercedes and leads by a few yards only. It is a sign of crisis when Neubauer begins to walk up and down in front of his pit.

'Now for the last lap. von Brauchitsch! A pause, here is Nuvolari, driving like a demon; but the Mercedes has gone faster still and is now 35 secs ahead. A minute and a half later Stuck comes by third, and then Caracciola as he passes his pit shakes his head and gestures that he can go no faster.'

It was on that fantastic last lap that a rear tyre on von Brauchitsch's Mercedes burst, allowing Nuvolari to score an epic victory (See *Ringmeister 2*, Tazio Nuvolari), which confirmed him as a *Ringmeister* and usurped the throne of Caracciola. Rudi would regain his throne, but not before it had been stolen again, this time by Bernd Rosemeyer.

Success in 1935 was followed by abject failure in '36 yet, in his autobiography Caracciola dismisses both seasons in just fifteen words, despite the fact that they were two of the most remarkable of his career, the first being an unqualified triumph, the second an equally unqualified disaster.

Throughout 1935 Caracciola's relationship with Baby Hoffmann blossomed without any apparent objection from Louis Chiron. Perhaps as a *quid pro quo*, Rudi encouraged Alfred Neubauer to sign Chiron to the Mercedes team for 1936, which he did.

For the new season Mercedes made the mistake of modifying their victorious W25, producing a short-chassis version powered by a 4.7-litre engine. It looked terrific and Caracciola won the opening race at Monaco, where heavy rain was the order of the day and Rudi was in his element. Although Nuvolari in the new 8C Alfa took the lead for several laps, it was *Regenmeister* Rudi who sailed his Mercedes around the waterlogged circuit to victory. He won at Tunis, too, a month later

and that was the last time he or a Mercedes saw the chequered flag that year.

Auto Union were now running the C-Type, its magnificent VI6 enlarged to six litres and producing 520 bhp. This time Rosemeyer made no mistake in the Eifel GP, producing another unbelievable performance to drive through the fog faster than seemed possible and beat Nuvolari (Alfa Romeo) by more than two minutes (See *Ringmeister 3*, Bernd Rosemeyer). Caracciola took the lead initially, only to be passed by Nuvolari and then Rosemeyer. On the fourth lap a rear shock absorber broke on the Mercedes and Rudi retired next time round.

In the German Grand Prix Mercedes fielded five cars for Caracciola, von Brauchitsch, Fagioli, Chiron and Hermann Lang, formerly Fagioli's racing mechanic who had been elevated to racing driver the year before. They were up against the four Auto Unions of Rosemeyer, Stuck, Ernst von Delius and newcomer Rudolf Hasse. Scuderia Ferrari brought along two new 12C Alfas for Nuvolari and Dreyfus and 8Cs for Brivio and Severi.

Manfred von Brauchitsch made a lightning start and led for the opening lap, but then damaged his steering in an excursion, handing the lead to Rosemeyer and Lang - youth to the fore. Caracciola never got going properly and on lap four the Mercedes stopped out on the circuit with a broken fuel pump. Rudi walked back to the pits. Meanwhile, Lang took the lead when Rosemeyer made his pit stop on lap seven, only to stop himself two laps later. He was in some distress, having broken his little finger against the side of the cockpit when changing gear. In a flash, Neubauer had him out of the Mercedes and Caracciola climbed aboard, to the boos and hisses of the spectators in the grandstand, who were unaware of Lang's predicament and angry that he was being replaced after such a fine drive.

Rudi rejoined in fourth place, which became third when Chiron stopped, but on lap 13 Mercedes' fortunes took a double hit when Chiron had a big accident on the main straight. He was lucky to escape with minor injuries. On the same lap Caracciola fell out again, when the supercharger failed on Lang's car. Nothing daunted, he took over Fagioli's machine and brought that home in fifth place. The race was won, of course, by Bernd Rosemeyer.

'A cloud hangs over the Mercedes-Benz camp,' noted *Motor Sport's* Continental Correspondent. 'Apart from the fact that the cars are not completely reliable, all is not well with the personnel. Perhaps a too-rigid discipline has resulted in smouldering resentment, but whatever it is, the team does not seem to pull as a team.'



1937 German Grand Prix. Nurburgring, Germany. 25 July 1937. Rudolf Caracciola, Mercedes-Benz

'Some people say that Caracciola is favoured above the rest of the drivers, and we all know that Fagioli has been a "rebel" in the past. Chiron does not like the behaviour of the new cars...von Brauchitsch seems to lose all interest as soon as his car gives the slightest trouble, Hermann Lang, the youngest of the team is the only one to appear at all happy...

'The scene outside the Eifelerhof Hotel in Adenau during the evening after the race reminded me of the fall of the Bastille. A vast horde of people thronged the narrow street, pressing so close to the hotel that the doors were bolted and barred. "We want Carracciola." was their oft-repeated cry. Later, an entry into the hotel was made and von Brauchitsch was almost buried under a struggling mass of autograph hunters. Caracciola was sitting quietly in a corner, and told everyone who approached him that "his brother" had gone to bed!'

The season was dominated by Bernd Rosemeyer, who won five races for Auto Union and with them the Drivers' Championship in only his second year of racing. It was an astonishing achievement and one would have thought Caracciola would have had some words of praise for

Bernd in his autobiography but no, all he writes is: 'In 1936 young Bernd Rosemeyer won victory after victory and the European Championship became his.' And that's it - no pat on the back for Rosemeyer and no word of explanation for the abject failure of the Mercedes team.

Indeed, what Caracciola leaves out of his autobiography is often more revealing than what he includes and it is hard not to ascribe an inferiority complex to him in this instance. First of all, having to fight off a complete novice on the circuit he called his own in the 1935 Eifel GP must have shaken him to the core. Had it been Nuvolari, Fagioli, Chiron or even von Brauchitsch, fair enough, but Bernd who??? And to add insult to injury Rosemeyer had then declared himself King of the Nurburg-Ring by winning the 1936 Eifel and German Grands Prix. Clearly, young Bernd had become Rudi's *bete noir*.

However, help was at hand. Before the season was over Mercedes-Benz withdrew from racing in order to re-group for 1937. They brought in a brilliant, 30 year-old engineer named Rudolf Uhlenhaut as Technical Director and, over the winter, he developed the car - the fabulous W125 - that would enable Caracciola to regain his Nurburg-Ring crown, but not just yet.

Uhlenhaut dispensed with the old, box-section chassis of the W25 and designed an oval tubular frame that was 14 ins/ 35.5 cm longer than before. Front suspension was now by wishbone and coil springs, the rear by de Dion and the engine was an improved version of the old straight-eight, but enlarged to 5.6 litres and producing, initially, a remarkable 580 bhp, with plenty more to come. The new Mercedes won first time out at Tripoli, where Hermann Lang scored the first of his hat-trick of victories there.

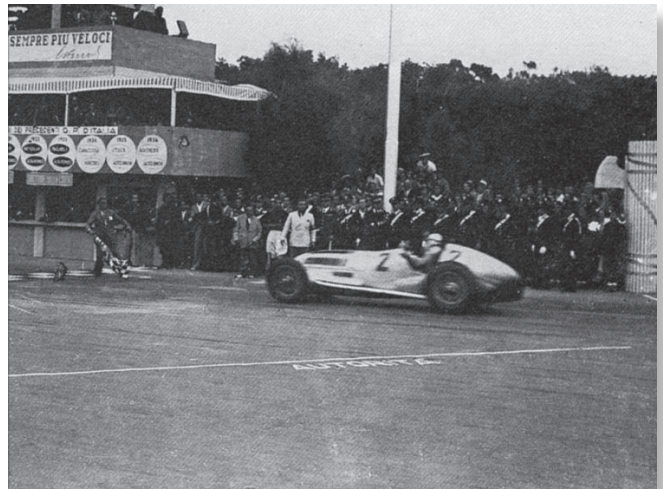
Auto Union wisely left their wonderful C-Types well alone for 1937 and sent four of them to contest the Eifel GP. For the first time at the Nurburg-Ring, the starting grid was decided by practice times and Rosemeyer won pole position with an astonishing 9 mins 57.0 secs. Beside him on the three-two-three grid were von Brauchitsch and Caracciola, with Lang and Hasse on row two. The Scuderia Ferrari Alfas of Nuvolari and Nino Farina were on row three with the Auto Union of von Delius.

Rosemeyer led from the start, but as they roared past the back of the pits into the North Turn it was the Mercedes of Caracciola in the lead. 'The speed was terrifying through the curves on the far side of the course,' wrote Rodney Walkerley in *The Motor*. 'Caracciola came along almost broadside, but straightened without effort, foot hard down into the next bend...'

His lead was short-lived, for on lap two Rosemeyer passed him with a lap in 9 mins 58.4 secs, only to be repassed almost at once. On lap three Bernd recorded 10 mins 03 secs to Caracciola's 10' 07", taking the lead again. At the end of lap four Rudi's challenge faded as he rumbled into the pits with a rear tyre in tatters. His stop for two rear wheels cost 38 seconds, but on the next lap Rosemeyer was detained for less than 30 and rejoined the race some 45 seconds ahead of Caracciola.

Bernd took the chequered flag after 10 laps having extended his lead by another five seconds. He had emulated Caracciola's feat of three wins in a row at the Nurburg-Ring, but the Mercedes W125 had proved itself to be a real threat to the Auto Union and Caracciola would finally have his revenge in the German GP

Six days after the Eifel GP, Rudi married Baby in Lugano, Switzerland. She had long ago divorced Freddie Hoffmann and when Louis Chiron made it clear that he would not marry her, she left him for the man who would. They honeymooned aboard the *Bremen* and in New York, where Mercedes and Auto Union were contesting the Vanderbilt Cup. Almost inevitably, it was won by Bernd Rosemeyer.



Above and center 1937 Italian gp - Rudi Caracciola (Mercedes-Benz W125)

Below Hitler shakes hands with Rudi (who hated the Nazis). Saluting is team manager Alfred Neubauer (Donington-Park)

But Caracciola's luck was about to change and, almost inevitably, it did so at the Nurburg-Ring where, three weeks later, he won the German Grand Prix. Rosemeyer won pole position with 9 mins 46.2 secs, no fewer than 10 seconds better than his fastest lap of the year before. Beside him were Hermann Lang with 9' 52.2" and von Brauchitsch on 9' 55.1". Caracciola and Nuvolari filled the second row, with 10' 04.0" and 10' 08.4" respectively.

As was his wont, Caracciola won the race by stealth, rather than bravado. He left the latter to Rosemeyer and Lang, who took off like scalded cats to lead the first few laps. Then early on lap four Rosemeyer hit a bank and lost a rear wheel nut. As a result the tyre shredded and he had to make a lengthy pit stop to repair the damage and replace the wheel.

Caracciola now led and was never headed for the rest of the race. After six laps the Grand Prix appeared to be a Mercedes benefit, with Caracciola leading von Brauchitsch, Lang and Dick Seaman. Sadly, on the very next lap Seaman was involved in a high-speed crash with the Auto Union of Ernst von Delius. Seaman was hospitalised with cuts and bruises, but the popular von Delius subsequently died of his injuries.

Meanwhile Rosemeyer was driving like a man possessed in an effort to make up lost time, enjoying a fierce battle with Nuvolari (Alfa Romeo) and eventually beating him to third place, behind Caracciola and von Brauchitsch.

'Rudi Caracciola did not set up any records,' noted Alfred Neubauer in *Speed Was My Life*. 'He drove an exemplary race, cool and calculated, a

tactical masterpiece that wasted not an inch on the bends and strained neither the engine or the tyres. The German Grand Prix of 1937 was his wedding present to his blonde wife, Baby. The year before it had been Bernd Rosemeyer's. That was the tenth German Grand Prix. Five of them had been won by Mercedes and on all five occasions Rudi Caracciola was the winning driver.' (Not so - Caracciola had won four for Mercedes and one for Alfa Romeo. Otto Merz had scored Mercedes' fifth victory.)

For Caracciola himself it was not just the wedding present that made the victory so sweet - he was King of the Nurburg-Ring once again, having beaten his *bete noir*, Bernd Rosemeyer, at the fourth attempt. This time he made his feelings clear in *A Racing Driver's World*: 'I had won the Grand Prix of Greater Germany and with it the coveted Adolf Hitler prize. It was a great, heavy bronze trophy... The trophy was given to me after the race at the Nurburg-Ring. Bernd Rosemeyer stood next to me. He was chewing on his cigarette and spitting out specks of tobacco. Never before had I seen him so disappointed and dejected.'

Revenge is sweet, indeed and it became even sweeter when Caracciola won three more races, to

1938 Italian GP. Caracciola's car is #12



regain the European Drivers' Championship from Rosemeyer. But feelings of revenge were swept away in January, 1938, when Bernd was killed while trying to beat Caracciola's new speed record on the Frankfurt-Darmstadt autobahn. In his autobiography Rudi recalled going to the 20th anniversary memorial service for Bernd. 'I imagined him with us again, the slim blond boy, laughing and joking in his customary fashion...

'In that hellish tempo we imposed upon each other everything was mercilessly hard. We did not give a second to each other. It was his wild, stormy youth against the experience of an opponent ten years older. I was thirty-seven then, Rosemeyer twenty-seven. He wanted to push me off my throne, whereas I wanted to sit there a while longer, at least until a new generation of racing drivers came along.' And sit there he did, until the end of the decade.

There was a new Formula in 1938, as the powers-that-be had decided that the current cars, with no limit on engine size, were becoming too fast. For 1938-39 they imposed a maximum weight of 850 kg, with a maximum engine capacity of 4.5 litres unsupercharged or 3 litres supercharged. It was no surprise that both Mercedes-Benz and Auto Union opted for the latter. Mercedes produced the W154 and Auto Union the D-Type, which was designed by Professor Robert Eberan von Eberhorst, as Professor Porsche's contract with Auto Union had expired.

There was no Eifel GP in 1938 but for the German GP Mercedes sent four cars for Caracciola, von Brauchitsch, Lang and Seaman. Auto Union were still shattered by the death of Rosemeyer, but one legend was replaced by another when Tazio Nuvolari joined the team in time for the Grand Prix. The other cars were for Stuck, Muller and Hasse, so once again it was, in reality, one Auto Union against the four Mercedes.

Caracciola qualified fourth fastest, failing to break 10 minutes yet again, but practice times were never very important to him. Hermann Lang, however, recorded a sensational 9 mins 48.4 secs, which was just 2.2 secs outside Rosemeyer's pole time the previous year in the 6-litre Auto Union. Lang led from the start, followed by Seaman, Caracciola and von Brauchitsch, Nuvolari having gone off the road on the opening lap. Caracciola was feeling unwell, however, and on lap 10 handed his car to Lang, whose own Mercedes was suffering from oiled plugs. Manfred von Brauchitsch looked set for victory until his car caught fire in the pits and so Dick Seaman inherited the lead, becoming the first Englishman to win the German GP Noth-

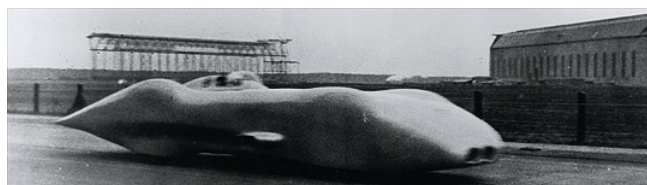
RUDOLF CARACCIOLA
FÄHRT AUF MERCEDES - BENZ
neue REKORDE!

Bei den am 28. Januar 1938 auf der Reichsautobahn Frankfurt-Darmstadt veranstalteten Rekord-Veruchsfahrten gelang es Rudolf Caracciola, Deutscher Meister und Europa-Meister 1935 und 1937, die bisherigen Rekorde in der Klasse B über den fliegenden Kilometer und die fliegende Meile weit zu überbieten und auf Mercedes-Benz folgende neue Rekorde aufzustellen:

Fliegender Kilometer 432,692 km / Std.
Fliegende Meile 432,360 km / Std.
(Vorbehaltlich der Anerkennung durch die A.A.C.C.)

Dabei erreichte der Wagen, der mit EC-Kolben, Bosch-Zündung und Continental Reifen ausgerüstet war, in einer Fahrtrichtung die unerhörte Spitzengeschwindigkeit von 436,893 km./Std., die größte Fahrgeschwindigkeit, die je auf einer Verkehrsstraße erreicht wurde. Ein neuer Beweis für die Beherrschung des Kraftfahrzeugbaues durch

MERCEDES - BENZ



ing daunted, Rudi went on to win his third Drivers' Championship.

Although Bernd Rosemeyer was no longer around to pressure him, the 38 year-old Caracciola now had two other younger men snapping at his heels, and both were in his own team. Hermann Lang and Dick Seaman were extremely talented and each knew that he had the talent to be the best. Lang made this very clear in the 1939 Eifel Grand Prix when he won pole position and the race.

No fewer than 13 Silver Arrows appeared at the Nurburg-Ring for the meeting. Both teams planned to run five drivers, but Auto Union brought seven cars and Mercedes six. For the former the drivers were to be Nuvolari, Stuck, Hasse, Muller and newcomers Ulli Bigalke and Schorsch Meier who, like Muller, was a motorcycle ace. Mercedes entered Caracciola, von Brauchitsch, Lang, Seaman and Walter Baumer.

In practice Lang won pole position with a stunning 9 mins 55.2 secs. Caracciola broke the 10-minute barrier for the first time with 9' 57.4»,

but was 0.2 secs slower than Nuvolari. (At 47, Tazio was nine years older than Rudi, but still very much a threat in the Auto Union). The Mercedes of Seaman and von Brauchitsch filled the second row with 9' 58.3» and 9' 58.9» respectively.

It seems the crowd was not as large as usual, for Adolf Hitler had proclaimed that Sunday to be Mothers' Day, and thousands of Germans spent the weekend with their families, rather than go to the Nurburg-Ring.

At the end of the opening lap Lang led by 13 seconds from von Brauchitsch, who was six seconds ahead of Caracciola. Seaman was already out of the running with a defective clutch. On lap two Caracciola went round in 9' 59.0», passing von Brauchitsch in the process, and then recorded 9' 54.0», just shy of Rosemeyer's outright record of 9' 53.4». Nuvolari now passed von Brauchitsch and Lang made an early pit stop on lap four, but the Mercedes mechanics changed his rear wheels, refuelled him and had him back in the race after 32 seconds, so he now lay second, between Caracciola and Nuvolari.

Rudi pitted on lap six, but his stop took 37 secs, which left him in third place. Next time round and Lang broke Rosemeyer's outright record with a lap in 9' 52.2". Nuvolari strove mightily, but he could do nothing about Lang, who won the race by 12 seconds from the Italian, with Caracciola third.

Still not recovered from the death of Bernd Rosemeyer, the Grand Prix world was dealt another blow in June when Dick Seaman was killed while leading the Belgian GP in the rain at Spa. In the circumstances, it was of very minor importance that Caracciola, the *Regenmeister*, should spin off the road in that race. However, when he crashed out of the French GP at Reims on the opening lap two weeks later, there were many who felt that his powers were waning under the increasing attacks of Hermann Lang, who had won the first four races of the season and was clearly the fastest driver in the world now. Characteristically however, Rudi re-asserted his authority in the next race - the German Grand Prix at the Nurburg-Ring.

By now the political situation was such that it was clear that this was not only going to be the last German GP of the decade, but for some time to come and maybe forever, unless Adolf Hitler came to his senses. This did not prevent a large crowd from attending the race, although in *The Motor*, Rodney Walkerley noted that it was 'much smaller than usual - at least 250,000 people.'

Mercedes entered only four cars this time, for Caracciola, Lang, von Brauchitsch and Heinz

Brendel, but Auto Union presented five, for Nuvolari, Stuck, Muller, Hasse and Meier. The 'opposition' comprised an 8C Alfa for Raymond Sommer and two 3-litre, eight-cylinder Maseratis for Luigi Villoresi and Paul Pietsch, formerly of Auto Union. The rest were just also-rans.

As expected, Hermann Lang put his W154 on pole position with a stunning lap in 9' 43.1". Mercedes filled the front row, with von Brauchitsch (9'51.0") and Caracciola (9' 56.0") beside Lang. On the second row were Muller (9' 59.3") and Brendel, who had recorded a fine 10' 09.4". Nuvolari had a troubled practice and could only do 10' 11.2". Paul Pietsch was also on the third row, having done an excellent 10' 14.0" in the Maserati.

On race day there was typical Eifel weather, with heavy clouds and mists over the forests and rain was very much on the cards. Manfred von Brauchitsch made one of his demon starts, but as the cars headed into the North Turn it was Lang who led, to such effect that he flashed past the pits 28 seconds ahead of von Brauchitsch. Then came Muller and, surprisingly, Paul Pietsch, who was ahead of Caracciola.

'Right from the start the race went crazy,' wrote Rodney Walkerley in *The Motor*. 'Nothing seemed to go according to plan. Troubles smote all and sundry. First of all, on the second lap, Pietsch passed nearly everyone and went into second place and sat just behind Lang, the Maserati emitting a beautiful scream. Then, as they swept on to the plateau at the start, Lang stopped for plugs. Pietsch flashed past into the lead and there, on his tail, sat Nuvolari, shaking his fist and bursting himself to get by... Nuvolari duly got past Pietsch in the next few miles and led the race, so the order was - Nuvolari, Muller, Caracciola, Pietsch.'

The damp weather was playing havoc with carburettor settings and von Brauchitsch, Pietsch and Nuvolari were all affected. On lap six Tazio stopped for new plugs, allowing Rudi to take the lead. Stuck had retired with a broken fuel pipe, Brendel crashed on lap four and von Brauchitsch was sidelined with a broken fuel pipe two laps later. This left Caracciola alone to do battle with four Auto Unions, and it was raining.

The *Regenmeister* stopped for tyres, fuel and plugs on lap nine and then Muller stopped also, but whereas the Auto Union was stationary for just 40 seconds, it was 1 min 21 secs before the

Mercedes was on its way again. Hasse now led, with Muller second, Caracciola third and Nuvolari fourth, but with softer plugs in the Mercedes the worsening conditions played right into Carac-

ciola's soft hands. He caught Muller on lap 11 and Hasse the next time round, just before the latter went off the road. Schorsch Meier had a stub axle break on his Auto Union on lap 11 and then on lap 19 Nuvolari's Auto Union blew up, and so of the nine Silver Arrows that had started there were just two remaining. At the end of the 18th lap Caracciola made a 17-second stop for fuel and rejoined the race 13 second ahead of Muller. Two laps later Muller, too, stopped for a top-up and the race was Rudi's.

At last he found something to say about the Nurburg-Ring in his autobiography: 'My heart was dancing,' he wrote, 'I heard the high, singing, metallic sound of my car and I was driving on my beloved Nurburg-Ring, the fastest record lap to victory (sic) - my sixth victory in the German Grand Prix.'

His fastest lap wasn't a record by any means. He completed the 20th in 10' 24.2", which was the fastest of the day, to be sure, due to the very slippery conditions, which also meant that the Mercedes-Benz W154 - the fastest car of the 1930s - produced the slowest race average since the 750 kg Formula had begun in 1934, Rudi completing the 22 laps at 75.31 mph/121.2 kph.

'Caracciola ended his long run of bad luck by a masterly victory for Mercedes,' noted *Motor*

Sport. 'He not only drove with all his old skill on the slippery course, but won his victory by splendid tactics, using only just sufficient speed to keep his rivals at bay.'

That, of course, was so typical of Rudolf Caracciola. While the likes of Rosemeyer, Nuvolari and von Brauchitsch could be almost guaranteed to produce fireworks in the cockpit, employing lightning reflexes and an acute sense of balance to keep the car pointing anywhere but straight ahead, Caracciola would win almost by stealth, his driving creamy smooth and unremarkable except for its phenomenal speed and consistency. And it paid off handsomely, for of all the drivers of the 1930s he was by far the most successful, winning 15 Grands Prix from 52 starts and three European Drivers' Championships into the bargain.

His victory in the 1939 German GP was the last of his career and the last German GP for 11 years, because Adolf Hitler did not come to his senses and brought about a global catastrophe a few weeks later. As a very minor detail, he also brought to a close the first chapter in the history of the fabulous Nurburg-Ring and it was entirely appropriate that the man who won the very first race in that chapter should also win the last. It was his ninth victory in 18 starts and the King of the Kings was back on his throne.

CARACCIOLA AT THE RING

YEAR	EVENT	LAPS	CAR	#	RESULT
1927	Inaugural Meeting	12 (N&S)	Mercedes-Benz S	1	1
	Grand Prix	18 (N&S)	Mercedes-Benz S	1	DNF
1928	Grand Prix	18 (N&S)	Mercedes-Benz SS (with Christian Werner)	6	1
1929	Grand Prix Touring Cars	18 (N&S) 8 Hours	Mercedes-Benz SSK Mercedes-Benz Nurburg	2	DNF 1
1931	Grand Prix	22 (N)	Mercedes-Benz SSKL	8	1
1932	Eifel GP	14	Alfa Romeo 8C Monza	14	1
	Grand Prix	25	Alfa Romeo P3	2	1
1934	Grand Prix	25	Mercedes-Benz W25	6	DNF
1935	Eifel GP	11	Mercedes-Benz W25	5	1
	Grand Prix	22	Mercedes-Benz W25	5	3rd
1936	Eifel GP	10	Mercedes-Benz W25	1	DNF
	Grand Prix	22	Mercedes-Benz W25 (with Luigi Fagioli)	12	5th
1937	Eifel GP	10	Mercedes-Benz W125	6	2nd
	Grand Prix	22	Mercedes-Benz W125	12	1
1938	Grand prix	22	Mercedes-Benz W154 (with Hermann Lang)	10	2nd
1939	Eifel GP	10	Mercedes-Benz W154	12	3rd
	Grand Prix	22	Mercedes-Benz W154	12	1



RINGMEISTER

2

TAZIO NUVOLARI



1931 - 1939

Tazio Nuvolari's reputation as a Ringmeister rests principally on one remarkable performance, his victory with the P3 Alfa Romeo in the German Grand Prix of 1935. That was one of the greatest upsets in racing history and it makes him something of a conundrum, for the Alfa was by then in its fourth season, yet in 1938 and '39, when he was driving the state-of-the-art Auto Union, he was unable to win either the Eifel or the German GP, his best result being second in the 1939 Eifel race.

He first appeared at the Ring in 1931, driving a straight-eight Alfa Romeo 8C, the only Alfa in the Grand Prix that year. It was raining heavily as the cars left the grid and neither Nuvolari nor anyone else could do anything about Rudolf Caracciola in the huge, SSKL Mercedes, but for some laps Tazio had a fine battle with Luigi Fagioli (Maserati), as W. F. Bradley reported in *The Autocar*:

'Soon we ceased to be so intensely interested for the moment in Caracciola, but turned our attention to the struggle for second position. Despite his daring, Fagioli could not close up on the German, and astern he was being threatened by Nuvolari who, from seventh place on the first lap, had become fourth on the next two rounds, and on the fourth was lying third, right in the wash of the Maserati. It was thrilling to watch the crimson and the dark red Italian cars hurtling down the straightaway at over a hundred, a column of water rising from each wheel; to see the drivers brake and change down for the concreted grandstand bend and follow them downhill until they disappeared a mile away across country.

'Closing up inch by inch, Nuvolari flashed past his compatriot immediately in front of the grandstands at the end of the seventh round. He held his place for a full round, then lost it to Fagioli, while on the tenth lap both men had to give way to the tempestuous onslaught of Louis Chiron who, though playing for safety at the outset, had now thrown away caution and was seeking to wrest the lead from Caracciola.'

Fagioli later went missing, but his team-mate Rene Dreyfus then stopped at the pits to report that Luigi's Maserati had come to a halt with a stripped third gear. Nuvolari held third place behind Caracciola and Chiron until the last lap, when he was passed by his great rival, Achille Varzi. Driving his Bugatti superbly, Varzi set a new record lap in the process, with a time of 11 mins 48 secs.

Nuvolari was back at the Ring for the 1932 Grand Prix and this time Caracciola was his team-mate, Rudi having joined Alfa Romeo following the withdrawal from racing of Mercedes-Benz. Rudi had already won the Eifel GP in May, when his 8C Monza was the only Alfa present, but for the main event Alfa entered three P3s, for Caracciola, Nuvolari and Baconin Borzacchini.

Their only real opposition came from the works Bugattis of Louis Chiron, Achille Varzi and Rene Dreyfus, but that was reduced when Varzi withdrew before the race. Despite this, some 150,000 spectators turned up and were rewarded with a pretty boring GP, which Caracciola won with ease.

He led from the start and although Nuvolari put on a spurt and passed him, to lead the race after 10 laps, Tazio 'did not seem to be driving with his usual vim', as W. F. Bradley noted in *The Autocar*. This was because Caracciola's victory was a *fait accompli*, as Alfa Romeo's Team Manager, Aldo Giovannini, had decided that it would be good for Alfa sales in Germany if a German driver won the German GP. Just to make the point, when Nuvolari stopped for fuel and new tyres it took the normally very efficient Alfa mechanics 2 mins 40 secs to get him back into the race, whereas Caracciola's stop took just 1 min 35 secs. Tazio made his displeasure known with glares and curses but, no doubt mindful of Caracciola's generous behaviour in the recent Monaco GP (See Ringmeister 1, Rudolf Caracciola), he made no complaint afterwards. He completed the race in second place, 30 seconds in arrears. He also set a new lap record with a time of

10 mins 49.4 secs. And Borzacchini finished third, making it a splendid 1,2,3 for Alfa Romeo.

Writing in *L'Auto Italiana*, journalist Corrado Filippini noted that, 'Alfa Romeo's victory proves one thing: that the Italian cars are absolutely the best. On the journey home from Nurburg Nuvolari, who is certainly no chatterbox, told us that winning is not very difficult for the drivers of the Alfa Romeo 2700 because there are no cars capable of challenging them. Nuvolari told us that at this point he feels the master of the field and starts confidently... So much so that Nuvolari suggests, with an air of coquetry, that he almost wishes that one or other of the manufacturers could produce a new type of car - then the races might become more interesting!'

Two years hence, Tazio's wish would come true, and in no uncertain fashion, for Mercedes-Benz and Auto Union would enter the fray at the start of the new, 750 kg Formula. Meanwhile, in 1933 Nuvolari entered the Eifel GP for the first time but as Alfa Romeo had been nationalised at the beginning of the year, he was now driving for Scuderia Ferrari. The company had pulled out of competition and handed over its Racing Department to Enzo Ferrari. But not quite, for Enzo did not get the wonderful P3s - he had to make do with Monzas, one of which Nuvolari drove at the Ring.

As Hitler's Nazi Party was now in power the event was graced, if that is the word, by the presence of Reichsminister Hermann Goering who, to open the proceedings, made a long speech extolling Germany's friendship towards all nations! The spectators who thronged the circuit were sadly disappointed by the absence of their great hero, Rudolf Caracciola, as the acknowledged Ringmeister (he had already won an astonishing six races there) was unable to take part. He had joined forces with Louis Chiron for the 1933 season and they had bought a brace of Monza Alfas, only for Rudi to crash badly during practice for the Monaco GP.

Chiron entered his Monza for the Eifel race, providing Nuvolari's main opposition, together with the Mercedes SSKL of Manfred von Brauchitsch and the Monza Alfa of Piero Taruffi. The French champion (winner of the German GP in 1929) led for the first three laps and put up a spirited fight with Nuvolari for the lead until lap seven, when his Alfa's fuel tank sprang a leak, forcing him to stop for repairs. This allowed von Brauchitsch and Taruffi to pass him and Nuvolari ran out an easy winner, almost six minutes ahead of the big Mercedes. Reichsminister Goering congratulated Nuvolari on his victory and then made



Tazio Nuvolari on a Bianchi motorcycle

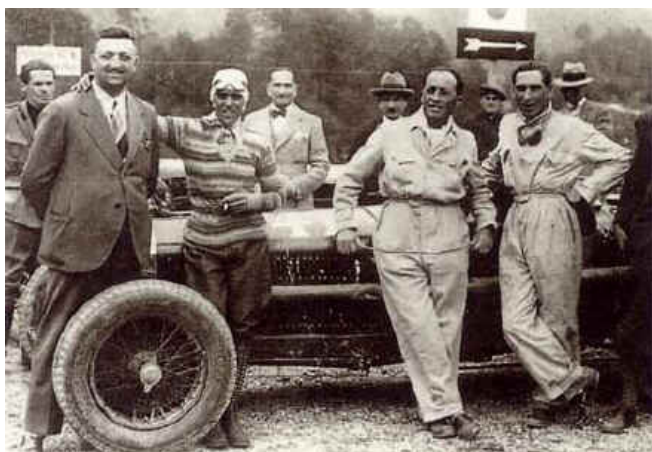


Driving the Bianchi 350 at Monza, (Lesmo turn) in 1925

another speech, saying how happy he was that the Italian had won.

This win apart, things did not go well for Scuderia Ferrari and the Monza Alfas, to such an extent that Nuvolari walked out of his contract after failures in the GPs of Penya Rhin and Marne and joined Maserati. To rub salt in the wound he won his next race, the Belgian GP at Spa and was later victorious in the Coppa Acerbo and the Nice GP. All this proved very embarrassing to Alfa Romeo and six P3 Alfas quickly found their way to Modena.

But Nuvolari had burnt his bridges with Enzo Ferrari, so he stayed with Maserati for 1934 and found himself up against the new racing cars he had wished for a couple of years earlier. In response to the demands of Germany's new Chancellor, Adolf Hitler, Mercedes-Benz - the oldest car manufacturer in the world returned to Grand Prix racing and the challenge was also taken up by the newest, Auto Union, a company formed in 1932 by the amalgamation of Audi, Horch, Wanderer and



Tazio Nuvolari with Enzo Ferrari

DKW Professor Ferdinand Porsche produced a design for a mid-engined, V16 racing car, which became the Auto Union and joined Mercedes in the battle for supremacy on the race tracks.

Surprisingly, neither team sought the services of either Nuvolari or Varzi, who were a) undoubtedly the finest drivers around at the time, with Caracciola's return still in question and b) available. Equally surprising was Alfred Neubauer's decision to sign Luigi Fagioli to the Mercedes team. Fagioli was fast and aggressive, certainly, but no one (except the man himself) considered him to be the equal of the other two Italians. Nuvolari got his first look at the Auto Union at AVUS, where he finished fifth in the Maserati. Enzo Ferrari had his revenge on Tazio, as the race was a great success for the Scuderia, with Guy Moll and Achille Varzi finishing first and second in the Alfas.

Mercedes-Benz made their debut in the Eifel GP at the Nurburg-Ring where they won first time out. Nuvolari's Maserati failed after seven laps. He had better luck in the German GP, finishing fourth, but he was still behind a Scuderia Ferrari Alfa, that of Louis Chiron. And ahead of them both were two German cars, the Auto Union of the victorious Hans Stuck and the Mercedes of Luigi Fagioli. The writing was on the wall for the Italians, and Nuvolari and Varzi took a close look.

Socially, the two men got along pretty well and, back in 1928, had joined forces, buying two Bugattis and racing as a private team. Their rivalry on the track was such, however, that this was never going to work and Varzi soon went his own way, vowing never to be on the same team as Nuvolari again. Looking to 1935, both he and Nuvolari knew that Mercedes were going to retain Fagioli and would not employ another Italian. But Auto Union were seriously short of a great driver (pace Hans Stuck) so both men looked towards

Chemnitz, rather than Unterturkheim, for future employment.

Varzi was quickest off the mark, doing numerous laps in an Auto Union at Monza in September, where the team was testing prior to the Italian GP. It was Nuvolari's turn during practice for the Spanish GP in September and a week later at Brno. He was very impressed with the V16, but so was Varzi and, more importantly, Auto Union had been sufficiently impressed with him that they gave him an official reception in Chemnitz in November.

Nuvolari's hopes were finally dashed early in December when he received a letter from Dr Richard Voelter, the team's Press and Public Relations Officer, informing him that 'certain other drivers we have signed for 1935 have expressed doubts on the subject of your engagement.' That could only mean Hans Stuck and Achille Varzi, who had clearly persuaded Professor Porsche and Team Manager Willy Walb that with Varzi on board, they did not need Nuvolari.

With Varzi gone from Scuderia Ferrari the team was left with two French drivers, Louis Chiron and Rene Dreyfus, which did not sit well with Italy's dictator, Benito Mussolini. He made it very clear that he wanted Ferrari and Nuvolari to kiss and make up and, just in case Tazio did not get the message, he put up a prize of 50,000 lire for the Italian Drivers' Championship, which was open only to Italian drivers in Italian cars. Nuvolari led a modest life, so it was not so much the money which won him over, as the appeal to his patriotism that was made by Enzo Ferrari and Vittorio Jano, designer of the now legendary P3 Alfa Romeo. Ferrari had lost Varzi to Auto Union and now he and Nuvolari had to admit that they needed each other. Tazio signed with the Scuderia for 1935. In the end, it was he who got the better deal, for although Varzi won three major races for Auto Union in 1935 and '36, in the same period Nuvolari won seven for Scuderia Ferrari, including the one that would make him a legend at the Nurburg-Ring and give him the title that would never be bestowed upon Varzi - that of Ringmeister.

By the time the teams arrived at the Nurburg-Ring at the end of July Mercedes-Benz were on a roll, having entered seven races to date and won them all. This was in no small way due to the wonderful renaissance of Rudolf Caracciola, who had made a remarkable recovery from his Monaco crash. He had won four of those seven races, including the Eifel GP, showing that the first -and so far the only - Ringmeister was back at the top of his form. Rudi must have been everyone's sen-

timental favourite to win the German Grand Prix, for the fourth time.

Nuvolari was having a pretty good season with Scuderia Ferrari, having won four races. However, there had been no German opposition and where the German teams had been present his best result had been third (behind the Mercedes of Fagioli and Caracciola) in the Penya Rhin GP. At the Nurburg-Ring, the red cars were outnumbered nine to three by the silver ones. The simple truth was that the supercharged Alfas were no match for the supercharged Silver Arrows despite the fact that they now had Dubonnet front suspension and that the engines in the P3s of Nuvolari and Chiron, which had been enlarged to 3.8 litres in time for the French GP at Montlhery, were retained for the German GP. (The correct capacity was a contentious issue for many years as it was widely believed that all the Scuderia Ferrari Alfas were powered by the 3.2-litre engines in this race. The use of the larger units was eventually confirmed by the eminent Alfa Romeo historian, Luigi Fusi). Even so, the P3s were still down on power compared to the Silver Arrows, their straight-eights producing 330 bhp, as opposed to the 375 bhp of the 5-litre, V16 Auto Union and the 430 bhp of the 3.9-litre straight-eight of the W25 Mercedes-Benz.

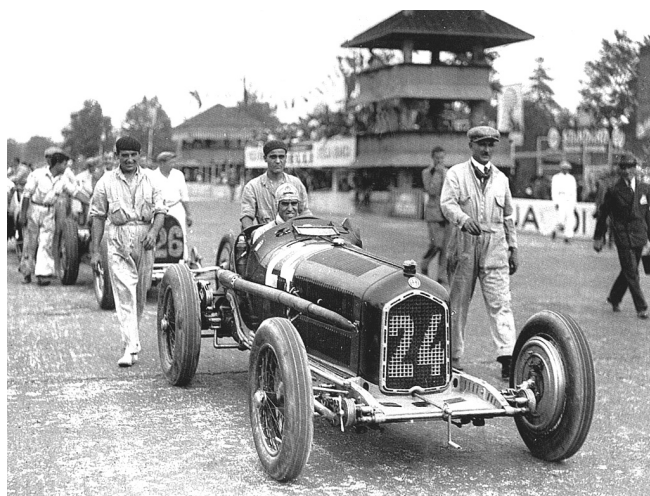
Scuderia Ferrari got the best and the worst of the draw for starting positions. Nuvolari found himself in the centre of the front row, between Hans Stuck (Auto Union) and privateer Renate Balestrero (Alfa Romeo), and Antonio Brivio (3.2-litre Alfa Romeo) was right at the back on row eight. Manfred von Brauchitsch (Mercedes) was on row two; Chiron and Caracciola on row three and Fagioli (Mercedes), Rosemeyer and Varzi (Auto Unions) on row five.

In *The Autocar*, W.F. Bradley set the scene: 'The cars are pushed up to the start as files of Nazi troopers parade and impressive anthems blare from the loudspeakers. They are arrayed upon the grid, while the usual murmur of excitement from the serried crowds grows louder and louder. But soon, as 11 am, the hour of the start, approaches, all other sounds are drowned by the roar of exhausts as engines are started. In a few seconds even these give place to the shrill sounds of the Mercedes superchargers, and then an electric signal - similar to a traffic light - releases the champing cars.'

'There is never a dull moment at the Nurburg-Ring,' continued Bradley, 'for though the lap measures 14.2 miles there are announcing stations at several points around the course, notably at the famous Karussell hairpin... Nor are the loudspeakers the only source of information, for an ingenious

score board with changing numbers indicates to the people at the grandstand the order in which cars pass at a point about two miles distant, before they come into sight. A shrill scream is heard in the distance, and Caracciola's silver car flashes into sight, already leading from Nuvolari by 12 secs.'

Despite his fine start, Nuvolari was soon swallowed up by Bernd Rosemeyer (Auto Union), Luigi Fagioli (Auto Union) and Louis Chiron, (Alfa Romeo). Scuderia Ferrari's hopes were dented on the opening lap when the final drive on Brivio's car failed. Things went from bad to worse on lap



1932 Italian GP - Tazio Nuvolari (Alfa Romeo)



five when Chiron's car suffered the same fate. Happily unaware that he was now on his own, Tazio Nuvolari began his assault on the leaders.

'Nuvolari is increasing speed!' wrote W.F. Bradley. 'On the ninth lap he is up to second place, with von Brauchitsch pressing him hard. As they come back behind the pits the Mercedes gets by again, but the announcer at the Karussell, almost incoherent with excitement, tells us that at that point the Italian has retaken second place and is close on Caracciola's heels.

'The excitement at the grandstands is indescribable. People stand up and none has time to cry "Sit down!" now. Here they are! Nuvolari leads! Rosemeyer is second! Rosemeyer - he has passed Caracciola. "Caratsch" is on his tail, and von Brauchitsch wheel-to-wheel behind. There they go down the valley. It is tremendous. Now von Brauchitsch is past Caracciola, and Rosemeyer worries Nuvolari's rear wheels. Gone! It is a relief to sit back for a while after those crowded moments of excitement.'

On lap nine Nuvolari set fastest lap of the day with 10 mins 57.4 mph, the first time the Ring had been officially lapped in under 11 minutes. This record lasted precisely one lap, for Rosemeyer then reduced it to 10' 55.1". The relief that Bradley wrote of did not last long, either, for at the end of the eleventh lap - half-distance - all four leading cars stopped at the pits, Nuvolari being followed in by Rosemeyer, von Brauchitsch and Caracciola, to the great delight of all in the grandstand. The Mercedes and Auto Union pitwork was a model of efficiency: von Brauchitsch was away after just 47 seconds and Caracciola after 67. Rosemeyer was halted for 1 min 15 secs, but poor Nuvolari's stop took an eternity. As Louis Chiron gave him a drink and washed his face, the handle on the fuel pump broke off, so the mechanics had to grab churns and pour the fuel into the funnel while a furious Nuvolari danced up and down and waved his arms about in exasperation. However, his Alfa Romeo was fitted with Englebert's special 'Nurburg-Ring' tyres, which had 6 mm treads instead of the usual 4 mm. This was to be a crucial factor in the outcome of the race. He finally shot back into the fray after 2 mins 14 secs, now in sixth place.

To the spectators (not to mention the Mercedes and Auto Union teams) it must have seemed as though Nuvolari was out of contention, for that

Above Tazio Nuvolari and Eugenio Siena, Berlin, 1933
Center Tazio shaking hands with the King of Italy
Below 1935 Tazio wins at Nurburgring

disastrous pit stop had lost him 87 seconds to von Brauchitsch, who was now in what was surely a secure lead, with Caracciola backing him up. Unfortunately for Manfred, Tazio didn't see it that way and the next time he passed the pits he was in second place! He had overtaken Stuck, Caracciola, Fagioli and Rosemeyer (the latter making for his pit with engine problems) in that one fantastic lap, which must stand as one of the all-time great laps of the Nurburg-Ring. Would that there had been a cine camera mounted on the Alfa!

But von Brauchitsch was no easy prey for Nuvolari. He had won the Eifel GP for Mercedes the previous year and was not about to let the German GP slip through his fingers. After the twelfth lap he had a lead of 1 min 9 secs. He then set a new lap record with a time of 10 mins 30 secs and after 15 laps had extended his lead over Nuvolari to 1 min 27 secs. Then the gap started to come down as Nuvolari, secure in the knowledge that his tyres would last the distance, drove like one inspired and von Brauchitsch, whose style was never going to win any prizes for smoothness, wore the rubber on his rear tyres nearer and nearer to the canvas.

At the end of lap 16 the Mercedes was 1 min 17 secs ahead of the Alfa, then the gap was 63 secs, then 47, then 43 and then, after 20 of the 22 laps it was down to 32 secs. In the Mercedes pits Team Manager Alfred Neubauer was keeping his man advised of his lead, well aware that von Brauchitsch was harder on his tyres than most, but knowing that a pit stop would hand the race to Nuvolari. He must have been in two minds when Manfred gained three seconds on his pursuer on the penultimate tour. Surely, not even Nuvolari could make up 35 seconds in one lap, but would the tyres on the Mercedes survive the pounding von Brauchitsch was giving them?

The answer Neubauer was dreading came from the announcer at the Karussell, who belated into his microphone that a rear tyre had burst asunder. Going into the Karussell for the last time, the left rear on the Mercedes gave up the ghost and within moments Nuvolari was ahead. The news was received in stunned silence in the grandstand and pits. Nuvolari took the chequered flag and was followed home by Hans Stuck (Auto Union) and Rudolf Caracciola (Mercedes-Benz), with Bernd Rosemeyer (Auto Union) in fourth place.

'But one more scene is to be played in this finest of all races,' wrote W.F. Bradley, 'von Brauchitsch is signalled on the indicator board. All hats go off, every man begins to cheer and clap, long before he comes into sight! von Brauchitsch, leader till five

miles from the finish, brings his gallant Mercedes over the line on the rim! von Brauchitsch climbs from his car. He is crying like a child. So ends a drama.'

So Tazio Nuvolari became King of the Nurburg-Ring, but such had been the dominance of Mercedes that season that no one had considered anything but a Mercedes victory and Major Adolf Huhnelein was going to have some explaining to do to his Fuhrer. More to the immediate point, the officials had, of course, brought along a record of the German National Anthem, Deutschland uber Alles, to be played over the loudspeakers after the German victory, but now that Nuvolari had won, there was an embarrassing silence, as the Italian National Anthem was not to hand. But Tazio put one over the Germans here, too, as he always took a record of the Marcia Reale to the circuits for luck and soon produced it for the announcer's gramophone. To their credit, the Germans gave it, and him, a roaring reception, for he was enormously popular in Germany, as everywhere else, and he had scored a truly sensational victory.

Not for the first time, countless people were left asking, "How does he do it?" Writing in *The Motor* a week after the race, Rodney Walkerley thought he knew: 'Cannot let the German Grand Prix fade into memory without a mead (sic) of praise for that magician Nuvolari. Last year there were those who wagged sage heads, saying, "Nuvolari is not what he was, poor chap," and mentioned his nasty smash in the Alessandria race as a cause. Now 300,000 people flock to the Nurburgring to see Mercedes, or possibly Auto Union, wipe the circuit with the two out-of-date Alfas, and Nuvolari calmly wins the race.

'How is it done?... The explanation seems to be - corners. Give Nuvolari a corner, and he will hurtle round it quite a good deal faster than any one else on earth, or so it seems.'

Writing in *Motor Sport* a few months later, Adrian Conan Doyle revealed that he had raised the matter with the man himself. 'One of our most interesting experiences in Germany was a little private lunch with Nuvolari. We found him a most pleasant and unaffected man, in sharp contrast to many lesser known drivers. During lunch, he talked at considerable length about physical strength in relation to the modern Grand Prix car. He says that when he first started motor racing, he found that with his slight build, he had not the physical strength to "manhandle" a racing car on bend or corner and therefore he decided to let the machine always enter a corner at a "natural" speed, in other words, let the natural smoothness and balance of



the car control the man. He has brought this act to perfection, a superb co-ordination of man and machine.'

The man from Mantua was indeed tiny, only 5 ft 3 ins tall and a stranger to the weighing machine, but already he was known as The Great Little Man, and with good reason, for he was a giant behind the wheel of a racing car. As he revealed, he found it better to let the car do the work and is generally credited with inventing the four-wheel drift. That said, he was always remarkably busy at the wheel and W.F. Bradley likened him to 'a jockey whipping a tired horse', contrasting him with Rudi Caracciola, whom he described as 'making a fast run for the pleasure of the thing.'

The remarkable P3 Alfa was finally replaced towards the end of 1935 with Jano's new creation, the 8C35, employing the 3.8-litre engine which Nuvolari and Chiron had used in the French and German GPs. In 1936 Jano produced a 12-cylinder, 4.1-litre unit, producing 370 bhp for this chassis, which became the 12C. For some reason Jano eschewed the low lines of the Mercedes and Auto Unions, and the new Alfa was a double-decker bus in comparison, standing very tall.

Nevertheless, Nuvolari drove the 8C superbly in the rain at Monaco, leading Caracciola for many laps until his brakes let him down and he had to resign himself to fourth place. Despite his undoubted genius, Nuvolari was undeniably accident-prone, his career being a chapter of accidents punctuated by victories. He crashed heavily during practice for the Tripoli GP, but against medical advice took part in the race - in a plaster cast. He finished seventh. He then uncharacteristically obeyed his doctors and took a month off. Refreshed, he turned up at Barcelona for the Penya Rhin GP and drove the new Alfa 12C to victory, soundly beating the Silver Arrows and setting fastest lap.

With this in mind, he was a hot favourite to repeat his sensational German GP win when the teams assembled at the Ring for the Eifel GP in June. Scuderia Ferrari entered four cars, two 12Cs for Nuvolari and Antonio Brivio and two 8Cs for Nino Farina and Franco Severi.

European Champion Rudolf Caracciola had won for Mercedes at Monaco and Tunis and his popularity, together with that of Nuvolari, brought a huge crowd of around 300,000 people to the Ring. 'When the first motorcycle race started at

8 am,' wrote Rodney Walkerley in The Motor, 'the grandstands and enclosures were already well filled and as the morning wore on they became jammed full and movement was almost impossible. The scene was incredible to English eyes.'



The previous day had been hot and sunny, but by 10 am the clouds had descended on the Eifel and the rain had begun to fall. During the morning a thick fog enveloped the Ring, but by the time the GP began the fog had lifted, but the rain was falling again.

Caracciola made a superb start from the third row and revelling in his wet weather skills, led Nuvolari across the line by 4 secs at the end of the opening lap, with Rosemeyer's Auto Union a further nine seconds back. Two laps later and Tazio had forced his way past the Mercedes between Breidscheid and the Karussell, and Caracciola was now being harried by Rosemeyer. On lap four Bernd electrified the spectators by passing regemmeister Caracciola and leading him across the line by four seconds, but still 18 seconds behind Nuvolari. Next time round (half-distance) and Bernd had reduced the deficit to 9 seconds, but Caracciola pulled into the pits to retire with a broken shock absorber.

Nuvolari managed to hold off Rosemeyer until the beginning of lap seven, when the extra power of the Auto Union told and it overtook the Alfa Romeo as they passed the stands, the roar of the cars' 28 cylinders being drowned out by the cheers of the delirious spectators.

Then, as Rodney Walkerley reported, 'the fog rode up the valleys and blotted out the Nurburg-Ring. I have never seen a more amazing thing. In the grandstands it was impossible to see across the track to read the scoreboard. Drivers passed, cutting-in and out, straining their eyes into the swirling fog.'

And that was the beginning of Bernd Rosemeyer's astonishing 'blind drive' to victory (See Ringmeister 3 - Bernd Rosemeyer) and there was nothing that Nuvolari could do about it. He was happy to finish second, more than two minutes behind the Auto Union.

And it was Rosemeyer who dominated the German GP a few weeks later, beating team-mate Hans Stuck to the flag by over four minutes. Nuvolari and Rene Dreyfus had 12C Alfas, with 8Cs for Brivio and Severi. Manfred von Brauchitsch led for the first lap, pursued by Rosemeyer, Hermann Lang (Mercedes), Caracciola, Stuck, Nuvolari, Fagioli (Auto Union) and Louis Chiron, who had joined his great friend Caracciola at Mercedes for 1936, but was none too happy in the final version of the W25 (but then nor was anyone else).

Above left The papers celebrate his victory at the Vanderbilt Cup

Below left Monza, 1938- a great win driving the Auto Union

Below right Donington, 1938- during practice Tazio hits a deer



On lap two von Brauchitsch hit the bank somewhere and stopped at the Karussell to check the steering of his Mercedes, as the others roared past. Caracciola dropped out on lap four and by lap six Rosemeyer was securely in the lead, more than 30 seconds ahead of Lang, with Nuvolari some 45 secs further back. By lap 12 Tazio was up to second place, but that was as good as it got, for on lap 15 the Alfa's rear axle failed just after the Karussell and Nuvolari's race was run.

He signed with Scuderia Ferrari again for 1937, and in March Alfa Romeo signalled their intent of returning to racing by acquiring 80% of the shares in Scuderia Ferrari. Tazio's first race of the year was to be in Turin in April, but he did not take part as he rolled the Alfa in practice, suffering concussion and a broken rib. He raced in Tripoli on May 9, but retired.

Later that month Professor Ferdinand Porsche contacted Tazio personally to see if he might be interested in joining Auto Union. Achille Varzi had left the team, his life tragically spiralling out of control due to his addiction to morphia, and Bernd Rosemeyer had positively welcomed the idea of being joined by the little Italian, whom he admired enormously. Tazio was tempted, but decided to honour his contract with Ferrari (this time!).

Two 12Cs were entered by the Scuderia in the Eifel GP, for Nuvolari and Farina. The latter retired with engine trouble after only a few laps, but Nuvolari completed the race, although he was never in contention, Rodney Walkerley noting that 'he was outpaced on speed and acceleration, but the crowd cheered him to the echo - the grand spectacle of the master driver keeping up with the faster cars by dint of sheer brilliance of driving - seventh after two laps, he gradually picked up places until he ran fifth.' And that was where he finished. Although he won the Milan GP a week later, that would be his only victory of the season.

And his private life was in turmoil, for first of all his father died and then, when he was on his way by sea to America for the Vanderbilt Cup, he received the news that his oldest son, Giorgio, had succumbed to the heart problems that had plagued him for all of his brief life. Nuvolari tried to bury his sorrow in his racing, and turned up for the German GP on July 25.

The Auto Unions, with Bernd Rosemeyer in his pomp, were hot favourites, while the Alfas were no longer competitive against the latest, 6-litre version of the C-type and the new Mercedes-Benz W125. In *The Motor*, Rodney Walkerley opined that the 12C Alfas 'were perhaps the most stable cars racing, but they are admittedly out-matched

in acceleration and speed on fast circuits.

On the Nurburg-Ring they stand more chance, especially with Nuvolari at the wheel, for that truly master driver can, by sheer skill and indomitable courage, get his car through the 130-odd curves at such astonishing speed that he can keep up with the faster German cars.'

Not this time. After two laps Rosemeyer was in the lead and Nuvolari was way down in 10th place. After five laps he was up to eighth and after 10 he was third. Rosemeyer had lost a hub cap on lap four and the rear wheel soon flew apart, causing him to make a pit stop of 2 mins 26 secs. Caracciola now moved into the lead, which he would hold until the end. Rosemeyer charged back into the race, now in 10th place. A sensational drive saw him up to fifth on lap 13 and chasing Nuvolari.

Two laps later he caught him at the Karussell, as Rodney Walkerley recorded: 'They entered the banking there one behind the other, and Rosemeyer passed the Italian car into fourth place on acceleration up the slope beyond. The duel between these two was simply staggering. Both men were doing all they knew, both sliding their corners and shaving the edges of the road. Nuvolari was pitting all his skill and experience against the superior speed and acceleration of the German car, but losing about 15 seconds per lap.' Caracciola duly won the German GP - for the fifth time - ahead of Manfred von Brauchitsch (Mercedes), Rosemeyer and Nuvolari.

Three weeks later Tazio turned up at Pescara to drive Vittorio Jano's latest version of the 12C Alfa in the Coppa Acerbo. Alfa Romeo were now back in racing as Alfa Corse, and Scuderia Ferrari had been disbanded, although Enzo Ferrari was still in charge. The new Alfa was useless and Nuvolari put up with it for just four laps before handing it over to Nino Farina in disgust. The race was won by Bernd Rosemeyer in the Auto Union and a week later, in the Swiss Grand Prix, Nuvolari was his team-mate!

Elly Beinhorn Rosemeyer explained the situation in Rosemeyer!: 'The big news story at Bern was that Nuvolari was going to drive an Auto Union. He had been having a very unhappy time with Alfa Romeo, whose cars were completely outclassed by the German machines and so Tazio, (who had been kept out of the Auto Union team in 1935 by Stuck and Varzi) was invited to join us - by Professor Porsche himself - for this one race.

'Bernd loved the idea of having him in the team. (Later, when he learned that Auto Union were looking for new talent for 1938, he suggested that they sign Nuvolari). He liked and admired

the Italian tremendously and knew that he would always be a scrupulously fair team-mate. He also knew that he was now the faster driver and while he had no doubt that Tazio would be very quick - in time - there was no question of him turning in lap records in this race, for the Auto Union would take even Nuvolari some time to get used to.'

In the event Tazio only did six laps, for on lap two a locked brake sent Rosemeyer into a field. He stalled the engine and was pushed back onto the track by some spectators. This meant disqualification, so he drove to the pits and retired, but he was not finished with the Swiss Grand Prix, as Elly recorded: "'Bring Nuvolari in so I can take over his car. I can drive it faster than him. He'll understand. Come on, quick!'" That was all I heard from him at that moment.

'Nuvolari came rolling into the pits on the next lap and with a cheerful laugh, handed over to Bernd.

«If I had known exactly what was the matter, I would have stopped and given it to Bernd on the way,» he explained to me, in French.'

In November, Bernd Rosemeyer Junior was born and Bernd and Elly invited Tazio and his wife, Carolina, to be his Godparents. They happily agreed and travelled to Berlin for the Christening on the day before New Year's Eve. The two couples then welcomed the arrival of 1938 at the Esplanade Hotel. However, it was to be anything but a Happy New Year for the Rosemeyers, as on January 28 Bernd was killed during a record attempt on the Frankfurt-Darmstadt autobahn and motor racing was deprived of one of its greatest and most charismatic stars.

As was Auto Union, which was now in some disarray, for Professor Porsche's contract had expired and they had fired Hans Stuck for alleged breach of contract. Luckily, the design and development of the cars for the new, 3-litre supercharged Formula for 1938 was in the very capable hands of Professor Robert Eberan von Eberhorst, but on the driver front the team was left with the inexperienced Rudolf Hasse and H.P.Muller. In February, Auto Union's Italian representative, Ugo Ricordi, tried to persuade Nuvolari to join the team, but he was under considerable pressure from the Italian press and public to stay with Alfa Romeo. He had a run in the new Auto Union, with its 3-litre V12 engine and de Dion rear suspension, at AVUS, which not only gave him an indication of the car's performance, but let Enzo Ferrari and Alfa Romeo know where he would be going if the new Alfa 308 was no good.

It was no good. During practice for its first

race, at Pau, it caught fire. Nuvolari leapt out, suffering minor burns to his legs and he was furious when he learned that the fuel tank had ruptured due to the flexing of the chassis. He swore that he would never again drive an Alfa Romeo and soon afterwards announced his retirement. He and Carolina went on a long trip to America, but on his return he was once again invited to join Auto Union, which he did, in time for the German Grand Prix.

He had little time to familiarise himself with the mid-engined D-type, which produced 485 bhp, as opposed to the 520 of the C-type he had driven so briefly in the Swiss GP. The starting grid was now decided by practice times and his best lap of 10 mins 03.3 secs put him on the second row, beside Rudolf Caracciola, who was just two-tenths faster in his Mercedes W154.

Tazio received a tremendous ovation as he walked to his car, and Korpsfuhrer Huhnlein shook his hand and wished him luck. He didn't get it, for although he made a superb start and was in second place behind Hermann Lang (Mercedes) as the cars came out of the South Curve, he was quickly overtaken by the Mercedes of the eventual winner, Dick Seaman. He held third place as far as Wippermann, where he spun and slid backwards off the road and into the ditch. The Italian press, ever-ready to defend their hero's reputation, reported that this was because he was 'suddenly blinded by oil spraying from the car in front', but this was nonsense as the only cars in front of him were the two Mercedes, which were not noted for losing oil. The most likely reason for the incident is Tazio's unfamiliarity with the mid-engined Auto Union. Be that as it may, film in the Mercedes archive shows a number of spectators jumping down into the ditch and pushing the Auto Union back onto the track, for which he should have been disqualified. However, he rejoined the race in last-but-one position, completed one more lap and then retired with damaged rear suspension.

At the end of the eleventh lap H.P.Muller stopped for more fuel and new rear tyres and Nuvolari took over the Auto Union from him, to cheers from the grandstand. After the fire in the pits that delayed race leader Manfred von Brauchitsch, Tazio moved up to third place, behind the Mercedes of Seaman and Lang. However, with one lap to go he stopped for new spark plugs, ceding his third place to team-mate Hans Stuck.

The Eifel GP had not been run in 1938, but it was back for '39 and both Auto Union and Mercedes entered five cars. Rodney Walkerley was there for The Motor. 'This is the first day of serious practicing,' he wrote, 'although they do say old Nu-



Tazio Nuvolari Auto Union D-type German 1939

volari has been at work here for the past 10 days, which suggests he is taking this race with great earnestness. After all, he won the last two races in which he drove - the 1938 Italian and Donington Grands Prix - and wants to add a third. He looks just the same as ever, grey haired, of course, but doesn't seem to have aged in the least for the past four or five years. The only thing I have noticed is that I haven't yet seen him smoking, whereas he usually has a cigarette dangling from one corner of his mouth.'

By now Nuvolari was well acquainted with the Auto Union and was second fastest in practice with a time of 9 mins 57.2 secs, which put him in the middle of the front row of the grid between the Mercedes of Lang (9' 55.2") and Caracciola (9' 57.4"). Manfred von Brauchitsch made the fine start from the second row and led initially, but as they rocketed past the pits at the end of the lap it was Lang who led von Brauchitsch by 13 seconds, with Caracciola a further six seconds back. Fourth and fifth were the Auto Unions of Muller and Nuvolari.

In his report of the previous year's Eifel meeting, Rodney Walkerley had described the end of the first lap: 'Then up the straight they came, leaping the humpback clear of the ground at over 170 mph, one after the other.' Now he noted that, 'The cars no longer leave the ground over the very hump-backed bridges on the finishing straight, but cling to the road like leeches, and the drivers no longer cut-out for the bridges as they used to, probably owing to a combination of better suspension, heavier cars and less powerful engines than in the old days of the 5.5 and 6-litre engines.' All this was proved by Hermann Lang, who covered his seventh lap in 9 mins 52.2 secs to set a new lap record with the 3-litre Mercedes, beating by 1.2 secs the time Rosemeyer had set in 1937 with the 6-litre Auto Union.

Even so, by the eighth lap Nuvolari was only 8 secs behind Lang and 20 secs ahead of Caracciola. 'How that little Italian drove was a marvel!' exclaimed Rodney Walkerley. 'His cornering on the course frightened everyone but himself and the car was never travelling in a straight line. He let the back wheels slip a yard outward on the corners, and even down the straight it was snaking slightly as he tore along at over 170 mph. On the ninth lap the Auto Union pit rose as one man and gave Nuvolari every known sign to open right up and catch the Mercedes.'

Unfortunately, he wasn't able to do that, and completed the ten-lap race just over 10 seconds behind Lang, who had driven a brilliant race.

On July 23, the teams assembled at the Nurburg-Ring for the German Grand Prix. Nuvolari was way off the pace in practice, finding himself on the third row of the grid with a time of 10 mins 11.2 secs, whereas Hermann Lang had got his Mercedes around the 14.2 miles in an astonishing 9' 43.1" and the fastest four drivers - Lang, von Brauchitsch, Caracciola and Muller - had all lapped in under 10 minutes.

Tazio was not helped by the fact that his Auto Union caught fire on the last lap of practice, thanks to a broken fuel line. All-night work by the mechanics ensured that the car was ready for the start. As in the Eifel GP it was von Brauchitsch who made the best getaway, only to be overtaken by Lang before they reached the North Turn. Lang completed the opening lap an astonishing 28 seconds ahead of his team-mate. After three laps his lead was 57 seconds and he seemed set for a runaway victory, only to suffer a seized piston on lap four. He pulled into the pits to retire.

Remarkably, Paul Pietsch in his Maserati now took the lead, but Nuvolari soon passed him and

then so did Caracciola and Muller. Nuvolari led for five laps before stopping for over a minute while mechanics looked at his engine without apparently doing anything to it. He rejoined the race in fourth position, only to stop next time round for fuel and new rear tyres. All this cost him some 2 mins 30 secs in the pits.

By now the Mercedes team was virtually out of the race, as von Brauchitsch, Lang and Heinz Brendel had all retired, and

Caracciola's car was not sounding at all healthy. At the halfway mark (11 laps) the Auto Unions of Rudi Hasse and HP Muller were first and second, Caracciola third and Nuvolari fourth. After a stop for new plugs Caracciola's Mercedes began to behave itself and he drove faster and faster, overtaking the Auto Unions in the next few laps. Hasse then spun into a ditch, leaving Muller in second place and Nuvolari in third, but on lap 19 Tazio's engine blew up and he coasted into the pits, the Auto Union steaming like a kettle.

And that was the last race at the Nurburg-Ring for the man they called Maestro.

NUVOLARI AT THE RING

YEAR	EVENT	LAPS	CAR	NUMBER	RESULT
1931	Grand Prix	22	Alfa Romeo 8C	44	4th
1932	Grand Prix	25	Alfa Romeo P3	10	2nd
1933	Eifel GP	15	Alfa Romeo 8C Monza	1	1
1934	Eifel GP	15	Maserati 8CM	24	DNF
	Grand Prix	25	Maserati 8CM	10	4th
1935	Grand Prix	22	Alfa Romeo P3	12	1
1936	Eifel GP	10	Alfa Romeo 12C	4	2nd
	Grand Prix	22	Alfa Romeo 12C	22	DNF
1937	Eifel GP	10	Alfa Romeo 12C	11	5th
	Grand Prix	22	Alfa Romeo 12C	22	4th
1938	Grand Prix	22	Auto Union D-type	2	DNF
			Auto Union D-type (with H.P.Muller)	8	4th
1939	Eifel GP	10	Auto Union D-type	2	2nd
	Grand Prix	22	Auto Union D-type	2	DNF



RINGMEISTER

3

BERND ROSEMEYER



1935 - 1937

The career of Bernd Rosemeyer is the most remarkable in the history of Grand Prix racing. That is quite a claim, but it is justified by the facts, the first and most extraordinary of which is that in his first real motor race - at the Nurburg-Ring, of all places - young Bernd caught and passed Rudolf Caracciola, the acknowledged Ringmeister, to lead the 1935 Eifel Grand Prix. Caracciola eventually won the race, but only by a whisker and Rosemeyer had made a Grand Prix debut the like of which has never been approached, let alone equalled, before or since.

He began his career on motor bikes, in 1930, racing on grass tracks for two years before moving on to road circuits. In 1933 his Sports BMW was swapped for a 500 cc NSU competition machine and in his very first race, in Hannover, he caught the eye of Walter Moore, the Team Manager of NSU. Moore immediately signed him up and he scored an impressive six wins that season, which prompted DKW to poach him for 1934.

DKW was part of Auto Union, the company formed in 1932 by the merger of DKW, Audi, Horch and Wanderer. Auto Union was the name given to the mid-engined racing car designed by Professor Ferdinand Porsche for the new, 750 kg Grand Prix Formula, which began in 1934. The A-type was a revolutionary machine which proved difficult to handle. In that first year of competition, only Hans Stuck mastered it properly, winning the German, Swiss and Czech GPs. Stuck would have been European Champion, had motor racing's governing body had the sense to inaugurate such a Championship to go with the new Formula, but they only got around to it in 1935 and Stuck never won the title he deserved.

None of Auto Union's other drivers was up to scratch, so Team Manager Willy Walb started looking for new talent for 1935. The great Italian rivals Nuvolari and Varzi were both interested and Varzi got his name on a contract first, keep-

ing Tazio out. This strengthened the team considerably, but more than two drivers were required, so 12 of Germany's best car and motorcycle racers were invited to the Nurburg-Ring on October 24, 1934, to see what they could do with the 4.4-litre, 295 bhp V16. Among the dozen was Bernd Rosemeyer, who had celebrated his 25th birthday just ten days earlier.

That day the hopefuls were confined to the 6 km Sudschleife, and fastest was Paul Pietsch, who had been racing an Alfa Romeo for the past couple of years. Second fastest was Rosemeyer, just 1.6 secs in arrears. The next day the fastest five were let loose on the 22.8 km Nordschleife and once again Pietsch was at the top of the list, with a lap in 11 mins 14.6 secs. Rosemeyer was third, with a time of 12 minutes exactly. To show what they were up against, in the recent German GP, Hans Stuck has set fastest lap in 10 mins 44.2 secs. As a result of these tests, Walb signed Pietsch and Rosemeyer to be Auto Union's junior drivers in 1935.

Early in 1936 Bernd described his early days with Auto Union in a German magazine: 'To talk about racing experiences isn't easy, especially when someone like me has only one year of racing and the first race of the second year (the Monaco GP) behind him. Each race, even each part of a race, is an experience which is exciting enough to fill several pages of a long novel. When a racing car starts dancing at a speed of 200 kph; when a tyre bursts at 180 kph; when a stone shatters the windscreen and half the Nurburg-Ring flies into your eyes; when two wheels inadvertently slide up over the embankment - these are all experiences which, although they often last for a split second, you will never forget.

'I had already had my first and also very amusing experience with the Auto Union racing car before I raced it. It was in the autumn of 1934 that my long-standing dream was fulfilled and I was called up from the Auto Union-DKW racing

stable to have a trial drive on the Nurburg-Ring as an aspiring junior driver. On a warm afternoon in late summer I stood there on the most famous racing circuit in Germany in a circle of many comrades (who were already experienced and well-known) who were to have their first trial drives in the Auto Union "Silverfish" at the same time.

"I didn't feel very confident, "The others will embarrass you," I thought, "What do you think you can prove against these grownup drivers, you poor baby? They will probably all laugh at you as your car walks around the Nurburg-Ring." My courage, usually so steady, threatened to disappear, until I finally sat in the car with which my comrade Hans Stuck had already won seven races that year. For the first time the powerful motor growled behind me; for the first time I pushed the short gear stick into first and seconds later I turned into the first curve.

'I was careful to begin with and was delighted to find that the butterflies had gone. «Just show what you can do!», was the one thing on my mind. Lap after lap my confidence grew; I tried harder, took more risks and drove faster and faster until the critical moment arrived. At a difficult bend, just where our Team Manager Willy Walb had set up an observation point, my car slid a little and I could not get into third gear. The curve came ever closer and I tried harder and harder, but the gear wouldn't slide in. «Damn,» I thought, «now you will skid to a halt and everyone will laugh at you,» but, at the very last moment, when I was all crossed up and sideways in the curve, I felt the gear go in and «Rosemeyer's youngest» roared off. At the end of this test drive my greatest wish had been fulfilled; together with my comrade Pietsch I had the best time of the junior drivers and I was taken on by the Auto Union racing stable.'

It is interesting to note that Rosemeyer refers to the Auto Unions as 'Silberfisch', or Silverfish. Happily this description of the racing cars of Auto Union and Mercedes-Benz was soon forgotten and they became known forever more as Silver Arrows. Which is just as well, for 'Racing the Silver Fish' lacks a certain something! Bernd also refers to his car as 'Rosemeyer's youngest', because the Auto Union drivers named their cars after themselves. Later in the piece he wrote, 'I like my «Bernd» -that's the name of my racing car - very much, just as Stuck likes his «Hans» and Varzi his «Achille» and we hope we can win often for Germany.'

Bernd would fulfil that hope much better than his teammates but, meanwhile, he could not believe his luck. After just three seasons on motor bikes, he was about to go racing in one of the most



powerful racing cars yet built. He was impatient to get started, but Willy Walb made him wait. Auto Union did not enter the first race of 1935, the Monaco GP, but they raced at Tunis and Tripoli - without Bernd Rosemeyer. Next up were the AVUS races, on the autobahn just outside Berlin, and Walb thought that it would be asking for trouble for the totally inexperienced Rosemeyer to make his debut on what was the fastest circuit in the world.

The man himself had no such qualms. In 1933 Bernd's very first race for NSU had been at AVUS and now he was determined to drive the Auto Union there, so he set about changing Walb's mind. One morning Walb looked at his office calendar to find that Bernd had written on it, 'Will Rosemeyer race at AVUS?' This went on for several days and always the answer was 'No' so, a week before practice was due to begin, Bernd changed his tactic and wrote 'Rosemeyer will race at AVUS', every day until finally he found that an exasperated Walb had written 'Yes!' on the page. He was as good as his word and on May 26 Bernd Rosemeyer took part in his very first car race.

Auto Union entered four machines for Stuck, Varzi, Prinz Hermann zu Leiningen and Rosemeyer, the latter two having semi-streamlined machines with enclosed cockpits. The attempt at streamlining was because the AVUS circuit entailed a flat-out blast down a six-mile stretch of autobahn before tip-toeing round a hairpin bend and another six miles flat-out in the other direction. It called for very little skill from the drivers, being designed as a showcase for the power and speed of the cars. And what speed! Hans Stuck stunned all present in early practice by recording a time of 4 mins 37 secs from a standing start, an average of 158 mph. No-one had previously reached this time with a flying start! The Auto Unions were doing 190 mph for mile after mile and Achille Varzi excitedly announced that he had never been so fast in his life!

Willy Walb's initial reluctance to let Rosemeyer race is understandable when one looks at the power and speed of what he was used to and what he was about to drive: the 500 cc NSU he had raced at AVUS two years previously had produced around 35 bhp, giving a top speed of approximately 100 mph; now Bernd was about to race Auto Union's latest machine, the B-type, its engine enlarged to 4.9 litres, producing 375 bhp and capable of propelling him to a maximum speed of more than 190 mph. No wonder Walb was hesitant!

However, Bernd Rosemeyer was about to show that he was possessed of no ordinary talent. In the final practice session Stuck was again fast-

est, with a sensational lap in 4 mins 31.3 secs to average 162 mph, the fastest ever recorded at AVUS. This was a remarkable 16 seconds faster than Varzi and Manfred von Brauchitsch (Mercedes-Benz), both of whom recorded 4' 47". Next, and just as astonishing, was Rosemeyer, with a time of 4' 49", which put him ahead of three of the greatest and most experienced drivers in the world: Tazio Nuvolari (Alfa Romeo) and Rudolf Caracciola and Luigi Fagioli (both in Mercedes-Benz).

Sad to report, Rosemeyer's brilliance in practice was not rewarded in the race, which was run as two heats and a final. He was drawn in the first heat and recalled: "My first start came in 1935 with the AVUS race and that really brought me down to earth with a bump. Just after the start of the first heat I attached myself to Fagioli, my Mercedes comrade, and we were chasing each other at full throttle. On the straight I always passed him, but in the curves he always caught me with his superior skill. Then, all at once it was over: there was a "bang" at the North Curve as one of my tyres freed itself from the wheel, but I had survived my baptism of fire.'

Among the spectators who saw the incident was Elly Beinhorn, the world famous aviatrix, and she and Bernd would become better acquainted before the year was out.

Despite failing to finish, Bernd had made an impressive debut as a racing driver and had imprinted his name on the minds of the 150,000 spectators. The AVUS weekend included races for motor bikes, but apart from the two-wheel enthusiasts present, the public had never heard of Bernd Rosemeyer till now. However, they would hear of him again very soon, for just three weeks later he would make his debut at the Nurburg-Ring, and with a performance that would become part of Grand Prix racing's folklore.

The AVUS and Nurburg-Ring circuits were similar in just one aspect: length, the former being 12.16 miles/19.57 km per lap and the latter 14.17 miles/22.8 kms. That apart, the AVUS was to the Nurburg-Ring as simple arithmetic is to calculus, six miles up one side of a Berlin autobahn and six miles back down the other, as opposed to a 14-mile rollercoaster ride through the Eifel mountains.

Bernd Rosemeyer mastered both circuits with insolent ease, although he did not shine in practice for the Eifel GP. That was spoilt by rain showers, but not before Manfred von Brauchitsch had set the fastest time of 10 mins 45 secs in his Mercedes W25. Rudolf Caracciola (Mercedes) was next fastest with 10' 59" and Hans Stuck (Auto Union) third on 11" 04".

The 11-lap race began on a wet track and von Brauchitsch took off like a scalded cat. Some 11 minutes later he fled past the pits no fewer than 22 seconds ahead of Caracciola, who was closely followed by Varzi and Stuck in their Auto Unions. Varzi, however, was in trouble with two very different problems: he was suffering from appendicitis and some sparkless plugs. The latter was caused by the very changeable weather, which varied from bright sunshine to heavy showers and was to play havoc with the combustion in many engines, including those propelling Stuck and Luigi Fagioli (Mercedes-Benz).

None of this bothered von Brauchitsch, who was running away with the race. After three laps he was 55 secs ahead of Caracciola, and Fagioli had passed Stuck and Varzi to make it 1,2,3 for Mercedes. Another lap and von Brauchitsch had increased his lead to 66 secs. Meanwhile, Stuck made the first of several stops for new plugs and with Varzi in no condition to fight for the lead, Team Manager Willy Walb signalled Bernd Rosemeyer to put on some speed and see what he could do. He promptly passed Louis Chiron (Alfa Romeo) into fourth place and when Fagioli stopped with plug trouble, moved into third. Not content with this he then, with all the arrogance of youth, went after the Ringmeister himself, Caracciola.

He caught him, too! Astonishingly, by the end of the sixth lap Bernd was right on Rudi's tail and pushing him ever closer to von Brauchitsch, whose lead was diminishing all the time. Rosemeyer's performance was truly remarkable, for not only was the novice harrying the expert, but he was doing so despite three handicaps, any one of which would have slowed a mere mortal considerably. First of all a flying stone broke his windscreen and the blast of air soon tore his helmet from his head; then a lens of his goggles was also broken and, as if that was not enough, his engine now came out in sympathy with those on the other Auto Unions and 'lost' two plugs. However, as none of these problems caused him to lose ground to Caracciola, Bernd continued his pursuit in unabated fashion.

After seven laps the two had reduced von Brauchitsch's lead to 43 seconds and Rosemeyer was less than a second behind Caracciola. It was on the next time round that the race fell into their lap, for von Brauchitsch over-revved his engine while overtaking the Maserati of Balestrero and was forced to tour into the pits and retire.

Now Rosemeyer made his move, as Rodney Walkerley reported in *The Motor*: 'Caracciola and Rosemeyer pass the stands neck and neck! Rosemeyer just squeezes past before the South Turn.

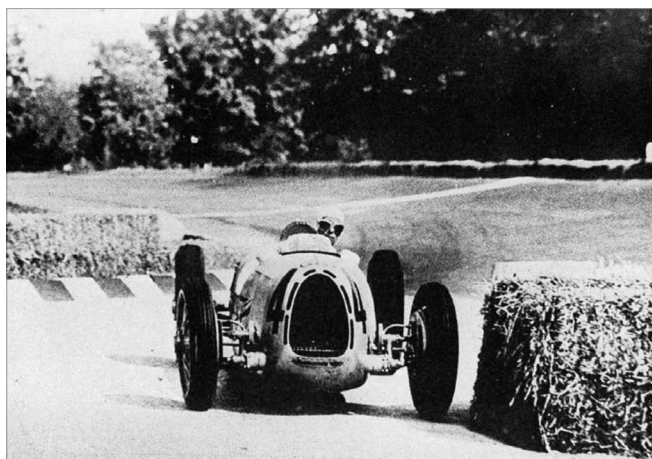
The big throng in the grandstands rise to their feet and watch the Auto Union lead the Mercedes back past the rear of the pits, and so downhill and out of sight!'

The next time round Rosemeyer had extended his lead and the packed grandstands rose to him as he fled past, now seven seconds ahead of Caracciola. Suddenly, a truly extraordinary result was on the cards. As Caracciola roared past the pits in hot pursuit, Mercedes Team Manager Alfred Neubauer somewhat unnecessarily gave him the 'flat-out' signal.

Motor Sport recorded those last, electrifying laps: 'Round the long, tortuous circuit the two rivals roared, Rosemeyer being slower on the uphill sections, but being just as fast on the rest of the lap. For some time "Carratch" could not make much impression on his young opponent, and they were still seven seconds apart when they started out on the last lap. The splendid system of loudspeakers kept the crowd informed of the progress of the race, and the announcers themselves nearly went crazy with excitement. From 100 metres it came down to 20 metres... 12 metres... 10 metres. It was not until a bare kilometre or so from the finishing line that Caracciola could seize his opportunity to pass, and he screamed past the finishing post with arm raised in acknowledgement of the tumultuous cheering.'

Rosemeyer himself provided this description of his astonishing performance: 'The big stars were up and away right from the start, Brauchitsch and Caracciola led the race and I pottered along with the field, still a blooming "baby racing driver". Then to my dismay, after several laps I noticed that my team-mates Stuck and Varzi were repairing their cars in the pits. Putting my foot on the throttle and getting away from the field was obviously the thing to do. However, it never rains but it pours and suddenly a stone thrown up by a competitor smashed my windscreen and the wind whistled round my ears. I could hardly see, but that didn't matter - I had to race on. After a fight lasting several laps I scored a big hit - I overtook Caracciola. Now I only had von Brauchitsch in front of me and then his engine gave up. For the first time in my life I was leading a car race!

'Behind me were men like Caracciola, Chiron and Fagioli. "Careful, Bernd, don't let them hurry you," I thought, and continued to drive my own race - right up until the last two laps. Then I noticed that my engine didn't really want to keep going, that something or other wasn't quite right. Two plugs quit and now my engine was only running on fourteen cylinders. I know today that I



Above 1935 Italian GP - Bernd Rosemeyer (Auto Union)
Below 1936 Italian GP - Bernd Rosemeyer (Auto Union)

made a mistake then and that during the last lap I should have kept my engine at maximum revs in order to keep Caracciola behind me. But I had too little experience and was reluctant, because of the defective plugs, to use maximum power. So, 100 metres before the finish, Caracciola went by me and won the Eifel race by just over a second.'

The race between the acknowledged Ringmeister and the "baby racing driver", as Bernd called himself, had had the spectators on their feet and cheering all round the circuit for those final, electrifying laps. Here's Motor Sport again: 'When they pulled up at the pits, Caracciola was almost

submerged by the crowd, and Rosemeyer received an equally fine ovation. This young driver has "arrived" and the motor-cycle world has provided yet another world class driver. Rosemeyer has raced motor-cycles at every meeting at the Nurburg-Ring since it was opened in 1927, and his great knowledge of the circuit helped him considerably in his fight today. He had the honour of making the fastest lap of the race in 11 mins 5 secs.'

Quite why making fastest lap should be regarded as an honour is anybody's guess, but Motor Sport's assertion that Rosemeyer had raced constantly at the Ring is nonsense - prior to the Eifel GP he had only driven there during the Auto Union driver trials the previous October, never on motor-cycles.

Which is what makes his performance that June day so extraordinary as to be virtually unbelievable. Bernd Rosemeyer's only experience of a racing car comprised those few test laps at the Ring, followed by almost four laps of racing at AVUS. Yet such was his genius that not only was he able to master the handling of a wilful 375 bhp, mid-engined racer within a handful of miles but also to catch and overtake Rudolf Caracciola on the 14 miles of constantly changing road that was the Nurburg-Ring, regarded as the most demanding circuit in the world. And Caracciola was acknowledged as der Ringmeister, having already won no fewer than six races there, starting with the inaugural event in 1927.

Another astonishing aspect of Bernd's performance is how little astonishment it aroused in the Press. Both in Germany and England, the fact that a motor-cycle racer in only his second car race had come within an ace of beating the man who, with Tazio Nuvolari, was regarded as the finest racing driver in the world - and on the Nurburg-Ring - was greeted with little more than mild surprise. No-one seemed to grasp the enormity of his achievement.

Exactly what Caracciola thought of so nearly being beaten by a novice on the circuit he regarded as his own has not, sadly, been recorded and, in his autobiography he made no mention of it. His silence speaks volumes!

He won the Eifel GP by virtue of his vast experience, rather than superior skill. As he and Rosemeyer accelerated through Dottinger Hohe and down the 3-kilometre straight, Caracciola noticed that his inexperienced rival changed into top gear very early with the low-revving Auto Union. So, on the last lap Rudi held his Mercedes in third at that point and overtook Bernd as he changed up too early yet again. Caracciola won by 1.8 secs.

Rosemeyer's remarkable performance that day gave Germany a new motor racing hero, to add to Rudolf Caracciola, Manfred von Brauchitsch and Hans Stuck. The latter were all in their thirties and had been around for some time and although very popular, none had the film star good looks and charisma that was immediately apparent in the 25 year-old Bernd. He was young, irreverent and undeniably handsome and on top of all that he made the fearsome Auto Union wag its tail like a dog with a new bone. The fans loved him and Europe's many photo magazines were quick to latch onto him, for they knew a true star when they saw one.

So expectations were high when he returned to the Ring for the German GP in July. On the first day of practice he drove very fast in exuberant fashion, wearing shorts and eschewing a wind helmet. Adrian Conan Doyle, son of the novelist, was at the Ring as a guest of Baron Klaus von Oertzen, Auto Union's Managing Director and he later wrote in *Motor Sport*: 'I was interested to hear the many promising remarks concerning the future of Rosemeyer, the new and talented recruit to the Auto Union team. They say that he is the man to watch, a second Hans Stuck in the making, and, as though to put a seal upon these predictions he made, unofficially the fastest lap during practice. Time: 10 minutes 35 seconds - a new record.'

This doubtless raised a few eyebrows, but it failed to give Bernd pole position on the grid, for the main topic of conversation at the Ring was the starting order, as *Motor Sport* reported: "All day long a great discussion raged as to the best method of deciding the starting positions. The authorities wanted to grade the cars in the order of their acceleration capabilities. The drivers were against this, however, on the ground that the corner soon after the start would complicate matters anyway. Eventually, it was agreed to draw lots.'

As a result, Rosemeyer found himself in 12th spot in the middle of row 5, between Fagioli (Mercedes-Benz) and Varzi (Auto Union). By the end of the first lap, however, he was fourth behind Caracciola (Mercedes-Benz), Nuvolari (Alfa Romeo) and Fagioli. One lap later and he was second, 12 seconds behind Caracciola. After three laps, 'Rosemeyer had drawn five seconds closer to Caracciola,' noted *Motor Sport*, 'and it looked as though we were going to see a repetition of their duel in the Eifel race. Sure enough on the fourth lap Rosemeyer was now only four seconds behind Caracciola, in spite of the latter lapping in 11 minutes 34 seconds. He hurled his goggles at his pit as he flashed past at 200 kph.'

To the obvious dismay of the 250,000 spectators who lined the Ring it was not to last, for the Caracciola-Rosemeyer duel came to an end on the next lap. Rosemeyer recalled the incident, which was never reported in the motoring magazines: 'A few laps after the start I am racing along at 200 kph when suddenly my car jumps up high, slides first left, then right, left and right again. I am busy keeping it on the track, but when I lift my foot from the throttle the car races on - the throttle linkage has broken! There is a curve in a few hundred metres and the throttle will not come back, so I have to bend down and pull it back with my hand. With a great effort and using half the earth bank I get through the curve and manage to drive to the pits, where the throttle linkage is sorted out. A little thing has destroyed my big hope.'

After a longish pit stop he rejoined the race and, undaunted, set about the Nurburg-Ring in his usual, tail-out fashion. Tazio Nuvolari, too, was going like the wind and became the first man officially to lap the Ring in under 11 minutes, with a time of 10' 57.4", only to have Rosemeyer record 10' 55.1". It was to no avail, though, for later Bernd had to spend more time in the pits with engine problems. He finally finished fourth, but hardly anyone noticed, for despite a stunning new lap record of 10 mins 32.0 secs by von Brauchitsch, Tazio Nuvolari defeated the pride of Nazi Germany to score a sensational victory in his out-dated Alfa Romeo.

From this point on Rosemeyer was no longer regarded as a junior member of the Auto Union team, having shown that he could hold his own with the cream of Grand Prix drivers. To make the point conclusively, he ended the season by winning the Czech GP at Brno, only the ninth motor race of his career. Better still, he was congratulated on his victory by Elly Beinhorn, the girl who had seen his undignified exit at AVUS. She was in Brno to give a lecture on her flying exploits that evening, and attended the Grand Prix as a guest of Auto Union. Although she was unaware of it at the time, that was the start of their runaway romance, and the beginning of the end of her remarkable flying career. Bernd pursued her relentlessly and in the next few months they would become the most celebrated couple in Europe, as their love affair captured the imagination of the public. Bernd was not yet in Elly's league as far as public acclaim was concerned, and although he had made an extraordinary impact on the motor racing world, it was as nothing compared with what was to come in 1936.

That year Auto Union produced the C-type, changing the rear suspension from transverse leaf

springs to torsion bars and increasing the V16's capacity to six litres and its power to 520 bhp, an increase of one litre and 145 bhp, respectively. Rosemeyer was now dealing with almost fifteen times the horsepower that had been provided by the NSU bikes in 1934, and he took it all in his stride.

He took the fog in his stride, too, when it descended upon the Nurburg-Ring during the Eifel GP in June. In what was latterly a virtually unseen performance, he consolidated the legend that had been born twelve months previously.

'The race for the Grand Prix cars which started after an interval of motorcycle racing might well be described as a racing driver's nightmare,' wrote Rodney Walkerley, in *The Motor*.

'Halfway through one of the most exciting struggles ever seen in modern racing, huge banks of fog rolled over the circuit and blotted it out. The nerve-racking experience of the drivers may be left to the imagination. The fact remains that, despite a maximum visibility of 150 yards, the lap times remained almost constant. The cars tore round through the fog at over 70 mph, touching 120 mph at several points.'

The race began in wet, but clear, conditions and Rudolf Caracciola (who was not only a Ringmeister, but also a Regenmeister) took the lead in his Mercedes at once, only to have a rear shock absorber break on lap three. He was passed by Tazio Nuvolari (V12 Alfa Romeo) and then by Rosemeyer on lap four. The latter now went after Nuvolari and took the lead on lap six as the cars dived into the North Turn.

On that lap he pulled out 19 secs on the Italian and, as he did so, the fog descended. As *The Autocar* reported: 'Low clouds have been drifting up, hiding the Nurburg castle, which overlooks the whole of the Ring. Now mist spreads over the entire scene. The pits are scarcely visible, and the scoreboard is lost in the white cloud. It is a weird sight, with vast crowds below the stand just discernable through the obscurity. The signal station is blotted out.'

'Rosemeyer appears suddenly out of the mist and screams by at an extraordinary speed, changing down for the invisible Sudkehere just as he vanishes into the white cloud. Then Nuvolari, not quite so fast. It must be a drive of amazing peril, groping through the clouds, in the mountains... But Rosemeyer, earning the title of Nebelmeister (fogmaster) averages the altogether astounding speed of 72.96 mph for his ninth lap and increases his lead over Nuvolari to 1 min 40 secs.

'The finish loses something of its usual excitement, for no-one can see the approach of the cars.

The staccato bark of the Auto Union is heard at last, and the crowd cheers Rosemeyer to the echo.'

Rodney Walkerley looked back on that remarkable race a week later in *The Motor*, 'Well, it does look as if the Mercedes series of triumphs is to be challenged at last - which is a good thing for racing. They definitely fear the 12-cylinder Alfas, and that wizard Nuvolari passed Caracciola fair and square. Then we have to reckon with the thunderbolt known as Rosemeyer, who is one of the gayest persons in racing. He certainly goes through fog faster than one would believe possible. For your entertainment I took the lap speeds of himself and Nuvolari right through the race, and of Caracciola until his retirement after four laps.

LAP	ROSEMEYER	NUVOLARI	CARACCIOLA
1	12' 00.0"	11' 51.4"	11' 47.6"
2	11' 43.8"	11' 44.0"	11' 46.4"
3	11' 38.8"	11' 37.4"	11' 43.8"
4	11' 43.4"	11' 35.8"	11' 51.6" RTD
5	11' 34.0"	11' 42.2"	
6	11' 25.0"	11' 32.4"	
		FOG	
7	11' 44.8"	11' 44.8"	
8	11' 32.6"	12' 14.8"	
9	11' 40.0"	12' 28.8"	
10	11' 49.4"	12' 22.4"	(FOG LIFTED)

'It really is quite extraordinary how Rosemeyer simply drove away from Nuvolari in the fog, by 42.2 secs on lap eight; 48.8 on lap nine and 33 on the final tour when the fog was lifting. Nuvolari had already raced six times at the Ring and knew it as well as anybody, but he simply could not stay with Rosemeyer.'



Auto Union Type-C, 1936 German, Hillclimb Championship Schausland. Bernd-Rosemeyer

Bernd was not only blessed with uncanny skill, but also with remarkable eyesight, which somehow enabled him to see through fog. This seems hard to believe, but it is confirmed by his wife, Elly, who recalled: 'I had been given firsthand experience of Bernd's extraordinary eyesight very early in our relationship, when he drove me to a lecture one foggy night. I had very good eyesight myself and on this occasion I could barely see more than 20 metres ahead, yet Bernd was driving the Horch at around 50 mph, as calm and relaxed as you please! When I asked him to slow down, he replied that he could see perfectly well, thank you, and had I noticed that cyclist in front of us? I could see nothing, but moments later, there was the cyclist. Bernd pointed out several other things long before I saw them and this convinced me that he had a remarkable, infra-red-type vision. Armed with this «secret weapon», he was virtually unaffected by the fog at the Nurburg-Ring, and won easily.'

That drive established Bernd as the new King of the Nurburg-Ring and became yet another monument in the building of the Rosemeyer legend, which was to grow by leaps and bounds in the coming months. But, for the moment, Bernd had more important matters on his mind and on July 13 he and Elly were married in Berlin. They deliberately chose that date because both regarded 13 as their lucky number. And, 13 days later, Bernd won the German Grand Prix.

In truth, he didn't just win, he dominated the Nurburg-Ring and the race almost from start to finish and in front of a crowd estimated at close to 400,000 people. Most of them, no doubt, were drawn to the Ring in the hope of seeing yet another electrifying performance from young Rosemeyer, now a household name throughout Germany. This was due as much to his romance with Elly Beinhorn and their recent marriage as to his racing skills, for they were a truly charismatic couple and the German press could not get enough of them, on or off the race track.

As usual, the starting grid was decided by drawing lots and Bernd found himself on row three, behind Tazio Nuvolari (4-litre, V12 Alfa Romeo); Hans Stuck (6-litre Auto Union); Jean-Pierre Wimille (3.3-litre Bugatti) with Rudolf Caracciola and Manfred von Brauchitsch (4.7-litre Mercedes-Benz) on row two. Manfred made a great start, leading Hermann Lang (Mercedes), Stuck, Caracciola and Nuvolari, but by the Karussell Rosemeyer had forced his way in to second place, only to have Caracciola pass him before Brunnchen. On the three-kilometre straight, however, both Rose-

meyer and Lang got by and fled through the start/finish area behind von Brauchitsch, whose standing lap had taken just 10 mins 24 secs, eight seconds under the circuit record, which he set in the previous year's GP.

On lap two Bernd went into the lead at the Adenau Bridge, when von Brauchitsch suffered front suspension problems and drove slowly back to the pits. From then on Rosemeyer was never headed. After seven laps he stopped at the pits for fuel and two rear tyres, being sent on his way again after just 41 seconds. Then Caracciola came walking in, his Mercedes having come to a halt with a defective fuel pump. After 10 laps Rosemeyer was leading team-mate Stuck by 1 min 54 secs, with Nuvolari third, some 25 seconds further back.

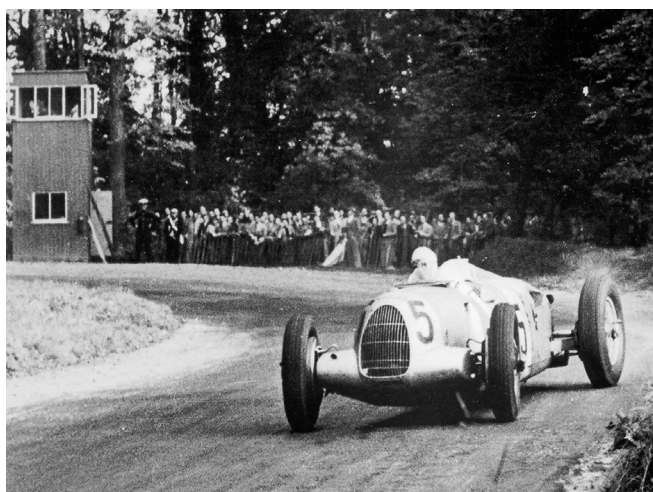
On the 14th tour Nuvolari was forced to retire with a broken rear axle, by which time Rosemeyer had broken Manfred von Brauchitsch's 1935 lap record of 10 mins 32.0 secs no fewer than 12 times! He did not lower the record each lap, but on the third he recorded a stunning 9' 56.4", which was so fast it did not appear in the speed table in the programme. It was also the first time that a lap in under 10 minutes had been recorded during a race. Once Nuvolari had retired Bernd eased up somewhat and took the chequered flag 3 mins 37 secs ahead of Stuck.

«How's this for an extra wedding present?» asked Bernd of his bride, who was almost overcome with relief after the awful tension of the past four hours. 'Sometime later,' wrote Elly in her biography of Bernd, 'we managed to struggle through the still-lingering crowds to our Horch and set off towards the little village of Daun, where the whole Rosemeyer family had preceded us. Naturally, Bernd insisted on driving. The youngsters of Daun had prepared a wonderful welcome for him, with poems written in his honour and garlands of flowers they had picked themselves, and in the evening the Fire Brigade came to congratulate us! I cannot describe to you how impressive this enthusiasm really was.

'Later we were to enjoy another triumphal celebration given by Auto Union at the Nurburg-Ring's Sport Hotel, but in spite of all the praise being showered upon him, Bernd's main concern was for his mechanics.

«We couldn't have won anything without them, Elly,» he said, «You really should get to know them. They are the heart and soul of the game and think nothing of working through a couple of nights to get the cars ready. I'm going to crack a bottle with them. Coming?»'

Rosemeyer went on to win three more GPs,



Auto Union Type-C, 1937 Grand Prix Donington-Park, Great-Britain. Bernd Rosemeyer

which made him European Champion for 1936, in only his second season of motor racing. To complete his phenomenal year, he also won two mountainclimbs and became European Mountain Champion.

In 1937 Bernd was delighted to find that the Eifel GP was to be held on June 13. A few days before, however, he was summoned to the Nurburg-Ring by Professor Porsche for some testing. Hav-

ing only recently acquired his full flying licence, Bernd borrowed a Jungmann bi-plane from its designer, Karl Clemens, and flew down from Berlin. He made an emergency landing on the small gliding airfield at Quiddelbacher Hohe, claiming that his engine had 'lost' a cylinder. This meant that the Jungmann had to be man-handled onto the circuit so it could be towed backwards down Flugplatz to the start/finish area, where the cylinder was replaced. The next day (having recorded an unofficial best-ever lap of the Nurburg-Ring in 9 mins 54.0 secs) Bernd took off right in front of the grandstand and flew home.

Elly Rosemeyer was convinced that he planned the whole affair, so he could show off his new-found flying skills to his motor racing friends.

On race day, a crowd estimated at around 300,000 turned up, doubtless in the hope that Rosemeyer would emulate Rudolf Caracciola and score three victories in a row at the Ring. He did not disappoint them, for his lucky 13 held true and he defeated the Mercedes team almost single-handed.

Following their disastrous 1936 season, the Stuttgart concern came up with a superb new racer, the W125, which won first time out, at Tripoli. Five of these cars were entered at the Eifel, to be driven by Caracciola, von Brauchitsch, Hermann Lang, Dick Seaman and Christian Kautz. By contrast, Auto Union retained their C-type and were in driver trouble, as Luigi Fagioli (who had joined the team from Mercedes) was ill; Rosemeyer's great friend Ernst von Delius crashed in practice and hurt himself, motor-cycle racer HP Muller was having his very first race and Rudolf Hasse was a junior driver of little experience.

So it was Rosemeyer against the entire Mercedes-Benz team - and he loved it! In practice he demoralised his rivals with a time of 9 mins 57 secs, whereas Caracciola and von Brauchitsch could not break 10 minutes. Caracciola took the lead from the start, but Rosemeyer moved ahead on lap two, which he completed in 9' 59". After four laps he was 10 secs ahead of the Mercedes, but at the end of lap five Rudi came into the pits with a rear tyre in shreds. Two laps later Rosemeyer came in - as scheduled - for new tyres, then roared back into the race, still leading by 45 seconds. He eased off in the final three laps to win by 50 secs from Caracciola, who was 55 secs ahead of von Brauchitsch.

And so, in the circuit's 10th anniversary year, Bernd Rosemeyer was King of the Nurburg-Ring again, having scored his third win in a row, the Eifel and German GPs in 1936 and now the Eifel once more.

The day after the race he returned to the Ring to do some filming for Auto Union. 'This gave him a great idea,' recalled Elly Rosemeyer, 'He had long wanted to take me round the Ring in his racing car and here was his chance. «This is a golden opportunity, Elly. You simply sit on the edge of my seat and I will drive very carefully, but fast enough that you may get an idea of what it's like when I am racing.»

'I was all for it, but my enthusiasm evaporated after the very first corner! At every bend I was ready to swear an oath that we would never get round and I was almost thrown out of the Auto Union by the centrifugal force. As I clung on for dear life my husband laughed himself silly. "What are you complaining about? I can't drive fast at all on these running-in plugs. Dawdling along like this wouldn't get us tenth place." I was by no means ashamed of my timidity. On the contrary, I was grateful for the chance to get some idea of what Bernd got up to on a circuit and it was abundantly clear to me that driving a racing car was infinitely more difficult than flying.'

With three consecutive wins under his belt Bernd was, of course, odds on to win the German Grand Prix again in July and, after practice, few would have bet against him. Although the W125

Mercedes produced an eye-watering 640 bhp, not even Caracciola was a match for Rosemeyer, whose Auto Union gave a mere 520 bhp and Bernd stunned everyone with a lap in 9 mins 46.2 secs. This gave him pole position on the grid which, for the first time at the Nurburg-Ring, was decided by practice times.

Second fastest was Hermann Lang in 9' 52.2». He had been a racing mechanic with Mercedes until he was given his chance to drive for the team in 1935, so he and Rosemeyer were almost exact contemporaries. He had won the Tripoli GP earlier in the year and was now second on the grid with a lap in 9' 52.2» Third was Manfred von Brauchitsch (Mercedes), with 9'55.1» and not at all happy at being slower than the former mechanic! On the second row were Caracciola (Mercedes) and Nuvolari (Alfa Romeo), neither of whom could get below 10 minutes.

The starting grid contained some of the most powerful racing cars the world had ever seen, five Mercedes W125s producing around 3,200 bhp and five Auto Unions a further 2,600! John Dugdale set the scene in *The Autocar*: 'The opening stages of a modern Grand Prix are the most thrilling in racing. Half a minute before zero time engines are started and the collected cars make the ground





Above Auto Union Type-C, Bernd Rosemeyer after victory at 1937 Coppa-Acerbo

Below Let's pay some tribute to one of the greatest racers, Bernd Rosemeyer, who was the first to break the 400 kmph speed barrier. In an Audi

vibrate with their concerted roar. A maroon fires and the smoke from spinning wheels and exhausts blows up to join the maroon's white puff. The cars move off the line together, accelerating amazingly quickly to almost 100 mph before the first bend.

'Nuvolari and Rosemeyer were moving suspiciously before the general start, but two Mercedes were first into the Sudkehre, the banked loop which immediately follows the straight past the stands; Caracciola (Mercedes) and Lang (Mercedes) led Rosemeyer (Auto Union). The rest could hardly be distinguished as they flashed down the narrow return road, the silver cars of Germany out in front, interspersed with the red of Italy and the lone green car bearing the British colour - Evans' Alfa Romeo.

'Then the unique atmosphere of the Nurburg-Ring really took hold. The cars went diving off down the winding road far out into the country. Through the Hocheichen, a wicked, grass-lined S-bend, every corner taken in a dry skid, drivers cutting the leaves from the bordering hedges, clipping grass verges and making the white-painted wood

kerbs black with rubber from the tyres. The announcer's guttural voice, vibrant with excitement, rose to a pitch of frenzy as the order from the Karussell banked hairpin was shouted through between the echo of the cars.

'Finally, the crowd waited expectantly for the dull roar which was to announce the leaders' approach up the straight towards the stands. All eyes were turned to the right. Then, quicker even than one expected, the cars came in sight over the bridge round a fast left bend. Lang's Mercedes had a fifty-yard lead on Rosemeyer's Auto Union. They were followed by Caracciola's Mercedes, scarlet-helmeted von Brauchitsch skidding nastily with his Mercedes; young Muller, Delius and Hasse, the three junior drivers of the Auto Union team; Nuvolari with the first of the Italian Alfas; Kautz' Mercedes and, tenth, Dick Seaman's Mercedes.

'The last couple had not made too good a start, and forthwith they set about increasing speed. But they were not the only ones to make special efforts, since Rosemeyer, who knew the race was really his, was impatient to be in front. On the second lap he passed Lang, put in the fastest lap of the day (9 mins 53.4 secs; 85.61 mph) and came round with a good lead. On the third lap Rosemeyer was more easily in the lead and Caracciola had passed Lang. But on the fourth lap it was the great "Rudi" Caracciola, four times winner of the German GP, whose Mercedes came round well out in front, followed by Lang and von Brauchitsch. Where was Bernd Rosemeyer? Where was the race favourite?'

Elly Beinhorn Rosemeyer takes up the story: 'Not long after Bernd had gone by (at the end of lap three) an NSKK official appeared at our pits with a hub cap that had fallen off one of our cars. From my position in the pit I could see that our Team Manager, Dr Feuereissen, and the mechanics were looking anxious about something, but I didn't know what. Then Bernd failed to appear at the end of the fourth lap and I could see that the mechanics were no longer just anxious, they were very worried. Before I could discover just what was going on, however, Bernd came rolling in with a rear tyre in shreds and although the mechanics worked feverishly it was 2 minutes and 20 seconds before a furious Bernd could get back into the race.'

John Dugdale again: 'Rosemeyer, aching to be on with the chase took a running jump into the cockpit, ripping the seat of his neat white overalls on the way. The sixteen cylinders roared into life, puffs of smoke shot up from the vertical exhaust stumps and the Auto Union was away, with over three minutes to make up on Caracciola. How

dearly the champion had paid for his opening laps at what was evidently too great a speed.'

Too true: in his efforts to pass Caracciola, Bernd had slid into a bank somewhere, breaking the hub cap which fell off at the South Turn, where it was retrieved by the NSKK official. The wheel vibrated on its spindle until the tyre burst. The result was that Rosemeyer was now down in 10th place.

But worse was to come for Auto Union. On the seventh lap Ernst von Delius, having passed Rosemeyer as he was making his way slowly back to the pits, took it upon himself to challenge Dick Seaman for fourth place, as John Dugdale reported: 'Delius made a terrific effort to pass Seaman and came up close as the cars entered the two-mile straight. The crowd rose in horror - just over the brow of a hump-backed bridge the two collided and in a flash were gone, Delius off the road on one side end over end; Seaman crammed on his brakes and slid broadside down the road, then spun round and round and shot backwards into the hedge.

The smash occurred at 150 mph. At the time of dictating this, Dick Seaman has a cut face and a badly sprained wrist. Delius is more critically hurt, although details are still lacking.'

As soon as she heard of the crash, Elly Rosemeyer went to the circuit's krankenhaus, where she learned that Dick Seaman had a broken nose and flesh wounds and that their friend Ernst had a broken leg, but was conscious and sent greetings to everyone. She returned to the pits to watch Bernd making a sensational effort to retrieve the race he thought should be his. He was now up to fifth place, but 'driving on the brink of disaster',

as Rodney Walkerley wrote in *The Motor*. At one point he overdid it and the Auto Union went off the road, stripping another tread from a rear tyre. The ensuing pit stop cost him 43 seconds.

On lap 15 he passed Nuvolari (Alfa Romeo) into fourth place, but had to stop again two laps later for a scheduled change of all four wheels, which was achieved in the splendid time of 52 seconds. It was then Nuvolari's turn for a final pit stop and Bernd moved back into third place, which he held until the end. Caracciola won, with von Brauchitsch second, but the packed grandstand gave Bernd the biggest cheer, for although he had been forced to do two very slow laps with a shredded rear tyre and had spent almost four minutes in the pits, he was barely 62 seconds behind Caracciola at the end. It was another stunning performance from Rosemeyer, who had won three of his six races at the Nurburg-Ring in three years.

His frustration at losing a race he should have won was immediately banished by the concern he and Elly felt for von Delius, who had been moved to the hospital in Adenau. The next morning their worst fears were confirmed, when they learned that he had died during the night.

And so the 1937 German Grand Prix, which had promised so much for Bernd Rosemeyer, had a tragic ending. In more ways than one, for it was to be his last race at the Nurburg-Ring he loved so much and which he had dominated so completely. Within six months Rosemeyer himself was dead - killed in a record attempt on the Frankfurt-Darmstadt autobahn - and buried close to his friend von Delius in the Dahlem cemetery, Berlin. The most astonishing career in the history of Grand Prix racing was over, after just three seasons.

ROSEMEYER AT THE RING

YEAR	EVENT	LAPS	CAR	NUMBER	RESULT
1935	Eifel GP	11	Auto Union B-type	4	2nd
	Grand Prix	22	Auto Union B-type	3	4th
1936	Eifel GP	10	Auto Union C-type	18	FL 1
	Grand Prix	22	Auto Union C-type	4	FL 1
1937	Eifel GP	10	Auto Union C-type	1	FL 1
	Grand Prix	22	Auto Union C-type	4	PP & FL 3rd



RINGMEISTER

4

ALBERTO ASCARI



1950 - 1953

Alberto Ascari's record at the Nurburgring is unique: races - 5; wins - 4. And he was winning the fifth by a mile when a wheel came off his Ferrari. He was the first man to complete a hat-trick of victories in the German Grand Prix, a feat equalled only by Juan Manuel Fangio.

By the time Alberto made his debut at the Ring in 1950 he had already established himself as one of the world's finest drivers after barely three seasons of racing. His countrymen were delighting in the fact that their new hero was the son of the great Antonio Ascari, who had driven for Alfa Romeo in the 1920s.

In that time Antonio had become friends with Enzo Ferrari, then employed by Alfa Romeo, and it was to him that young Alberto turned in his quest to become a racing driver. Although his father had been killed during the French GP at Montlhery in 1925, Alberto was determined to follow him onto the circuits. He began with motorcycles, first a 500 cc Sertum in 1936 and then with the 500 cc Gileras of Scuderia Ambrosiana, which raced cars and motorcycles. In 1937 he won five races, which brought him an invitation to join Bianchi in 1938, which he did, his success limited more by a lack of petrol due to the political situation, than a lack of skill on his part.

In 1940 he set about getting his career as a racing driver started and in doing so was instrumental in getting Ferrari (who had left Alfa Romeo in 1938) embarked on a career as a bona fide constructor. In *Ferrari - the Man, the Machines*, Peter Coltrin revealed that, 'In late 1939 Alberto Ascari and a friend approached Ferrari and asked him to build a pair of sports racing cars for them. The twenty-one-year-old Ascari was the son of Ferrari's late racing driver friend, Antonio Ascari, and with a successful motorcycle racing career behind him, he now wanted to try his hand at four wheels. Ascari's companion was the Marquis Lotario Rangoni Macchiavelli di Modena, a scion of one of the

city's most distinguished families who had taken part in some local races and whose garage was just up the street from Ferrari's premises.'

The request was made at a dinner party on Christmas Eve, 1939, and there was some urgency about it as Ascari wanted to race the car in the forthcoming Mille Miglia, to be held on April 28. The race had been banned by the government immediately after the 1938 event, when a car ran into the crowd, killing 10 people and injuring many others. Three weeks later, journalist and racing driver Johnny Lurani suggested reviving the race by running it on a triangular, 100-mile circuit, to be lapped 10 times. In 1940 this idea was taken up (with no credit to Lurani) and the race re-named as *Il Gran Premio di Brescia*, to be run over nine laps of a triangular course from Brescia to Cremona to Mantova and back to Brescia.

Enzo Ferrari agreed to Ascari's request and engineer Alberto Massimino set about designing a car for the 1.5-litre class. A clause in Ferrari's contract with Alfa Romeo stipulated that he could not put his name on a racing car for some years, so the new machine was known as the *Vettura 815* (eight cylinders, 1.5 litres). It was largely based on the Fiat 508C Balilla with a straight-eight engine formed of two Fiat units and clothed in a body styled by Carrozzeria Touring of Milan. Two cars were built and entered in the *Gran Premio di Brescia* for Ascari and the Marquis, who raced as Rangoni.

It would be nice to record a success first time out for the 'first Ferrari', but although Ascari led his class for the initial lap, he and Rangoni were both forced to retire soon afterwards. And that was the end of his racing career until the Second World War had been won by the Allies.

In 1947 Ascari went to Cairo, of all places, where there was a race for Cisitalias, to be driven by the likes of Louis Chiron, Franco Cortese, Antonio Brivio and Piero Taruffi. Ascari caused quite a stir by finishing second in his Heat to Taruffi and

second in the Final behind Cortese. This led to an invitation to rejoin Scuderia Ambrosiana and race its factory-prepared Maseratis.

The Scuderia's number one driver was Gigi Villoresi and the two men quickly became firm friends. That year Alberto won the Circuit of Modena and in 1948 won the San Remo GP and the Coppa Acerbo. He was victorious in the 1949 Buenos Aires GP and then returned to Italy to join Scuderia Ferrari, taking Villoresi with him. By now Ferrari had hired Gioachino Colombo as his Chief Engineer and they decided to race sports and GP cars powered by a V12 engine. Ferrari claimed that this decision was inspired by his admiration for the Packard V12, which he had first seen in a photo of Ralph de Palma's racer in the 1914 Indianapolis 500. He also remembered that, 'In the early post-war years I had the opportunity to get a close-up look at the new Packard engines in the magnificent cars of the high-ranking American officers.'

All good, romantic stuff but, as Griffith Borgeson pointed out, Ferrari hated giving credit to others and this was just his way of diverting attention from his real inspiration, the several V12s that Vittorio Jano had designed for Alfa Romeo in the 1930s. Be that as it may, the Ferrari F1 125 and F2 166 were powered by 1.5- and 2-litre V12s, the figures 125 and 166 denoting the cubic capacity of one cylinder. The F1 car was supercharged, producing 250 bhp @ 7,000 rpm, the F2 car was not, and produced 155 bhp at the same revs. In the absence of Alfa Romeo (which had withdrawn from racing) Ascari drove the F1 cars to victory in the Swiss and Italian GPs and the International Trophy race at Silverstone. And he won the F2 races at Bari and Reims.

However, in 1950 the Alfas returned to the fray and Ascari and Ferrari failed to win a single Grande Epreuve in the new World Championship, which was dominated by the Alfa Romeos of Nino Farina and Juan Manuel Fangio, the former becoming the first World Champion. In F2, however, Alberto drove the 166 to victory at Modena, Mons, Rome and Reims before travelling to Germany for his first look at the Nurburgring.

The circuit had re-opened with a National meeting the year before and its success prompted the FIA to grant International status to the Automobilclub von Deutschland for 1950. The Club immediately set about organising its first post-war German Grand Prix and, as there were no German Formula One cars (4.5-litres u/s; 1.5-litres s) available, they made theirs a Formula Two race, for 2-litre cars. This allowed a number of German-built machines, such as Veritas and AFM, to take part.



Bremgarten 1950, Ferrari 125

After six years of reverberating to the raucous sounds of the Silver Arrows from 1934 to 1939, the Nurburgring garage square sounded (and looked) decidedly different as the cars arrived for the Grand Prix. There was no sign of Mercedes-Benz or Auto Union, but with the old order gone there were works entries from the new, Scuderia Ferrari, Officine Maserati and Equipe Gordini.

Entering his first race in Germany as a constructor, Enzo Ferrari sent two 166 models to be driven by Ascari and Dorino Serafini, the latter standing in for Villoresi, who had crashed and injured himself in Geneva. Maserati sent three six-cylinder cars, for the powerful team of Juan Fangio, Froilan Gonzalez and Louis Chiron; there were 1.5-litre Simca Gordinis for Maurice Trintignant, Andre Simon and Robert Manzon and two HWMs for Lance Macklin and motorcycle ace Bob Anderson.

However, as Rodney Walkerley remarked in *The Motor*, 'The day was full of rather sad, pale ghosts of the past. Caracciola was there, still a semi-invalid after his post-war crash at Indianapolis; Ernst Henne was there; Herr Neubauer, heavier than before, was Chief Starting Marshal and he must have had fits at the general tone of the pit work, and the mobs which surrounded the cars when they came into the pits, von Brauchitsch, obviously much older, was imprisoned in an AFM, with modified BMW engine. The great Hermann Lang had a single-seater Veritas with a single overhead camshaft ex-BMW engine. Hans Stuck, once mountain champion of Europe and Auto Union driver, had a new AFM with a specially-designed V8, twin overhead camshaft engine thought up by motorcycle expert Kucher, and these were the only drivers who had raced on the Ring before.'

Alberto Ascari, of course, had never seen the circuit before, but his remarkable natural ability immediately stamped him as a Ringmeister in waiting. He did 20 laps in a sports Ferrari to find



1951 Nurburgring, A. Ascari Ferrari 375

his way around, before climbing aboard his racer and winning pole position with a lap in 10 mins 39.5 secs. Already he was instantly recognizable by his racing attire, which was all in blue: trousers, open-necked sports shirt (usually with short sleeves) and linen wind helmet, which became a blue hard hat when they became compulsory in 1952.

His pole position time was 10 seconds quicker than Simon on the Gordini and 17 seconds quicker than his team-mate, Serafini. Sadly, of the Maseratis there was no sign, as all three were withdrawn before practice, and the 300,000 spectators who had flocked to their beloved Nurburgring from all over Germany were denied a battle between Ascari and Fangio.

The Grand Prix was preceded by a 9-lap sportscar race and then a 6-lapper for 500 cc cars. In *The Autocar*, Gordon Wilkins noted that, 'As the Nurburg-Ring is in the French Zone it was fitting that the first post-war international race should end with the playing of the Marseillaise. Germany, being still divided by conquerors who are now divided among themselves, has no national anthem and Reiss' win (in a Veritas) was celebrated to the haunting strains of a tune called "Ich hab mich ergeben" - "I have surrendered."

In Fangio's absence a Ferrari victory was virtually a certainty, just as long as the 166s lasted the distance of 16 laps. Ascari's did, but Serafini's did not. He retired after six laps with gearbox failure, but Ascari went serenely on his way, leading by some four miles at one point, before easing up with the race in the bag. But not quite, for on his last lap he slipped a rear wheel over the top of the Karussell's banked turn and broke many of its spokes. He nursed the Ferrari to the finish, still some two-and-a-half minutes ahead of Andre Simon in the Simca-Gordini. He had also made fastest lap in 10 mins 43.6 secs. The first post-war King of the Nurburgring had ascended to the throne.

Two months earlier, Ascari had given the new F1 Ferrari its maiden outing in the Belgian GP at Spa. Aurelio Lampredi had now replaced Colombo at the Scuderia and he and Enzo were agreed that the supercharged V12 of the 125 was too thirsty and unreliable. They decided to go the unsupercharged route and so Lampredi came up with a 3.3-litre V12 that would be enlarged to 4.5 litres for 1951. It was the smaller engine, the 275, which powered Ascari's car in the Belgian GP and he finished fifth.

In 1951 the 4.5-litre 375 began its assault on the invincibility of the supercharged Alfa Romeo 159s. Juan Fangio won the first Grande Epreuve, the Swiss, for Alfa, but Taruffi was second in the Ferrari. Nino Farina (Alfa) won in Belgium, where Ascari was second. For the French GP at Reims the Ferrari team was strengthened by the addition of Jose Froilan Gonzalez. Ascari retired early on and took over Gonzalez' car to finish second behind Fangio, who had taken over Fagioli's Alfa. The Alfa domination was finally broken at Silverstone, where Gonzalez scored an historic victory, beating Fangio into second place by almost a minute. Ascari retired with gearbox problems.

And so to the Nurburgring, where Ascari lost no time in establishing himself as top dog, taking pole position for the German Grand Prix with 9 mins 55.8 secs. That was just 3.6 secs shy of Hermann Lang's outright record, set with the Mercedes W154 in the 1939 Eifel GP. Gonzalez and Fangio were both newcomers to the Ring, which didn't stop them from showing their potential as Ringmeisters by making second and third fastest times with 9' 57.5" and 9' 59.0" respectively. Taking fourth spot on the grid was Fangio's team-mate, Nino Farina (an old hand at the Ring), who recorded 10' 01.0".

'Today is der Tag, der Tag for Germany's first post-war Formula 1 Grosser Preis,' wrote Autosport's correspondent. 'And what a circuit the cars were to race over! No flat airfield course with characterless straw-baled corners, but the other extreme, a nightmare 14.2 miles of wild-plunging, twisting black tarmac, set in the heart of the Eifel Mountains in West Germany, with every variety of bend from harsh hairpins to flat-out curves; a headlong plunge down the Fuchsröhre followed by right-left-right bends in quick succession, the sharp right-hander at Bergwerk, a long climb to the unique Karussell curve, with its one car's width of banking, then right, a long left-hander and right again at Hohe Acht, more bends at Brunnchen, a breather through the Pflanzgarten, then the double Schwalbenschwanz (Swallow-tail) and one

long, switchback straight running from Dottinger Hohe back to the start, a frightening test for man and machine.' The anonymous writer clearly did not care for Silverstone!

Ascari made a poor start and it was Farina who roared into the lead, followed by Fangio, Gonzalez and Piero Taruffi (Ferrari). Fangio quickly overtook his team-mate and Ascari moved up on Gonzalez. At the end of the opening lap it was Fangio, just 3.4 secs ahead of Ascari, who had Gonzalez close behind him. The second time round and Fangio was 7 secs to the good, but then Ascari carved away at his lead, the Ferrari passing the Alfa Romeo on lap four. Lap six and Fangio stopped for fuel, allowing Gonzalez up into second place and into the lead, briefly, when Ascari stopped at the end of lap nine. Fangio fought his way back to first place on lap 12, but two laps later he had to stop for more fuel and Ascari took the lead once more.

After sixteen laps he was 75 sec ahead and apparently cruising to victory, but he then made an unscheduled stop for rear tyres. 'His pit staff seemed somewhat amazed to see him,' noted Rodney Walkerley in *The Motor*, 'and there was a certain amount of drama before the jack was under the car. However, he was away looking anxiously over his shoulder with about half-a-minute still in hand, and thereafter there was nothing Fangio could do about it.'

Italian journalist Giovanni Canestrini later revealed the reason for this stop. Before the race, Ascari asked him how Nuvolari had beaten the German teams in his famous victory of 1935. Canestrini recounted how Manfred von Brauchitsch had abused his tyres and suffered a blow-out on the last lap as a result.

After the race Ascari told Canestrini that as he was well aware of Fangio's tactic of attacking his rivals at the end of a race he did not want to run the risk of wearing out his tyres, as had happened to von Brauchitsch, when he would have had to react to the pace of his pursuer. "Being certain that I could go as fast as Fangio, I wanted to be in the best condition to beat him."

He was also aware that the very thirsty Alfa Romeos were expected to make two pits stops to the one of the Ferraris, so "I came in because otherwise people would have said that I won because I made only one pit stop. Instead I also made two stops - and one of them a surprise!"

Be that as it may, Ferrari's unsupercharged 4.5-litre cars had inflicted a second stunning defeat on the Alfas. Fangio finished second, but the other Alfas had retired, whereas Ferraris filled the next four places.

It was the same result for Ferrari in the Italian GP at Monza, which Ascari won by almost a minute from Gonzalez. Fangio was forced out with a blown piston. The World Championship was now on a knife-edge, as it was to be decided by the best four results from eight races and with just the Spanish GP to come, Fangio led Ascari by two points. Sadly, in an effort to complete the race in Barcelona non-stop Scuderia Ferrari fitted all their cars with small diameter, larger section tyres, which failed to stand up to the weight of fuel and the high speed on the very long main straight. Fangio won convincingly for Alfa Romeo, with Gonzalez (Ferrari) second. Ascari was fourth, two laps behind. So Juan Fangio became World Champion for 1951, with Ascari in second place.

The current Formula 1 was due for a change in 1954, when GP cars would have to be powered by engines of 2.5-litres unsupercharged or 750 cc supercharged. However, at the end of 1951 Alfa Romeo decided to retire once again, which left only Scuderia Ferrari with competitive cars in the 4.5-litre u/s/1.5-litre s Formula. The FIA and race organisers very reasonably decided that for 1952 and '53 the World Championship should be run for 2-litre F2 cars.

Ferrari and Aurelio Lampredi decided to abandon their V12 engines as Lampredi knew that a four-cylinder unit would be lighter and produce more power. His new engine gave 170 bhp as opposed to the 155 of the V12 and the Ferrari 500 became one of the most successful GP cars of all time, dominating the 1952 and '53 seasons completely.

It must be said that throughout 1952 Alberto faced no real opposition other than his team-mates, for the new Maserati A6GCM only made its debut in the German GP, where its rear axle failed on the opening lap, and it didn't appear again until the Italian GP in September, by which time Ascari had been World Champion for a month. For the rest, the Gordinis, HWMs and Cooper-Bristols were simply not in the same league as the cars from Maranello. More to the point his biggest rival, Juan Manuel Fangio, crashed and was seriously injured in a non-Championship race at Monza in June and was out of action for the rest of the year. (See Ringmeister 5 - Juan Fangio)

Ascari missed the opening Grande Epreuve of the season, the Swiss, as he was driving a 4.5-litre Ferrari at Indianapolis. Less than an hour into the race a rear wheel collapsed and Ascari was out, but he had stunned everyone in qualifying by completing his four laps with less than eight-tenths of a second between the slowest and the fastest. Such consistency was unheard of at the speedway.



1952 Nurburgring, A. Ascari Ferrari 500



1952 Monza, A. Ascari Ferrari 500

Alberto came home and won the Belgian and French GPs and then Scuderia Ferrari entered three cars in the German GP for him, Farina and Taruffi. For some reason the organisers were unable to produce any official practice times, but Ascari won pole position with 10 mins 04.9 secs, pretty nifty for a 2-litre car, considering his pole time the previous year in the 4.5 was 9' 55.8".

That year, 1952, was the Jubilee year of the Nurburgring, so it was appropriate that Mercedes-Benz, who had won the opening race 25 years earlier, were back and racing again, dipping their toes in competition with sportscars prior to a return to Grand Prix racing. Fresh from their superb victory at Le Mans, the Silver Arrows were in the form of four open 300SLs and were entered for the 10-lap sportscar race. Led by former Grand Prix great Hermann Lang, the team was once again under the command of Alfred Neubauer and it was just like old times at the Ring, as *The Autocar* noted:

'When practice finished on Saturday (Mercedes fastest), Herr Neubauer gave a brief signal, the four cars left in procession and the pit was instantly closed and deserted. When the start flag fell on Sunday those four cars shot off in similar fashion - Kling, Riess, Lang, Helfrich - and at the end of ten laps it was Lang, Kling, Riess, Helfrich and Herr Neubauer stolidly buttoning up his jacket, job done. Magnificent: how long before Grands Prix are buttoned up in a similar manner?'

For the Grand Prix, Ascari shared the front row of the grid with Nino Farina (Ferrari) and the Gordinis of Maurice Trintignant and Robert Manzon. Apart from the Ferrari of Piero Taruffi and the Gordini of Jean Behra, the rest of the 30-strong field was made up of private entrants, most of whom were obscure Germans whose entries had been accepted in an effort to bolster the attendance figures. No one offered any threat to Ascari, who simply ran away with the race.

After four laps he was one minute ahead of Farina. Next time round he set fastest lap of the race in 10 mins 05.1 secs, then eased back into the 10' 20"s. On lap 10 he stopped for new rear wheels (but no fuel) and five laps later his lead over Farina was 48 secs. Then, as Rodney Walkerley reported:

'With two laps to go Drama reared its interesting head with its usual suddenness. Just as we sat back to watch Ascari tour round to win, he screeched to his pit in a ferment of agitation, covered in oil, to have a gallon or so slammed into the tail tank, looking anxiously over his shoulder and unconsciously revving his engine to the red marks while he waited, a Prey to Apprehension. And lo, Farina sailed serenely by while Ascari bit his nails for 33 secs. Now, with two laps to go, Ascari fought for his World Championship points. He tore round that nightmare circuit, sliding the corners left and right, flogging the Ferrari to its limit. The crowds were on their feet shouting. Farina, unruffled and grinning, fled before him, but with an ever-diminishing gap. Ascari had restarted with 10 secs to make up and in that one lap of 14 miles he sliced it off until half-way round he was on Farina's tail, and he passed him in front of the roaring grandstand. Farina drew level again as they braked for the South Curve, but Ascari deftly swung his car through in a tight sliding turn and led by a length out of the corner.'

Ascari covered his final lap in 10 mins 06.7 secs to win by 14 seconds and become the first man to score a hat-trick of victories in the German Grand Prix. In *Autocourse*, Corrado Millanta wrote, 'Many Germans who have studied all the famous drivers on this infernal circuit during these last years consider Ascari to be the greatest of them all. The results themselves are proof enough, but what is more striking is his regularity and sang-froid when the fight is at its most violent. There was a difference of only 7 secs between his average lap speed - excluding, of course, pit stops - and his fastest lap, and remember the circuit is 14.2 miles long.'

As before, the World Championship was decided on the best four results of eight races (which

included the Indianapolis 500) and Ascari's success at the Nurburgring meant that he had won four Grandes Epreuves on the trot, so the title was his. He went on to win the final two races, the Dutch and Italian, giving him an unprecedented six wins in a row. He also set fastest lap in all of them and pole position in five!

For 1953 Lampredi left his winning Ferrari well alone, although the 500 now produced close to 190 bhp @ 7500 rpm. However, Maserati emerged as a real threat with the arrival in their midst of Giaocchino Colombo, who set about tweaking the A6GCM into the A6SSG. They also signed a fully recovered Juan Manuel Fangio and his fellow Argentine, Jose Froilan Gonzalez -a formidable pairing of prime, Argentine beef. For its part, Scuderia Ferrari signed the exciting young Englishman, Mike Hawthorn, to join Ascari, Farina and Villoresi.

Despite Maserati's newfound strength the first three Grandes Epreuves of the year fell to Alberto Ascari, whose run of nine consecutive Championship victories remains unequalled fifty years on. The run came to a halt in the French GP, when Mike Hawthorn and Juan Fangio had their legendary duel and Ascari found himself relegated to an unaccustomed fourth place. Order was restored at Silverstone, however, where he won by one minute from Fangio.

And so to the Nurburgring, where Alberto Ascari was King. Ferrari sent four cars for Ascari, Farina, Hawthorn and Villoresi. They also sent a 4.5-litre sportscar which all four drivers used in practice in preparation for the very first 1000 Kms race, scheduled for the end of August.

Once again Ascari dominated practice, his time on the first day, when the weather was wet and blustery, being a remarkable 10 mins 0.4 secs, which was no fewer than 19.5 seconds faster than the next man, Juan Fangio. On Saturday Ascari put his Ferrari on pole, with a time of 9 mins 59.8 secs. No one else got below 10 minutes, Fangio recording 10' 03.7", Farina 10' 04.1" and Hawthorn 10' 12.6".

Fangio made the best start, but at the end of the lap it was Ringmeister Ascari who fled past the pits first, 11 secs ahead of Fangio, who had Hawthorn and Farina on his tail. Ascari was flying, and in a class of his own. He completed his second lap in 10' 02.9", his third in 10 minutes exactly, his fourth in that plus 2 secs. 'Ascari was obviously quite uncatchable, his mastery of the Nurburgring being superb,' wrote Denis Jenkinson in *Motor Sport*, 'and he steadily increased his lead by around 10 secs per lap.'

Fangio and Hawthorn were reliving their Reims battle, with Hawthorn having the better of it for the moment but, as Rodney Walkerley noted in *The Motor*, 'Then came the drama. Motoring at 150 mph up the finishing straight on his fifth lap, Ascari saw his front right-hand wheel unaccountably detach itself and disappear into the sky with startling speed. Without lifting his foot Ascari kept the three-wheeled vehicle on its course until it sank gracefully on to its brake drum for the next mile. He passed the pits at 80 mph and gently braked to a standstill beyond. A mechanic ran madly with a jack and, thus elevated in front, Ascari reversed to his pit with a brake drum nicely flattened for one third of its periphery, got a new wheel and was off after 4 mins 5 secs, in 9th place, while Hawthorn took the lead a few lengths ahead of Fangio.'

'How the Dickens he kept the car on the road, slumped sideways in front at about 150 mph, took it something over a mile up a hill and round two curves to pull up gently just past the pits is, we thought, more a demonstration of his mastery than even the way he had been galloping away from the rest of the race.'

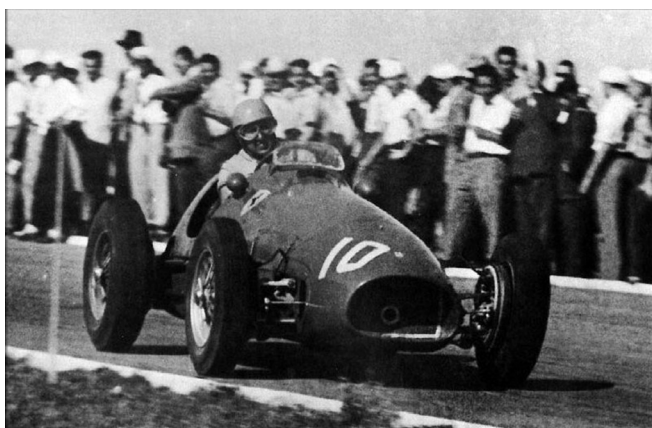
So now an Englishman was leading the German GP for the first: time since Dick Seaman had done so in 1938. But this race's surprises were not over yet, for out of the blue Nino Farina began a charge that took him whistling past Fangio and then Hawthorn and into the lead at the end of lap eight, which he covered in 9 mins 59.9 secs.

Meanwhile Ascari was once again flying round the Ring, covering his eighth lap even quicker, in 9' 57.1", only for Farina to equal that on lap 9. Ascari replied with 10' 00.6" but, clearly unhappy with the Ferrari's handling, came into the pits next time round to retire. Team Manager Nello Ugolini immediately flagged in Gigi Villoresi, who was in fourth place, and Alberto went back into the fray. To say that he was fired up at the thought of actually losing a race at his beloved Nurburgring is some understatement. In *Autosport*, Gregor Grant wrote, 'If Ascari's previous passages were rocket-like, his present ones are meteor-like. It occasions little surprise to wielders of stop-watches to learn that the three-times German GP winner has covered his 12th lap in 9 mins 56.0 secs - a Formula 2 record! That would remain the fastest lap of the race.'

Sadly, it was all too much for the Ferrari. Just when it looked as though Alberto was closing on Hawthorn his engine erupted in a cloud of blue smoke and his day was done. Farina went on to score a superb victory, finishing more than one minute ahead of Fangio in the Maserati and continuing Ferrari's unbroken run of Championship wins.



1953 Nurburgring, A. Ascari Ferrari 500



1953 Buenos Aires, A. Ascari Ferrari 500

Ascari won the next GP, the Swiss, clinching his second World Championship. In those two years he and the Ferrari 500 had entered 14 Grandes Epreuves, winning 11 and recording 12 pole positions and 9 fastest laps. There may not have been much in the way of opposition, but you can only beat those who turn up on the day and Ascari's silken skills and awesome consistency made him a truly great champion.

Long-distance sportscar racing came to the Nurburgring in 1953, when the first 1000 kilometre race was held on August 30, with works entries from Ferrari, Lancia and Maserati. Scuderia Ferrari sent two 4.5-litre V12s, an open model with Vignale bodywork for Alberto Ascari/Gigi Villoresi and a Pinin Farina Berlinetta for Nino Farina/Mike Hawthorn; Lancia sent three V6 D24s (also styled by Pinin Farina), two 3.3-litre machines for Juan Fangio/Felice Bonetto and Piero Taruffi/Robert Manzon and a 3-litre for Giovanni Bracco/Eugenio Castellotti. Officine Maserati sent three 2-litre cars for drivers including Hermann Lang, Hans Herrmann and the young Argentine Onofre Marimon. As the 1000 kms was just one week after the Goodwood Nine Hours there were no entries from Aston Martin or Jaguar, although Ecurie Ecosse courageously sent three C-types.

Juan Fangio was fastest in practice, taking his D24 round in 10 mins 12.8 secs, while Taruffi recorded 10' 16.6". Ascari was fastest of the Ferrari drivers, with 10' 24.9", which was not exactly encouraging, as the Lancias were giving away more than a litre to the Ferrari. Worse still, the engine in Alberto's car broke irreparably, so the V12 was taken out of the Farina/Hawthorn Berlinetta and dropped into the roadster. It was then decided that Ascari should be partnered by Farina rather than Villoresi, so Gigi and Mike Hawthorn were unemployed.

In order to run the whole, 44-lap race in daylight the start was scheduled for 7-30 am. Ascari was first away after the Le Mans run-and-jump and at the end of the first lap he led from Taruffi, with almost 30 seconds passing before the arrival of the Lancias of Fangio and Castellotti. Fangio's race lasted just four laps before he was sidelined with a failed fuel pump, but the other two Lancias soon overwhelmed Ascari's Ferrari and then ran away from it.

It was not to be Lancia's day, however, for when both cars stopped to refuel and change drivers at the end of the fifteenth lap they failed to restart, due to flat batteries. As no spare was carried on the cars they had to be withdrawn and the race was handed to Ferrari. Ascari and Farina completed the 44 laps without drama to win the first 1000 kms of the Nurburgring by more than 15 minutes from the Ecurie Ecosse C-type Jaguar of Roy Salvadori and Ian Stewart, Roy gallantly doing most of the driving as Ian had other things on his mind - he was on honeymoon!

And that was Alberto Ascari's last race at the Nurburgring. Early in 1954 he stunned the Italian motor racing world by announcing that he and Gigi Villoresi were leaving Ferrari to join Lancia, Gianni Lancia having decided to enter GP racing after enjoying considerable success with his sportscars. This was the beginning of the new, 2.5-litre F1 and in February Ascari drove the Vittorio Jano-designed Lancia D50 for the first time. Although he was very excited about its prospects it was soon obvious that the car needed a great deal of development before it would be ready to race.

Ascari's hopes of defending his World Championship faded fast, as he had to watch Juan Manuel Fangio win in Argentina and Belgium with a 250F Maserati, until the new Mercedes-Benz W196 was ready in time for the French GP. The D50s were not ready, however, and when Gianni Lancia realised that neither Ferrari nor Maserati had an Italian driver entered for the race, he quickly gave permission for Ascari and Villoresi to join Maserati.

ti at Reims. Ascari had not driven a Maserati since winning the Buenos Aires GP in 1949, yet he immediately put his 250F on the front row of the grid, just 1.1 secs slower than Fangio in the streamlined Mercedes. And a fat lot of good it did him, for the transmission failed at the start and he had to sit by the side of the road with Gianni Lancia, watching the Mercedes of Fangio and Kling waltz home to a sensational 1-2 victory.

Ascari also drove a Maserati (two, to be precise) in the British GP, but both failed him, so when the time came for the German GP at the Nurburgring, he decided to stay away from his favourite circuit, rather than risk another failure. Ideally, he should have returned to Ferrari for this race, as the Scuderia had crushed Mercedes at Silverstone, but Alberto had burnt his boats with Enzo so he decided to sit this one out. Which was unfortunate for everyone except Fangio, for as long as Ascari had four wheels under him he was unbeatable at the Ring and it must have been intensely frustrating for him to miss that race. Early on in the GP Gonzalez in the Ferrari gave Fangio a very hard time and as Alberto had lapped in 9 mins 56.0 secs with the 180 bhp of the 2-litre Ferrari under his foot in 1953, what might he have achieved with the 230 bhp of the new, 2.5-litre car? He must have had a very good chance of scoring a fifth victory at the Ring.

And he might have done just that anyway, had not the ADAC cancelled the second 1000 Kms race shortly after the GP. Ascari had already tested the new, 3.8-litre Lancia D25 there and had reportedly achieved the stunning time of 9 mins 52.0 secs, which was not only 3.1 secs better than Karl Kling's fastest lap in the recent German GP, but also faster than Hermann Lang's outright lap record of 9' 52.2", set with the supercharged, 3-litre Mercedes in 1939.

That testing session was, alas, to be Alberto Ascari's last visit to the circuit he loved and dominated above all others, for the first post-war King of the Nurburgring was killed while testing a Ferrari sportscar at Monza in May, 1955.

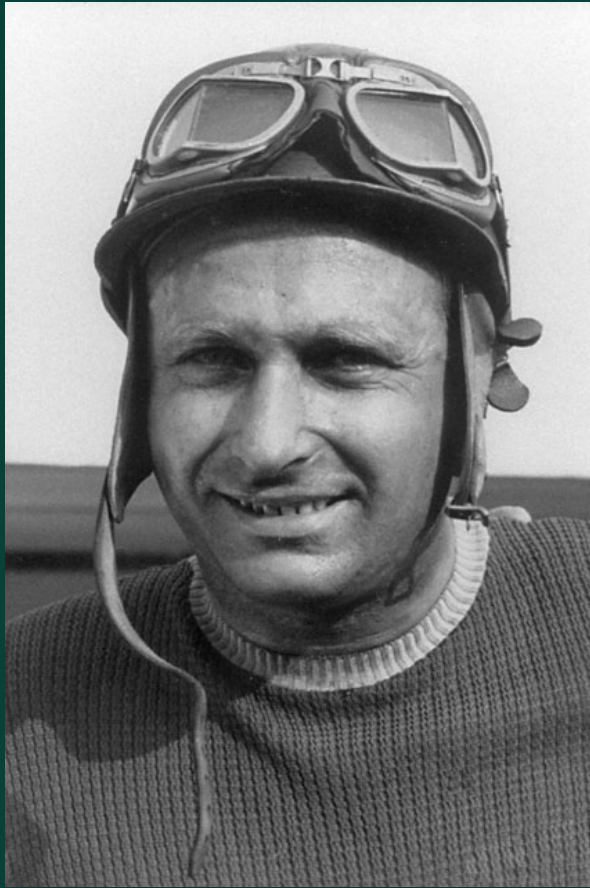
His untimely death at the age of 37 left the road clear for Fangio to drive on to immortality. To be sure, he was challenged on occasion by the young pretenders Mike Hawthorn and Stirling Moss, but their victories were few and far between and they never remotely challenged his overall supremacy, which he never possessed so long as Ascari was around. Ascari's record shows that he was capable of beating Fangio virtually any day of the week but with no Ascari to challenge him, Juan Manuel racked up four World Championships in a row before retiring in 1958 and his outstanding success in the years after Alberto's death, culminating with that sensational drive in the 1957 German Grand Prix, have undoubtedly overshadowed the Italian's achievements. Yet in Ascari's lifetime there were many who considered him to be better than Fangio and observers were referring to him as Maestro long before that accolade was bestowed upon the Argentine.

It is worth noting that Fangio declined Gianni Lancia's invitation to join Ascari in his Grand Prix team and the fact that, had he done so, one of them would have proved to be faster than the other may well have had something to do with it. In the light of Fangio's god-like reputation today that may seem like heresy, but in 1954 both were in the Lancia sportscar team for two events and whether racing on the wide, aerodrome spaces of Sebring or through the serpentine roads that ran between the hedgerows of Dundrod, Ascari was consistently the quicker and, in the TT, by a considerable margin. Autocourse published the lap times of every car (to seconds only, no tenths) and Ascari's fastest lap was 4' 50", as opposed to Fangio's 4' 55".

Alberto Ascari was unquestionably one of the greatest drivers of all time. He excelled on any circuit you care to name and at the Nurburgring, the most demanding of all, he was virtually unbeatable. He won pole position in all four GPs he entered, set fastest lap in three and won three. And he won the first 1000 Kms. If the Nordschleife is a yardstick of a driver's greatness, then Alberto Ascari has no superiors.

ASCARI AT THE RING

YEAR	EVENT	LAPS	CAR	NUMBER	RESULT
1950	Grand Prix	16	Ferrari 166	2	PP & FL 1
1951	Grand Prix	20	Ferrari 375	71	PP 1
1952	Grand Prix	18	Ferrari 500	101	PP & FL 1
1953	Grand Prix	18	Ferrari 500	1	PP DNF
			Ferrari 500 (with Gigi Villoresi)	4	FL DNF
1953	1000 Kms		Ferrari 4.5-litre (with Nino Farina)	1	1



RINGMEISTER

5

JUAN FANGIO



1951 - 1957

'Getting to know the Nurburgring was like getting to know a woman. You can't memorize 176 curves over more than 14 miles, just as you can't memorize 176 feminine wiles after a short acquaintance.'

So said Juan Manuel Fangio in his book, *My Racing Life*. By the time he first raced at the most demanding circuit in the world he was 40 years old, an age at which most sportsmen are ex-sportsmen and in pipe-and-slipper mode. But Fangio cannot be included in the phrase 'most sportsmen', for so deep was his well of skill, experience and endurance that he continued racing until he was 47. He also left his greatest race almost to the very last, for his victory over the Ferraris of Mike Hawthorn and Peter Collins in the German Grand Prix of 1957 is regarded by many as the greatest drive of all time. It also completed his hat-trick of victories in the race, equalling the achievement of his greatest rival, Alberto Ascari, and it is worth noting that Fangio never won at the Nurburgring while Ascari was around.

Although separated by seven years and half-a-world, the two men began their racing careers almost in tandem. The 27 year-old Fangio began in 1938 with a Ford V8 in his native Argentina, whereas the 22 year-old Ascari got started with Enzo Ferrari's Vettura 815 in the 1940 Mille Miglia. That same year Fangio scored his first win, with a Chevrolet, and he became Argentine Champion, a feat he repeated in 1941. The war in Europe brought road racing in Argentina to a halt until 1947, when Fangio resumed his career and in 1948 he travelled to Europe and took part in two races at Reims, driving a Gordini. He retired in both, but went back to Argentina with a Maserati 4CLT under his arm. With that he won the Mar del Plata GP early in 1949 and then returned to Europe for the season, racking up six wins, five with the Maserati. As a result, he was signed up for the 1950 Formula One season by Alfa Romeo.

In common with Alberto Ascari he was due to make his debut at the Nurburgring in the first post-war German GP, but unlike Ascari he never made the starting grid. As the race was for F2 cars he was entered in a works 4CLT Maserati. However, its new 6-cylinder engine suffered a cracked block and as no spare was available it was withdrawn from the race. Ascari, on the other hand, won pole position with his Ferrari and then romped away to an easy victory.

The next German GP was a pukka Formula 1 affair, counting towards the World Championship, which Nino Farina had won with Alfa Romeo in 1950. Alfas sent four 159s to the Nurburgring, having already won the first three Grandes Epreuves of the season, the third being the French GP at Reims, where Fangio had taken over Fagioli's car to score the 27th consecutive victory for the supercharged Alfa 158/159 since

1946. However, this remarkable run came to an end in the very next race, when Jose Froilan Gonzalez won the British GP at Silverstone with Ferrari's unblown 4.5-litre car, the 375. Was this the writing on the wall for the 1.5-litre supercharged engine?

Scuderia Ferrari certainly thought so and sent four 375s to the Ring, their 4.5-litre V12s pushing out 350 bhp @ 7,000 rpm. By contrast, the straight-eight Alfas produced around 420 bhp, but approximately 135 of this was required to drive the Roots-type two-stage supercharger, and the engine had a voracious thirst, consuming a gallon of fuel for every 1.6 miles of road.

The Ferraris were for Ascari, Gonzalez, Gigi Villoresi and Piero Taruffi; the Alfas for Fangio, Farina, Felice Bonetto and one other. Louis Chiron and Willy Daetweiler were considered before Alfas finally settled on the German Paul Pietsch, who selection was so late that he only managed two practice laps.

Fangio set about learning the circuit in the car Alfa Romeo had given him as part of his contract, a 2.5-litre, six-cylinder coupe. 'I tried to memorize the circuit from the start onwards,' he wrote. 'When the day of the race came, I knew it by memory as far as the eighth mile.'

This explains his crash in practice, when, by his own admission, he confused one high-speed curve with another and entered a left-hander too fast. 'I was taken by surprise,' he wrote, 'tried to change down and the clutch didn't respond. I went off the track sideways. In the end the tail hit a mound of earth that was between me and a line of trees and that stopped the car. I'm glad that mound was there.'

This makes his performance in practice all the more remarkable for, as John Cooper wrote in *The Autocar*, 'The practice period for the race had revealed an unprecedented state of affairs, with Alfa Romeo positively rattled and Ferrari making the two best practice times.' These were set by Ascari and Gonzalez, who recorded 9 min 55.8 secs and 9' 57.5" respectively.

Despite knowing only the first eight miles and driving the remaining six on reflexes, Fangio immediately established himself as a Ringmeister in waiting by recording 9' 59.0". Nevertheless, 'The old air of "invincibility" appears to have departed from the Alfa camp,' noted Autosport, adding 'The state of affairs with Ferrari that same evening seemed very different. The cars, looking new and clean and very formidable, were ready, but with a few mechanics carrying out unhurried tasks.'

Despite this and his unwanted excursion into the under-growth, Juan Manuel made a superb start and led for the opening lap, hounded by Gonzalez, Farina and Ascari, but the latter was in second place as they flashed past the pits. And that is where he stayed until the fifth tour, when he took the lead at Breidscheid. Next time round and Fangio was in for fuel and new rear wheels, rejoining the race in fifth place after 38 seconds. Ascari now led from Gonzalez, who was only four seconds behind.

Things began to go wrong for Alfa Romeo on lap two, when Paul Pietsch left the road at the Karussell, losing some seven minutes in the process and then, on the following lap, Bonetto stopped at the pits with his engine mis-firing badly. He was sent on his way with it in no better shape.

Farina stopped shortly after Fangio, only to retire at the pits in disgust a couple of laps later with damaged oil and water pipes, due to the bumps and jumps on the tortuous circuit.

Ascari made his scheduled pit stop on lap nine, allowing Gonzalez and Fangio to go past. Gonzalez then stopped and Ascari, going like the wind, caught and passed Fangio. But not for long, as the latter came back with a lap in 9 mins 56.0 secs to retake the lead on lap 11. He then completed lap 12 in 9' 55.8", which was to be the fastest lap of the race, and led Ascari by 14.5 secs.

Alfa Romeo then suffered another blow when Paul Pietsch, in fifth place and out of his depth in the very powerful 159, overdid things in the North Turn, shot up into the air backwards and disappeared from view. Happily, he reappeared on foot a few moments later, to great applause from the spectators on the grandstand, who had seen the whole thing and feared the worst for their man, but another Alfa was out of the race and only Fangio was left to do battle with Ascari and Gonzalez.

On lap 14 he made his second pit stop, still only 14 seconds ahead of Ascari. To make matters worse he stalled the Alfa on take off and then had trouble changing gear as he was pushed back into the race, which was now lost to Ferrari. However, the Alfa pit saw a glimmer of hope on lap 17 when Ascari took everyone by surprise and made an unscheduled stop for new rear tyres. This detained him for 40 seconds, and Rodney Walkerley noted that 'Ascari sat tapping his knee with nervous impatience and looking over his shoulder,' but he was away again before the snarl of the Alfa engine could be heard approaching the pits. Ascari was still half a minute ahead and with the Alfa's gear-box playing up, there was nothing Fangio could do about it. He completed the 20 laps 30.5 secs behind the Ferrari.

'Alfa Romeo certainly did not deserve to win,' wrote John Cooper in *The Autocar*, 'There was an almost defeatist air about their camp at times, and an unwonted air of indecision. Not to have decided earlier on the axle ratio and tyre size was a cardinal error; the ratios were changed twice, in spite of Fangio's definite statement as to which ratio he considered correct, and the mechanics literally were on the verge of a strike during the Saturday afternoon. As it was, they had to work all through that night.'

'One thing is certain: Alfa Romeo will have to do some very hard thinking before the Italian GP at Monza in September. The days of their easy supremacy in Grand Prix racing are over, for the present at least.'

Fangio's second place at the Ring meant that he now led the World Championship by 28 points to Ascari's 17 and although Alberto won the Italian

GP and Juan Manuel retired, Alfa Romeo recovered to enable the latter to win the last race, the Spanish GP, and to secure his first World Championship.

It was nearly his last, too, for in June, 1952 he crashed a Maserati at Monza. The World Championship was now for 2-litre F2 cars and Omer Orsi of Maserati asked Fangio to drive his new car in a non-Championship race on June 9. Fangio agreed - a foolish decision in view of the fact that he was to drive a BRM in the Ulster Trophy in Belfast the day before. After that race he and Louis Rosier flew to London, but there were no flights to Italy. They flew to Paris, only to find that all flights to Italy had been cancelled due to bad weather. Rosier then drove Fangio to Lyon in his Renault and, finding that there were still no flights, told Fangio to complete the journey to Monza in the car.

'What happened next is not a long story,' recalled Fangio in *My Racing Life*, 'I got to the autodrome at two in the afternoon, at half-past two I was racing and at three I was in hospital. Simple as that.'

As he had not practiced with the Maserati he started at the back of the grid, but was unconcerned

as he knew the Monza circuit well. However, he was very fatigued after his hectic journey across Europe and it caught up with him on the second lap when he crashed at Lesmo. He was lucky to survive. He suffered a broken vertebra and spent the next three months encased in a plaster cast. This was removed in time for the Italian GP in September and he was invited to start the race, but he had lost that whole Championship season - to Alberto Ascari.

So Fangio's next visit to the Nurburgring was for the 1953 German GP, when he was leader of the Maserati team of six-cylinder A6GCS cars.

One of his team-mates was his compatriot, Jose Froilan Gonzalez, but he had hurt himself in a crash in Portugal. He was replaced at the Ring by Felice Bonetto. Third man was another Argentine, Fangio's protege Onofre Marimon.

His two team-mates were hopelessly off the pace, both being almost 40 seconds slower than their leader, whose time of 10 mins 03.7 secs was almost four seconds slower than - you've guessed it - Ascari. Fangio shared the front row of the grid with the three Ferraris of Ascari (9' 59.8"), Farina (10' 04.1") and Hawthorn (10' 12.6"). All three

1956 German GP, Nurburgring - Juan Manuel Fangio



would lead the race at one time or another - Fangio would not.

Predictably, Ascari surged into the lead, hell-bent on winning his fourth German GP in a row. After four laps he was 37 seconds ahead of Hawthorn, who had Fangio right with him, but on lap five Ascari's Ferrari shed a front wheel and he came into the pits for a new one (See Ringmeister 4, Alberto Ascari).

Mike Hawthorn now led the German GP and try as he might, Fangio could not get past the Englishman. A month earlier the two had enjoyed a monumental dice in the French GP, which had been dubbed 'The Race of the Century'. Hawthorn had won by a few feet and was now showing that he was every bit as much at home on the helter-skelter of the Nurburgring as he had been flashing through the fields of Reims. He led for three laps until Farina surprised everyone by uncorking a bottle of vintage Nino and storming past first Fangio and then Hawthorn - and there was nothing either could do about it.

At half-distance (9 laps) Farina led Fangio by almost 13 seconds with Hawthorn the same distance behind. Ascari had given up on his own car and was waiting at the Ferrari pit to take over from his friend, Gigi Villoresi, which he did next time round. He set a new lap record on lap 12 with a remarkable 9' 56.0", but that was too much for the Ferrari, which expired two laps later.

By lap 12 Farina had extended his lead over Fangio to 30 seconds and Juan Manuel was looking decidedly black in the face as the exhaust pipes had fallen off his Maserati, which was sounding very odd as a result. He continued to the end, however, finishing second, just over a minute behind the flying Farina and almost 40 secs in front of Hawthorn.

A few weeks later Fangio was back at the Ring, this time driving for Lancia in the first 1000 Kms race, amid rumours that Gianni Lancia was trying to sign him up to drive his new Grand Prix car in 1954. There were two of the latest 3.3-litre D24 models on hand for Fangio/Felice Bonetto and Piero Taruffi/Robert Manzon and a 3-litre D23 for Eugenio Castellotti/Giovanni Bracco.

Fangio set fastest time in practice with 10 mins 12.8 secs and Taruffi was next with 10' 16.6", both way faster than the 4.5-litre Ferrari of Ascari and Farina, which Ascari could only get round in 10' 24.9". Lancia had used a spare D23 for private practice earlier in the month and it served the same purpose for the race, covering more than 150 laps altogether with no problems. In the circumstances, things were looking good for Fangio's first win at



the Nurburgring, but the reliability of the practice hack was not to be found in the race cars.

Ascari took an immediate lead from the Le Mans start, ahead of the Lancias of Taruffi and Fangio, but within a couple of laps Juan Manuel's race was run. The D24 came to a halt at Schwalbenschwanz and Fangio was seen to be working on the car, first under the bonnet and then under the car itself. It was to no avail, for the fuel pump had failed. The other two Lancias soon overtook Ascari and ran away from the Ferrari until the first pit stop, when both refused to start due to flat batteries. Ascari and Farina sailed on to an untroubled victory, Alberto securing his fourth win at the Ring in four years. He was the undisputed King of the Nurburgring, while Juan Manuel was still not yet a Ringmeister.

All this was about to change, for at the end of the season Ascari would leave Ferrari for Lancia and Fangio would leave Maserati for Mercedes-Benz and it was Fangio who would get what was immeasurably the better deal. Having Fangio on his sportscar team in 1953 made Gianni Lancia very keen to sign him up for his new Grand Prix programme early in 1954, but by this time Ascari had already made his move from Maranello to Turin (taking Villoresi with him) and Fangio clearly did not fancy joining him.

Also, Alfred Neubauer of Mercedes-Benz had been making overtures to Fangio since 1951. In the 1930s, Mercedes had enjoyed the skills of three of the great German drivers - Rudolf Caracciola, Manfred von Brauchitsch and Hermann Lang. Now, in 1953, only Lang was a possible candidate for a place in the team and Neubauer had to look hard to find another German driver of any repute. In the event, he chose 44 year-old Karl Kling and 23 year-old Hans Herrmann, neither of whom had any real Grand Prix experience. Lang was held in reserve. If Mercedes were going to return to racing with a chance of success, they had to have Fangio.



Juan Manuel agreed to a contract in principle, but refused to sign initially, as Neubauer could not tell him when the new Mercedes would be ready to race - June, possibly, but maybe July. He was prepared to pay Fangio for the races he might miss, but Fangio was more interested in Championship points. He had lost his title to Ascari in 1952 and '53 and was determined to regain it in '54. To this end he agreed to drive for Officine Maserati until the Mercedes was ready. It was a wise move.

Driving the new 250F, he won the Grands Prix of Argentina and Belgium, while his greatest rival, Ascari, was twiddling his thumbs, waiting for the D50 Lancia to be made raceworthy. When Mercedes-Benz made their debut in the French GP at Reims, Ascari drove a 250F Maserati, which broke its transmission at the start.

Ascari drove for Maserati again in the British GP, with no better luck, but Mercedes came a cropper, too. The streamliners were all at sea on the wide open spaces of Silverstone and Fangio could only finish fourth, behind the Ferraris of Gonzalez and Hawthorn and the Maserati of Marimon.

After two failures with Maserati, Ascari decided to stay at home rather than risk another at his beloved Nurburgring. There was now a complete reversal of fortune, for just as Ascari had experienced a Fangio-free zone throughout 1952, now Fangio was enjoying a virtually Ascari-free zone in 1954.

Mercedes-Benz had stunned the racing world with their beautiful streamliners at Reims. Built for the new 2.5-litre Formula 1, the W196 had a straight-eight engine producing 257 bhp @ 8250 rpm. It had desmodromic valves and Bosch fuel injection and by mounting it at 50 degrees from the vertical in a spaceframe chassis Mercedes engineers were able to run the driveshaft beside the driver to the rear-mounted five-speed gearbox, making for a very low car. Huge drum brakes were mounted inboard all round and the whole thing was covered in a gorgeous, aluminium streamlined body, requested by Alfred Neubauer for high-speed circuits such as Reims and Monza.

The streamlining worked superbly at Reims, but not at Silverstone, where Fangio found he had difficulty placing the car in corners. If this applied to Silverstone it would apply in spades at the Nurburgring so, for the German GP, the cars that Fangio and Kling had raced at Reims were stripped of their streamlining and fitted with open-wheel bodywork. These were given to Kling and Hermann Lang (brought back into the team for his home GP, at the circuit on which he had shone in 1939) and a completely new car was built for Fangio. The third Reims streamliner was left alone and given to Hans Herrmann.

The new cars were not ready for the first day's practice, so Fangio had to content himself with

some laps in the streamliner, recording a best time of 10 mins 05.3 sees. Fastest of the day was Stirling Moss in his privately-entered 250F Maserati with 10' 05.1" and third was another Englishman, Mike Hawthorn in the works Ferrari, with 10' 19.4".

On the Saturday the new Mercedes arrived, and received a decidedly luke-warm reception, for whereas the streamliner was undeniably gorgeous, the open-wheel W196 was anything but. Motor Sport's Denis Jenkinson described it as 'a rather gormless single-seater of vast width, the only real improvement over the Silverstone cars being that the driver could now see the wheels.'

As Karl Kling could attest, for on his first lap in the W196 one of his front wheels took flight, bounding off into the scenery while he was at full chat on the main straight. Shades of Alberto Ascari the previous year! Like Ascari, Kling managed to bring the car to a halt without damage, although as he had no outboard brake drum, he could not drive the car back to the pits, as Ascari had done. As a result of this incident, he had to complete his practice in cars other than his own, which meant that he had to start on the back row of the grid. This was dominated by Fangio, who got his new car round in 9 mins 50.1 sees, demolishing at last (and unofficially) Lang's pre-war outright lap record.

For some reason best known to themselves, the organisers abandoned the classic Nurburgring 4-3-4 grid, reducing it to 3-2-3 (a pointless exercise on so wide a starting area), so Fangio found himself on the front row alongside Mike Hawthorn's Ferrari (9' 53.3") and Moss's Maserati (10' 00.7"). Behind them were Hans Herrmann's streamlined Mercedes (10' 01.5") and Froilan Gonzalez' Ferrari (10' 01.8").

In Gonzalez, perhaps, lay the key to the race, for on Saturday morning Onofre Marimon crashed his works Maserati at Wehrseifen (see Ringmeister 6, Stirling Moss). As soon as the news reached the pits, Gonzalez leapt into the Ferrari 750S sportscar the team was using for training and drove to the crash site, where he learned that his fellow countryman had died of his injuries. Gonzalez was distraught, as was Fangio, for Marimon was a protege of theirs. He was also a hugely likeable young man and his death cast a pall over the whole weekend. Although Fangio was able to keep his grief in check, Gonzalez was not and his distress seriously affected his performance in the race.

Initially, however, he swallowed his grief and made a superb start, leading Fangio right round the first lap until they reached the 3-km straight, when the Mercedes went past the Ferrari. Stirling

1956 German GP, Nurburgring - Juan Manuel Fangio





Moss's challenge ended on lap two, when his Maserati broke a big-end, but the big surprise was Hermann Lang who, driving with all his pre-war fire and skill, moved his Mercedes into third place on lap four and into second a lap later. There he stayed until lap 11, when he made a mistake and spun, stalling his engine. Mike Hawthorn ran sixth initially, behind Herrmann's streamliner, only to retire on lap four with transmission failure.

By now Gonzalez' challenge was visibly wilting, so Mike asked Team Manager Nello Ugolini if he could take over the slowing Ferrari, but for some reason Ugolini refused, telling Hawthorn to wait until Gonzalez made his re-fuelling stop. Had

Mike taken over at once, he might well have taken the fight to Fangio, but the moment was lost.

As the race progressed, Fangio came under threat from his own team-mate, Karl Kling. Starting his home Grand Prix from the back row, with 18 cars in front of him, was not Kling's idea of fun so he proceeded to carve his way through the field, setting fastest lap of the race in 9 mins 59.3 secs and moving into a remarkable fourth place at the end of lap five. Next he dispatched Gonzalez and then Lang, before going after Fangio! This was not in Herr Neubauer's script and Kling was given frantic signals to slow down, as Fangio was due to win the race and consolidate his position in the World Championship. Kling ignored the signals. On lap 15 he passed Fangio as they went into the South Curve and set a new fastest lap of 9' 55.1", with Fangio right behind him. More than 300,000 spectators had come to see the return of the Silver Arrows to the Nurburgring and this sent them into ecstasies - a German driver in a German car was leading the German Grand Prix! It was just like old times!

Was Fangio going to be denied his maiden victory at the Nurburgring yet again? And by his team-mate? No, the reason for Kling's remarkable turn of speed was that since the fourth lap he

*1957 German GP, Nurburgring
Above - podium. Below - start*



had been sprayed with fuel. It was leaking from the tank behind him and onto the inboard drum brakes, which threw it forward into the cockpit. Convinced that he would not be able to complete the race non-stop, he decided to make up as much time as he could before refuelling.

Unaware of this, Fangio sat behind Kling, pointing angrily at him as they passed the pits to make his feelings clear to Alfred Neubauer, who was powerless to do anything about it. His problem was resolved on lap 17, when Kling suddenly slowed at Schwalbenschwanz and Fangio went back into the lead. Kling passed the pits pointing at his left rear suspension. Then a care-worn Gonzalez finally came in for fuel and was happy to give his car to Mike Hawthorn, who shot back into the race, hell-bent on salvaging something for the Scuderia.

Kling came in at the end of lap 19 and the Mercedes was immediately enveloped in a swarm of humanity, most of whom were hangers-on who should not have been there. Neubauer raged at them with his flag and some order was restored while the car was refuelled and the rear suspension checked. It was discovered that a radius rod had broken and by the time repairs had been effected Kling had lost 2 mins 20 secs and Mike Hawthorn had gone by, to be followed by Maurice Trintignant in another Ferrari. Hawthorn strove mightily to catch Fangio, but it was too late and Juan Manuel, easing up, still finished some 35 seconds ahead of the Ferrari. Karl Kling finished fourth, at very reduced speed.

So Fangio finally won at the Nurburgring at his fourth attempt but, tellingly, in the absence of Alberto Ascari. However, you can only race against those who turn up on the day and driving superbly, Fangio had seen off a strong challenge from Gonzalez and would surely have been able to deal with Kling had he had to, so his elevation to Ringmeister was assured.

His next visit to the Ring was to drive the new 300SLR in the 1955 Eifel races at the end of May, and he arrived to learn the shattering news that Alberto Ascari had been killed at Monza. The previous weekend in the Monaco Grand Prix, Alberto had taken a dive into the harbour in his Lancia, moments after taking the lead. He escaped with a bloody nose and a few bruises and four days later, unexpectedly decided to do a few laps in the Ferrari Monza he had been scheduled to drive in the Supercortemaggiore 1000 kms race that weekend. Unseen by anyone on the deserted track, he crashed fatally and all Italy was plunged into mourning.

After an impressive 1954 season driving a Maserati 250F, Stirling Moss had been signed to Mercedes-Benz for 1955 and, along with Fangio and Karl Kling he went to the Nurburgring after Monaco. The news of Ascari's death cast a pall over the whole weekend and Fangio, who had established a great rapport with his greatest rival, must have been stunned. However, he didn't let his feelings show, as Sir Stirling recalls, "He was a fairly emotional person, but he kept himself very much to himself, so I never really knew what he felt about it. He and I couldn't converse about anything other than food, cars and crumpet, really."

The 10-lap race was little more than a demonstration run by the three Mercedes. Fangio won by a car's length from Moss but a Mercedes 1,2,3 was spoiled when Kling's car sprang an oil leak, which dropped him to fourth place at the end.

There was to be no happy return to the Ring for Fangio in 1955, as the German Grand Prix was cancelled following the tragedy at Le Mans.

For the first two and a half hours of that race Fangio in the 300SLR and Mike Hawthorn in the D-type Jaguar were locked in a titanic duel, seemingly reliving their great battle in the French GP at Reims in 1953. But when making his scheduled pit stop, Hawthorn moved in front of the Austin-Healey of Lance Macklin and braked heavily. The standard disc brakes on the Austin-Healey were no match for the racing discs on the Jaguar and, in order to avoid running into the back of the D-type, Macklin instinctively swerved to the left, right into the path of Fangio's team-mate, Pierre Levegh. The Mercedes was launched into the air at high speed and crashed into the crowd, killing more than 80 (including Levegh) and injuring many more. As a result, Mercedes withdrew from the race when the Fangio/Moss car was well in the lead and set to give both their first victory at Le Mans.

The tragedy sent shock waves through the motor racing world and the German GP was just one of the many races that were cancelled as a consequence. The Dutch, British and Italian GPs were held, however, and Fangio won his third World Championship, but at the end of the year Mercedes-Benz withdrew from racing.

With Ascari now sadly departed Fangio had no immediate challenger, but there was a serious threat on the horizon - Stirling Moss. In his book, *My Racing Life*, Fangio stated that Ascari and Moss were his greatest rivals and that he realised just how serious Moss was from the day he joined Mercedes.

He recalled that before the European season started they did some testing at the Nurburgring.

He set a good time only for Moss to beat it, despite the fact that he had not driven the W196 at the Ring before. After lunch Fangio restored the status quo, but Moss had laid down his marker.

Fangio was to retain his superiority over Moss in Grand Prix racing for the rest of his career, but in sportscars it was a different matter. With the Mercedes 300SLR, Moss had won the Mille Miglia, the Tourist Trophy and the Targa Florio in 1955, 'allowing' Fangio to win only two minor races, at the Nurburgring and in Sweden. For 1956, Fangio joined Scuderia Ferrari and Moss went to Officine Maserati and in May they returned to the Ring for the second running of the 1000 Kms race.

The Ferrari line-up was Juan Fangio/Eugenio Castellotti and Fon de Portago/Olivier Gendebien in four-cylinder 3.5-litre 860 Monzas and Luigi Musso/Maurice Trintignant and Phil Hill/Ken Wharton in 12-cylinder, 3.5-litre 290 MMs. Maserati were represented by Stirling Moss/Jean Behra, Piero Taruffi/ Harry Schell and Cesare Perdisa/ Robert Manzon in 3-litre, 300S models. There were also works entries from Aston Martin, Jaguar and Porsche, but the battle was obviously going to be between the Italian teams.

In practice all three Ferraris, headed by Fangio, were faster than the Maseratis, but at the end of the opening lap it was Moss who led, followed

by Hawthorn, Fangio and Peter Collins in the Aston Martin. Fangio soon passed Hawthorn and Old Master set off in pursuit of his Young Pretender, to no avail. Moss pulled steadily away and after 13 laps was 37 seconds in front, which increased to two-and-a-half minutes once Fangio had handed over to Castellotti on lap 14.

A lap later Jean Behra took over from Moss, but at the end of lap 18 he pulled in to the pits to retire, a transverse leaf spring having broken on the Maserati's rear suspension. Moss and Behra were immediately switched to the Schell/Taruffi car and Jean set off to chase the two Ferraris of Fangio/Castellotti and Gendebien/de Portago, the latter pair having taken over the Hill/Wharton car. Behra moved into second spot when Gendebien stopped to hand over to de Portago and by the time Castellotti had given the leading Ferrari back to Fangio the Maserati was only some 10 seconds in arrears. Then Behra stopped for Moss to take over at the end of lap 32 and Stirling was just 66 seconds behind Fangio, and closing.

At the end of lap 40 Castellotti put on his crash helmet and gloves ready for the final stint but Fangio had other ideas. He stopped for fuel only and then jumped back into the Ferrari, leaving Castellotti forlornly in the pits. Fangio set off 17 seconds behind Moss, but Stirling steadily increased his

1957 German GP, Nurburgring - Juan Manuel Fangio (Maserati 250F)



lead, to win by 26 seconds. The Old Man had set fastest lap of the race with 10 mins 05.3 secs, but the youngster had beaten him to the flag.

However, a month later, The Old Man once again showed who was boss in the open-wheel game. As Rodney Walkerley noted in *The Motor*: 'At two minutes past five pm, when the grey skies which had dragged across the panorama of the Eifel Mountains were breaking up into blue and a warm sun flooded the Nurburgring for the first time in days, a tired Juan Fangio climbed out of his V8 Ferrari, winner of the 18th German Grand Prix. The "old master" had once again showed the youngsters that he is still to be reckoned with.'

The youngsters in question were Peter Collins, who had joined the Scuderia for 1956 and Stirling Moss and, try as they might, they could not shake Fangio from the top of the tree. Following Lancia's shock withdrawal from racing in 1955, the D50s had all been handed to Scuderia Ferrari. Over the winter the cars were considerably modified as the fuel was moved from the pannier tanks to the rear of the car and the V8 engine was no longer a structural part of the chassis. By the time of the German GP, the Lancia-Ferraris had won four of the five Grandes Epreuves and Peter Collins had won two of them. As a result, he was leading Fangio in the World Championship by one point.

Scuderia Ferrari entered five cars for the Grand Prix, to be driven by Fangio, Collins, Eugenio Castellotti, Fon de Portago and Luigi Musso. In practice Fangio immediately found his new mount easier to handle on the Nurburgring than the Mercedes had been, as he recalled in *My Racing Life*: 'the Lancia-Ferrari was a very pleasant car to drive on that circuit. It was agile on corners and braked well, qualities not shared by the Mercedes-Benz cars of 1954. These were much larger, and their inboard mounted brakes faded rapidly, what with all the heat under the bonnet between the engine and the radiator. What's more, the inboard brakes gave the car a tendency to understeer. Going into a fast curve in the 1954 model could be a breath-taking experience, with the front wheels sometimes not responding to the steering because of their lightness.'

Just how pleasant the Lancia-Ferrari was to drive was shown in no uncertain fashion during unofficial practice on the Wednesday, when Fangio was credited with a staggering 9 mins 26.2 secs, no fewer than 26 seconds under Hermann Lang's all-time record. Even with Fangio at the wheel, that has to be suspect, but both Rodney Walkerley and Denis Jenkinson recorded it, although Fangio himself made no mention of it in *My Racing Life*.

1957 German GP, Nurburgring - Juan Manuel Fangio (Maserati 250F)





1957 German GP, Nurburgring - Juan Manuel Fangio (Maserati 250F)

On Friday afternoon, however, there was no question about the times, as Jenks wrote in *Motor Sport*: 'The Old Man was right on form and in spite of the wet track was hurling the car through the bends in beautiful slides, while the young man (Collins) was making everyone sit up and take notice by doing exactly the same and at just the same speed. These two were easily the fastest and recorded 9' 51.2" and 9' 51.5" respectively, with Castellotti third with 9' 54.4".' Next up was Stirling Moss on the new 250F Maserati, but he could not get under 10 minutes, recording 10' 03.4".

Peter Collins made the best start and was first into the South Curve, followed by Moss and Fangio, but as they roared past the pits to start the second lap it was Fangio who led from Collins and Moss, with a good lead over the next trio of Jean Behra and Roy Salvadori (Maseratis) and de Portago (Ferrari).

And that was it, really. Fangio led from start to finish and stamped his authority on the race in a way that he had been unable to do in 1954. Initially, Collins stayed with him. Driving brilliantly, the young Englishman was never more than 2-3 seconds behind Fangio and on the second lap they both broke Lang's outright record officially with 9 mins 51.0 secs.

As Denis Jenkinson remarked, 'There was no doubt now that the Lancia-Ferraris were in a similar position to Mercedes-Benz in last year's Grand Prix races, and once more it was Fangio who was in control with a young British driver sitting on his tail learning all about Grand Prix racing. Last year it had been Moss, this year Collins, and Fangio is old enough to be father of both of them.'

The Old Man and the two youngsters now began a determined attack on the lap record. On lap seven first Collins recorded 9' 47.6", then Moss

knocked a second off that, only for Pete to reply with 9' 45.5" on lap eight. Moss came back with 9' 45.3", but at the end of that lap Collins came into the pits, groggy from fumes as a result of a split fuel tank. Now Fangio got into the act again, recording 9' 44.9" on lap 10. At half-distance (11 laps) he led Moss by some 20 seconds, with Behra, de Portago and Castellotti a long way behind. On lap 14 Fangio made everyone else look positively tardy with a sensational new lap record of 9' 41.6", almost 10 seconds better than his pole position time.

Peter Collins recovered and, chasing valuable Championship points, took over de Portago's Lancia-Ferrari, but in his efforts to make up lost ground he overdid it between the Karussell and Schwalbenschwanz and slid off the road. There was now just one Lancia-Ferrari left in the race and that was in the hands of the new King of the Nurburgring, Juan Fangio, who romped home to win the German GP for the second time, 46 seconds ahead of Moss in the 250F.

Fangio went on to finish second in the last Grande Epreuve of 1956, the Italian GP at Monza, securing his fourth World Championship. This was in no small way thanks to Peter Collins who, seeing Fangio standing forlornly at the pits after his Lancia-Ferrari had retired, immediately gave up his car, despite having an outside chance of winning the title himself.

Nonetheless, Fangio had not enjoyed his year at Ferrari and for 1957 he signed with Maserati, while Collins stayed with Ferrari, where he was joined by Mike Hawthorn, a partnership that would prove fruitless for the Scuderia, but which would provoke the final, majestic flowering of Fangio's awesome skills. Fittingly, this would happen at the Nurburgring in the German GP, but first Juan Manuel had a frustrating race in the 1000 Kms, in which he was paired with Stirling Moss.

Stirling had joined Vanwall for Formula 1, but remained with Maserati for sportscar racing and he and Fangio were now paired in the 450S, a 400 bhp, 4.5-litre monster that was not ideally suited to the Nurburgring. Despite this, Fangio recorded fastest time in practice with his own car and second fastest with the similar one of Harry Schell/Hans Herrmann, which the organisers unfairly put in second place in the line-up for the Le Mans start.

The 450S was backed up by a 300S in the hands of Jo Bonnier/Giorgio Scarlatti and the team's principal opposition came in the form of two Ferraris, a 4.1-litre for Peter Collins/Olivier Gendebien and a 3.8-litre car for Mike Hawthorn/Maurice Trintignant. There was also a new threat

from the DBR1 Aston Martins of Tony Brooks/Noel Cunningham-Reid and Roy Salvadori/Les Leston, Brooks having stunned everyone in practice by lapping in 9 mins 48.2 secs against Fangio's best of 9' 43.5". But Fangio's best did him no good at all for Moss, taking the first stint, stalled and lost much time before the engine would fire.

Meanwhile, Tony Brooks was off and running, leading the race easily in the opening laps with the Aston Martin. Although giving away some 160 bhp to the big Maseratis, the Aston had a spaceframe chassis that clung to the Nurburgring like ivy to a wall and it took Moss eight laps to wrench the lead away from Brooks. In the process he set a new sportscar record with 9 mins 49.9 secs, but at the end of lap 10 it was Brooks who came past the grandstands in the lead and there was no sign of Moss. The Maserati had shed a rear wheel at Schwalbenschwanz.

Team Manager Nello Ugolini immediately nominated Moss and Fangio to drive the second 450S and when Harry Schell brought the car in a lap later it was Fangio who rejoined the race. Two laps later he was back, for an oil cooler had come adrift. After 17 minutes Moss took the car back into the race, only to pull in and retire next time round. The 3-litre car of Bonnier/Scarlatti was in deep trouble, so in desperation Ugolini called in the works-entered but privately-owned 300S of Francisco Godia/Horace Gould and Moss set off in that.

Fangio took it over for the final laps and by dint of some very fast motoring finished in fourth place, behind the winning Aston Martin of Brooks and Cunningham-Reid and the Ferraris of Collins/Gendebien and Hawthorn/Trintignant. The Fates had conspired to rain on Fangio's parade on this occasion, but a month later he would have his final day in the sun, one that will be remembered for all time.

'Practicing on two warm, dry days in succession, showed that we were to see epic motor racing in the 19th German Grand Prix,' wrote Rodney Walkerley in *The Motor*. 'Driving the "Monza" low-chassis Maserati, Fangio went round at the record pace of 9 mins 25.6 secs (a Nurburg lap at 90 mph!) which was no less than 26 seconds faster than his own 1956 lap record

(Ferrari) - nearly two seconds faster per mile of tormented, twisting mountain roads.'

Maserati entered three 250Fs for Fangio, Jean Behra and Harry Schell to do battle with the V8 Ferraris of Mike Hawthorn, Peter Collins and Luigi Musso. These cars were the latest development of the Lancia-Ferrari with which Fangio had won

the 1956 race, now without the fairings between the wheels and with coil spring front suspension, being used for the first time.

Mike Hawthorn was closest to Fangio in practice, getting round in 9'28.4". Next was Behra, 2.1 secs slower and completing the front row was Collins, with 9' 34.7". Unlike the previous year, when Collins had run Fangio very close indeed, he was off the pace here and it was Hawthorn who stepped into his shoes.

Making their first visit to the Nurburgring, the Vanwalls were no match for the Italian cars, being fifth (Tony Brooks), seventh (Stirling Moss) and ninth (Stuart Lewis-Evans) on the grid. They would play no part in the race.

Knowing that his cars would have to make a stop for new rear tyres, Maserati Team Manager Nello Ugolini decided to start them with their fuel tanks half-full. Ferrari elected to run non-stop, but even with full tanks, Hawthorn and Collins led the race from Fangio for the first two laps. On the second, Mike broke The Old Man's 1956 lap record with 9 mins 37.9 secs, only for Fangio to follow him with 9' 34.6". As they passed the pits Fangio was lining up Collins and overtook him on the exit to the South Turn.

'On the twisting downhill run through the forest he came up with Hawthorn,' wrote Rodney Walker ley. 'For seconds the two men raced elbow to elbow, and then Fangio drew past and led. Then Collins passed his team-mate into second place.'

Fangio now began Part One of the Drive of his Life in an effort to gain enough time on the two Ferraris to allow for his pit stop. He set new records on lap three - 9' 33.4"; lap five - 9' 33.0"; lap six - 9' 32.5"; lap eight - 9' 30.0" and lap ten - 9' 29.5".

At the end of lap 12 he stopped for fuel and rear tyres, leaving out of the car for a drink while the mechanics did their work. His lead had been 28 seconds over the pursuing Ferraris, but the stop took an interminable 56 seconds and, for good measure, on that same lap Collins went round in 9' 28.9".

But now Fangio's pit stop lulled Collins and Hawthorn into thinking that he was in trouble. As they fled past the pits a couple of lengths apart they were very much aware that the spectators in the stands were on their feet and waving frantically, 'Which meant just one thing,' wrote Mike in Challenge Me The Race, 'Fangio must have stopped.'

In the heat of the moment they failed to see the Maserati stationary at its pit and when, next time round, they were told they were 45 seconds ahead of Fangio and then 48 seconds, they relaxed and eased up.

'Victory seemed to be ours,' continued Mike, 'and as we roared along the straight I motioned to Peter to come alongside and pointed behind us with thumb down to indicate that Fangio seemed to be in trouble. He nodded, put his thumb up, then pointed to me with one finger and back to himself with two. He wanted me to win and was prepared to come second himself...'

Peter and Mike had made a huge mistake and it would cost them the race, for Fangio was not in trouble, simply getting used to his new tyres. And he was not a happy bunny, having rejoined the race almost 50 seconds behind the Ferraris after his prolonged pit stop. 'I felt quite disappointed,' he wrote, 'as I was losing a race that could win me the Championship.'

A disappointed Fangio meant trouble for the two youngsters ahead of him and he now began Part Two of The Drive of his Life on the Nurburgring. 'I had learnt from experience that if you left the car in a higher gear for some of the faster curves, as long as you went in at the correct angle, you came out with the engine revving at a faster rate on the straight, which made a difference in terms of time. It wasn't very comfortable, feeling the lack of grip as the car went round, but after all, I had to win. I began to take nearly all the bends in a higher gear than I would normally have used.'

The result was electrifying and gave Hawthorn and Collins 'the fright of our lives. Fangio had cut our lead by 12 seconds in one lap!' And that was just the beginning. On lap 17 The Old Man recorded 9 mins 25.8 secs, reducing that to 9' 25.3" next time round and then 9' 23.4" on lap 19. 'The Ferrari pit staff were in a ferment,' recorded Rodney Walkerley in The Motor, 'but the two Englishmen could go no faster... Lap 20 and uproar in the grandstand, hysteria in the Ferrari pit; they gesticulated and tore the air, they fell on their knees to their drivers, and in the Maserati pit Ugolini smiled at his watch. Fangio was on their tail - three seconds behind with a lap at 91.84 mph.'

As with his career, so with the lap record, for Fangio had saved the best till last, recording an unbelievable 9 mins 17.4 secs. On the approach to the North Turn he caught the Ferraris, slipping inside Collins as they went into the huge concrete bowl of the left-hander. But Fangio's passing speed carried him wide, and Peter dived through the gap into second place again. Fangio replied almost immediately by passing the Ferrari with two wheels on the grass, throwing up dirt and stones, one of which shattered a lens in Peter's goggles. Fangio now went after Hawthorn. 'I was driving right on the limit,' wrote Mike, 'as we rushed through the

endless tree-lined curves to the Hocheichen and on to the Quiddelbacher Hohe, but just as I was going into a slow left-hand corner Fangio pulled the same trick, cut sharply inside me and forced me onto the grass and almost into the ditch.'

Fangio then put Masten Gregory's Maserati between himself and Hawthorn and Mike was unable to challenge him again, but he was only 3.6 seconds in arrears as Juan Manuel took the chequered flag, to the thunderous cheers of the delirious spectators, who had been given a graphic description of that last, tumultuous lap by the on-course commentators. Despite his lengthy pit-stop, his average speed for the race was 88.79 mph, faster than his previous lap record. The resurfacing of much of the circuit between times will have had something to do with that, but most of it was just due to The Old Man's phenomenal skill and daring.

That victory proved to be the last of his remarkable career, and secured his fifth World Championship. Looking back on the race in 1984, he wrote in *My Racing Life*, 'The Nurburgring was always my favourite track, from the first day I drove on it, in an Alfetta in 1951. I fell totally in love with it, and I believe that on that day I finally managed to master it. It was as if I had screwed all its secrets out of it and got to know it once and for all... I had always been a man with faith in my own abilities and in the machines that were prepared for me to drive. Till that race, I had demanded nothing more of myself or of the cars. But that day I made such demands on myself that I couldn't sleep for two days afterwards... For two days I experienced delayed-action apprehension at what I had done, a feeling that had never come over me after any other race, a feeling that still returns to me to this day when I think about that time. I had never driven as I drove then, but I also knew that I'd never be able to go so fast again, ever!'

FANJIO AT THE RING

YEAR	EVENT	LAPS	CAR	NUMBER	RESULT
1951	Grand Prix	20	Alfa Romeo 159	75	FL 2nd
1953	Grand Prix	18	Maserati A6GCS	5	2nd
	1000 Kms		Lancia D24 (with Felice Bonetto)	5	DNF
1954	Grand Prix	22	Mercedes-Benz W196	18	PP 1
1955	Eifel Sports GP	10	Mercedes-Benz 300SLR	1	PP 1
1956	1000 Kms		Ferrari 860 Monza (with Eugenio Castellotti)	1	PP 2nd
	Grand Prix		Lancia-Ferrari	1	PP & FL 1
1957	1000 Kms		Maserati 450S (with Stirling Moss)	1	PP DNF
			Maserati 450S (with Moss, Harry Schell and Hans Herrmann)	2	DNF
			Maserati 300S (with Moss, Francisco Godia and Horace Gould)	4	5th
1957	Grand Prix	22	Maserati 250F	1	PP & FL 1



RINGMEISTER

6

STIRLING MOSS



1951 - 1961

'Feb 19. Left for Germany. The roads to Nurburg are really awful with potholes, etc, due to war. Shocking weather, snow, hail, rain. Arrived at Adenau with no fuel, no money. Bought petrol at black market rates when changed a cheque, then came to the Ring! Wow! At first I thought I would never learn it, then gradually it came clearer, and now I have a fair idea of it.'

That extract from Stirling's diary for 1951 records his very first look at the circuit on which he would score several of his greatest victories. He made the trip in a Jaguar XK120 (borrowed from the works) with his friend, Ian Burgess, in order to take a look at Spa and the Nurburgring, before moving down to Italy and checking out the Mille Miglia route.

His next visit was in July, in a somewhat less exciting motor car, a Morris Minor. The 22 year-old was due to race an HWM in the 20-lap German Grand Prix and a Kieft in the 6-lap 500 cc event. However, an administrative mix-up meant that the HWM team did not get any entries and was withdrawn. Stirling did two laps in the Minor to refresh his memory of the circuit and in evening practice with the Kieft the next day he gave notice that he was a future Ringmeister with a truly sensational lap, winning pole position with a time of 11 mins 31.8 secs.

'Old record was 12 mins 8 secs,' he noted in his diary, 'Very bumpy course, car bottomed twice, and fuel tank split.' His time was not only 40 secs faster than the next 500cc car, it was faster than no fewer than five 4.5-litre Talbots entered in the Grand Prix!

There were 49 half-litre cars on the grid (which comprised 11 rows) and the noise was deafening. It seemed to affect the starter, because he fell off his rostrum, causing some confusion and Stirling and Eric Brandon (Cooper) jumped the start. Both stopped and waited for the rest of the field, which dropped them back a few places, but at the end

of the first lap Moss was 22 secs ahead of Brandon, with the Cooper of Alan Brown third. After two laps Stirling's lead was 38 seconds and he was running away with the race, but during the next tour a steering arm broke and the Kieft slid to a halt at Hatzenbach, its front wheels at very different angles to the perpendicular. Nonetheless, he completed his one flying lap in 11 mins 42.5 secs, which proved to be the fastest of the race.

'Had a nasty moment when it was seen that Moss was overdue,' wrote Rodney Walkerley, in *The Motor*. 'He had been ill in the tummy all night and felt (and looked) like death before the race, so I gave him a couple of anti-seasickness tablets to freeze his interior. It then occurred to me that perhaps he was allergic to such things and went off the road in a paroxysm of red-hot corkscrews. However, it was merely a broken steering arm, which cost him some £300 in starting money.'

Stirling next appeared at the Ring for the 1952 Eifel Meeting, where he entered both the F2 and F3 race in borrowed cars. No works HWM was available as two of the team's four cars had lost a rear wheel during the Swiss GP the previous weekend and his Kieft had been written off in a multi-car shunt in Brussels the weekend before that. Not to be denied, Moss borrowed a 1951 HWM for the F2 race and his friend Derek Annable lent him his Kieft for the 500 cc event.

Which turned out to be even shorter than his 1951 debut, for hardly had he completed the first lap well in the lead than a wheel fell off the Kieft at the South Turn, and that was that. To rub salt in the wound, Eric Brandon (Cooper-Norton) reduced Stirling's 500 cc lap record to 11 mins 34.5 secs.

Moss did better in the F2 event, making fastest lap in practice and leading the race for the opening two laps, but the Ferrari of Rudi Fischer had the legs of the HWM on the three-kilometre straight and powered past on lap three. On the next tour the fire extinguisher in the HWM went

off on its own accord, spraying Stirling with foam, with the result that after four laps the Ferrari's lead was 16.5 secs. Fischer completed the 10 laps 41 seconds ahead of Stirling, who was relieved to have finished the race.

For 1953 Stirling Moss Ltd employed mechanics Alf Francis and Tony Robinson and went racing with the Cooper-Alta Special. The brainchild of John Cooper (Sports Editor of *The Autocar*), Moss and designer Ray Martin, this had a much-modified F2 Cooper chassis, fitted with de Dion rear suspension and inboard drum brakes, with Girling discs at the front. Alf and Tony took it and the Cooper-Norton to the Nurburgring in Stirling's new Commer transporter for the Eifel Meeting. Charles Cooper (of Cooper Cars) hitched a ride with them.

Stirling drove there with his girlfriend, Sally Weston, in a Jaguar Mk VII and after the first practice session he took his team for a few laps, as Alf Francis recalled in his book, *Racing Mechanic*. 'Tony Robinson and I sat in the front with Stirling whilst Charles Cooper sat in the back with Sally Weston. The Jaguar lapped the Ring in just over twelve minutes with five people up, which I considered very good indeed. Poor Charles Cooper, visibly perturbed, did not like it at all.

'Tony and I did not worry. We chatted and joked whilst Stirling described the line he took through different corners in the Cooper-Alta: "Here the car does this; here it does that."

'He explained all the corners and I marvelled how he had learned so much about the circuit in such a short time. It takes a very active and receptive brain to memorize even part of the Nurburgring but Stirling seemed to be doing exactly the right thing at every corner.

'Poor Charles Cooper was finished. When he got out of the car he disappeared and although he was with us in the pits during the race I never saw him again after the meeting. I think he must have hitch-hiked back to England with someone else.'

Stirling scored his first win at the Ring with the Cooper-Norton. Unfortunately, no one from the British magazines was there to report his success. He also finished sixth in the Eifel GP with the Cooper-Alta, finding its roadholding to be pretty awful.

As a result a new Cooper-Alta with pre-selector gearbox and drum brakes all-round was built by Alf Francis and Tony Robinson in 11 days and was ready - just - in time for the German GP. Stirling qualified 12th fastest with a time of 10 mins 48.3 secs, as opposed to pole-setter Ascari's 9' 59.8» in the Ferrari. Minutes before the start Moss found that the car was stuck in second gear. «What can we do?» he asked Alf.

«Nothing,» was the helpful reply, «You'll have to start in second gear, retire as soon as you can and collect the starting money.»

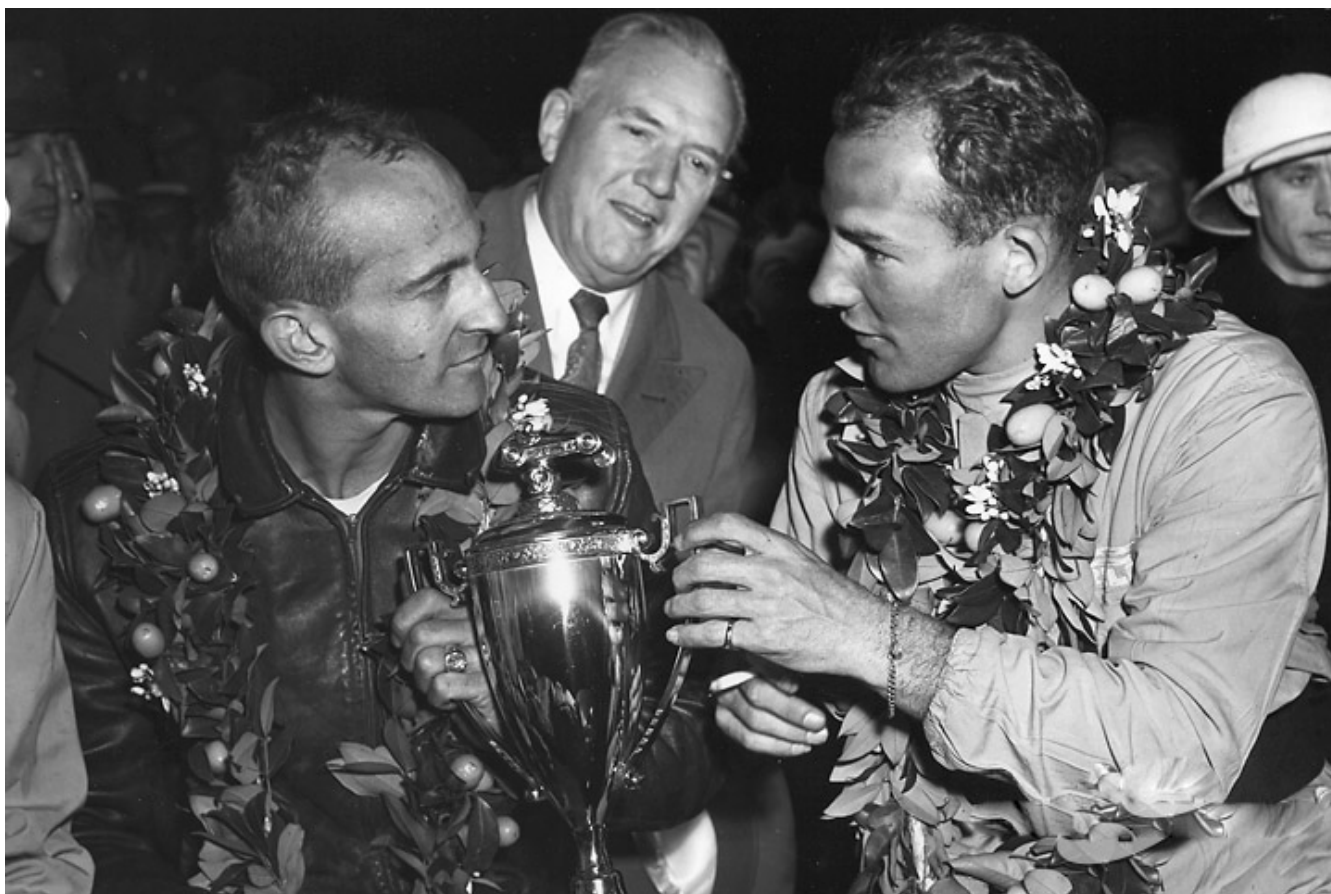
Francis did not expect to see the car again, so was very surprised when Stirling completed the opening lap and flashed past the pits. He finished sixth and explained to Alf that in the heat of the moment he had started the race using the pre-selector as a normal gearbox, and it worked, so he carried on.

Stirling scored his second victory at the Ring in the 1954 Eifel meeting, when he drove his Beart-Cooper. It was a lucky win, for the race was dominated by the Cooper of Stuart Lewis-Evans, who drove away from everyone and left Moss to battle for second place with Don Parker (Cooper). After three laps Lewis-Evans was almost 30 seconds ahead of Moss and Parker's Cooper had expired. On the fifth tour Lewis-Evans' Norton engine died on him shortly before the finish and he was passed by both Moss and Theo Helfrich (Cooper). He managed to push the car over the line to finish third, but was acclaimed by the crowd as the moral victor.

After years of trying for success with British cars, Stirling 'went foreign' in 1954. His manager, Ken Gregory, had earlier tried to persuade Alfred Neubauer to sign him to Mercedes-Benz for their return to Grand Prix racing in 1954, but Neubauer already had Fangio in his pocket and was keen to have German drivers in his other cars. He told Gregory he felt that Moss needed more experience before he was ready for Mercedes and suggested that he join one of the Italian teams for a year. If he did well, Neubauer would consider him for 1955.

Without telling Stirling Gregory went to Modena, stood in the middle of the town and tossed a coin. Heads he would approach Ferrari; tails he would try Maserati. It was tails, but he was told that Maserati already had their drivers finalised for 1954. However, they were building a 250F which as yet had no buyer. On an impulse, Gregory told them Moss would buy it, although he had no idea how Stirling was going to find the asking price of some £5,000. Eventually, the whole Moss family chipped in and the Maserati was his. Ever the patriot, Stirling insisted that it be painted British Racing Green.

Alf Francis oversaw the building of the car in Modena and Moss made his Championship debut with it in the Belgian GP at Spa, finishing third behind Juan Manuel Fangio (Maserati) and Maurice Trintignant (Ferrari). As he was committed to Jaguar for the Reims 12-Hour race he opted out of the French GP and loaned his 250F to the works, which needed two extra cars for Ascari and Villoresi, as



1954 Stirling Moss and Bill Lloyd drove a Osca MT4 1500 Moretti to a very impressive overall victory at the 12 Hours of Sebring

the D50 Lancias were not ready. In return, Maserati promised Stirling a new engine if his should blow up during the British Grand Prix. Freed from the restrictions of a private owner, Moss drove the 250F hard and fast at Silverstone. He held a superb second place for 25 laps, behind winner Jose Froilan Gonzalez and ahead of the Mercedes of Fangio and Kling and the Ferrari of Hawthorn, only for the Maserati to glide to a halt nine laps from the end. The lack of drive was due to gearbox failure.

Stirling was clearly quicker than the works Maserati drivers, Roberto Mieres, Onofre Marimon and Sergio Mantovani and the factory was just as clearly very much aware of the fact. On the first day of practice for the German GP Moss made his point in no uncertain terms, setting the fastest time with 10 mins 05.1 secs.

«He lost no time coming to the point. «They have just offered me a place in the works team. The car will be repainted red; they will take full responsibility and look after it and are prepared to give me reasonable terms.»

Francis knew this meant that he would be out of a job, but he was convinced that Stirling was destined for great things and generously told him to accept Maserati's offer. He also reminded Stirling that the engine in his 250F was worn out.

«It is never going to finish the race.»

So Moss joined Officine Maserati at the Nurburgring but, repaying Alf's generosity, only after insisting that he and Tony Robinson went with him. Overnight the 250F was repainted red, but Alf carefully left the nose in green.

Onofre Marimon, a protege of Juan Manuel Fangio, was clearly worried by the fact that the private entry of Stirling Moss had put up a faster time than he had, and spoke to Alf Francis and Stirling about it. The next day he went out at the same time as Stirling and Alf was convinced that he was trying to stay with him, despite his lack of experience. He lost ground in the first two laps, then went off the road just before the Wehrseifen bridge on the third. He was killed instantly.

Naturally, this cast a pall over the whole meeting and Maserati withdrew Villoresi from the race, but released Moss from the team so he could take part as a private entry. So he finally made his debut in a proper GP car at the Nurburgring and he put the Maserati on the front row, too, alongside pole-sitter Juan Manuel Fangio in the Mercedes and Mike Hawthorn in the Ferrari.

However, Alf Francis knew what he was talking about when he had said that the 250F was never going to finish the race. Stirling made a great

start and was third behind Fangio's Mercedes and Gonzalez' Ferrari at the end of the first lap. On the second the Maserati's big ends failed.

In the Swiss GP at Bern, he held second place behind Fangio until the Maserati's oil pressure failed and then he led the Italian GP for 23 laps until the car ran its bearings. Moss finished the season having won a few minor races with the Maserati, but it had failed to finish every Grande Epreuve but one. However, he had made his skills known to Alfred Neubauer in no uncertain fashion and when he returned to the Ring in 1955, it was as a fully-fledged member of the Mercedes-Benz team.

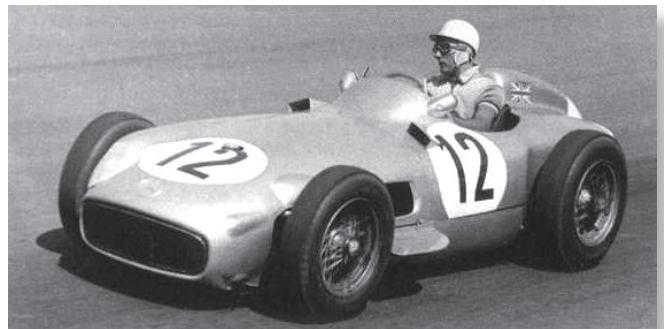
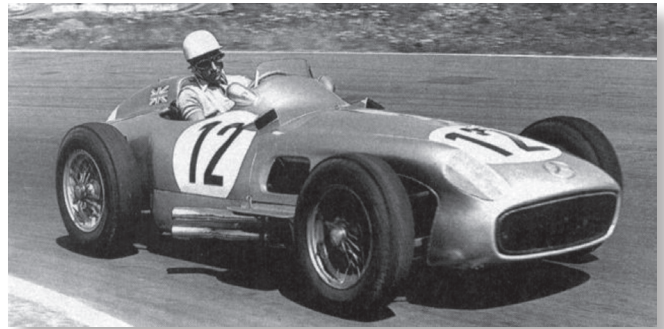
He arrived having scored two victories for Mercedes already. The first was something of a non-event, the second Heat of the free-formula Buenos Aires GP, but the second was to stand as one of the greatest achievements of his illustrious career, the Mille Miglia. With Motor Sport's Denis Jenkinson as his navigator, Stirling had completed the 1000 miles at the shattering average speed of 97.9 mph and given the Mercedes 300SLR a stunning victory first time out.

After coming within an ace of winning the Monaco GP, Stirling travelled to the Nurburgring, where he, Fangio and Kling were to drive 300SLRs in the 10-lap Eifel GP. On arrival they learned the dreadful news that Alberto Ascari had been killed at Monza.

The next day Moss and Kling recorded 10 mins 19.0 secs and Fangio did 10' 16.0". On the Saturday Stirling got down to 10' 05.0" and frightened himself badly when he went into the Karussell too fast and slid over the side. Fangio recorded 10' 01.0", putting everyone in his place. Nonetheless, Team Manager Neubauer made it clear to Stirling that Fangio was to win this race. "It was the only time in my career with Mercedes that I came under team orders," recalls Sir Stirling. "Alfred Neubauer said it would be nice if Fangio won - and I got the message!"

In the race Kling got the best start, but before the end of the lap the order was Fangio, Moss, Kling and on lap seven Kling's engine 'spread oil all round the bloody circuit,' according to Stirling's diary. 'Juan and I continued first and second, one metre apart and I got fastest lap in 10' 10.8".'

Having enjoyed a lesson in Ringmanship from Fangio, Stirling must have been looking forward to driving the W196 in the German GP, but that was just one of a string of races which were cancelled in the wake of the Le Mans disaster. And at the end of the season Mercedes withdrew from racing altogether, mission accomplished.



1955 Great Britan (Aintree) S. Moss Mercedes-Benz



For 1956 Moss rejoined Maserati and also signed to drive for Aston Martin in sportscar races where the Italian concern was not present. The Nurburgring 1000 Kms was back on the calendar as a Championship event and received works entries from Ferrari, Maserati, Aston Martin, Jaguar and Porsche.

There were three 300S Maseratis for Stirling Moss/ Jean Behra; Piero Taruffi/Harry Schell and Cesare Perdisa/Robert Manzon and their main opposition would obviously come from the 3.5-litre Ferraris - 4-cylinder 860 Monzas for Juan Manuel Fangio/Eugenio Castellotti and Fon de Portago/Olivier Gendebien and V12 290MMs for Luigi Musso/Maurice Trintignant and Phil Hill/Ken Wharton. Lesser threats were the DB3S Aston Martins of Peter Collins/Tony Brooks and Peter Walker/Roy Salvadori; the D-type Jaguar of Mike Hawthorn/Desmond Titterton and the 1.5-litre Porsches of Taffy von Trips/Umberto Maglioli and Hans Herrmann/Richard von Frankenberg.

Fangio won pole position for the Le Mans-type start with a time of 10 mins 03.0 secs and Moss was fourth fastest with 10' 10.0", but it was Stirling in the Maserati who led across the line at the end of the first lap and he proceeded to draw steadily away from the World Champion, being 37 secs ahead after 10 laps. Taruffi (Maserati) was third, followed by Hill (Ferrari) and Hawthorn (Jaguar). Five laps later and Stirling's lead was up to just over 2 mins 30 secs, thanks to Fangio's pit stop to hand over to Castellotti. On lap 16 it was

the Maserati's turn for a change of drivers and after 90 seconds Jean Behra was back in the race. But not for long, and Maserati's hopes seemed to be dashed when he came into the pits after just one lap, stepped out of the car and took off his helmet. The rear suspension on the 300S had broken away from the chassis and the car was out of the race.

The rules stated that if one car retired, the drivers (plural) could be transferred to another, so Team Manager Nello Ugolini quickly brought in Harry Schell and replaced him with Behra. The feisty Frenchman loved a challenge and, now in third place, he set about getting the Maserati back in the lead. He moved up to second when Olivier Gendebien pitted to hand over the Ferrari to Portago (they having taken over the Hill /Wharton car) and began to catch Fangio in the leading Ferrari. After 28 laps the gap between the two cars was 23.5 secs; then 20.2; then 18 and after 31 laps Behra was just 10 seconds in arrears. Next time round he stopped to give the Maserati to Moss.

Stirling speeded up the proceedings by using the gravity feed pipes from two of Maserati's pits to fuel the car and was back in the race after 57 seconds. After 33 laps, he was 1 min 06 secs behind Fangio and proceeded to reel him in, in the first of his several 'Comeback Kid' drives at the Ring. With seven laps to go Fangio's lead was 54 seconds; Lap 38 and it was down to 42, then 35.

On lap 40 the Ferrari made a frantic stop for a few more litres of fuel and then Fangio was away

again, but it was too late, for Moss had gone by into the lead. As Cyril Posthumus reported in *Autosport*: 'Three laps to go and Fangio was 25.5 secs behind Moss. Two to go, and he had lost three more seconds; one lap to go and there were 30 secs between them. Moss had another race in the bag, and once again Fangio had to give him best. The last lap... Moss at the Karussell... Moss coming through the Swallowtail... Moss now in sight... and Stirling Moss took the winner's flag in a motor race for the ninth time this season, to the clapping and cheering of the multitude. Round the back leg he drove and into "victory lane", there to celebrate with his co-drivers in victory, Schell, Taruffi and Behra.'

Although this was the first of Stirling's five wins at the Nurburgring, it was Piero Taruffi who had done the lion's share of the work in the winning 300S, completing 16 laps to the four of Schell and 12 each of Behra and Moss. However, it was the latter two who had ensured victory for Maserati.

Moss had beaten Fangio on this occasion, but on their next meeting at the Ring, in the German GP, Juan Manuel reversed the situation, showing once again that if Stirling had the edge on him in sports-cars, he had the upper hand in single-seaters.

The Grand Prix was preceded by a 7-lap race for sports and sports-racing cars up to 1.5 litres. In the latter category, Porsche entered four RS cars for Hans Herrmann, Taffy von Trips, Umberto Maglioli and Richard von Frankenberg; Maserati sent two 150S models for Moss and Jean Behra and there were two works, centre-seat Cooper-Climaxes for Roy Salvadori and Jack Brabham. There were also four AWEs from East Germany and Edgar Barth put his on the front row, with Moss, von Trips and Behra. Stirling's car was unpainted and had only arrived the day before, just in time for him to practice.

It was Roy Salvadori who got away first, but by the end of the lap Hans Herrmann was in the lead, ahead of Edgar Barth, von Trips and Behra. Next time round Salvadori had moved up to second place, followed closely by Moss, the two swapping places occasionally. Unfortunately, Maserati had undergeared the 150S and Stirling found that he could not stay with the Cooper on the straight, despite hitting 7900 rpm. The Porsche of von Trips expired on the first lap; Barth retired on lap five and Stirling managed to get past Roy on the final round, setting fastest lap in the process with a time of 10 mins 13.3 secs. He finished second, behind Hans Herrmann.

During practice for the Grand Prix, Stirling found that his 250F Maserati was no match for the V8 Lancia-Ferraris, three of which (in the hands of



Juan Fangio, Peter Collins and Eugenio

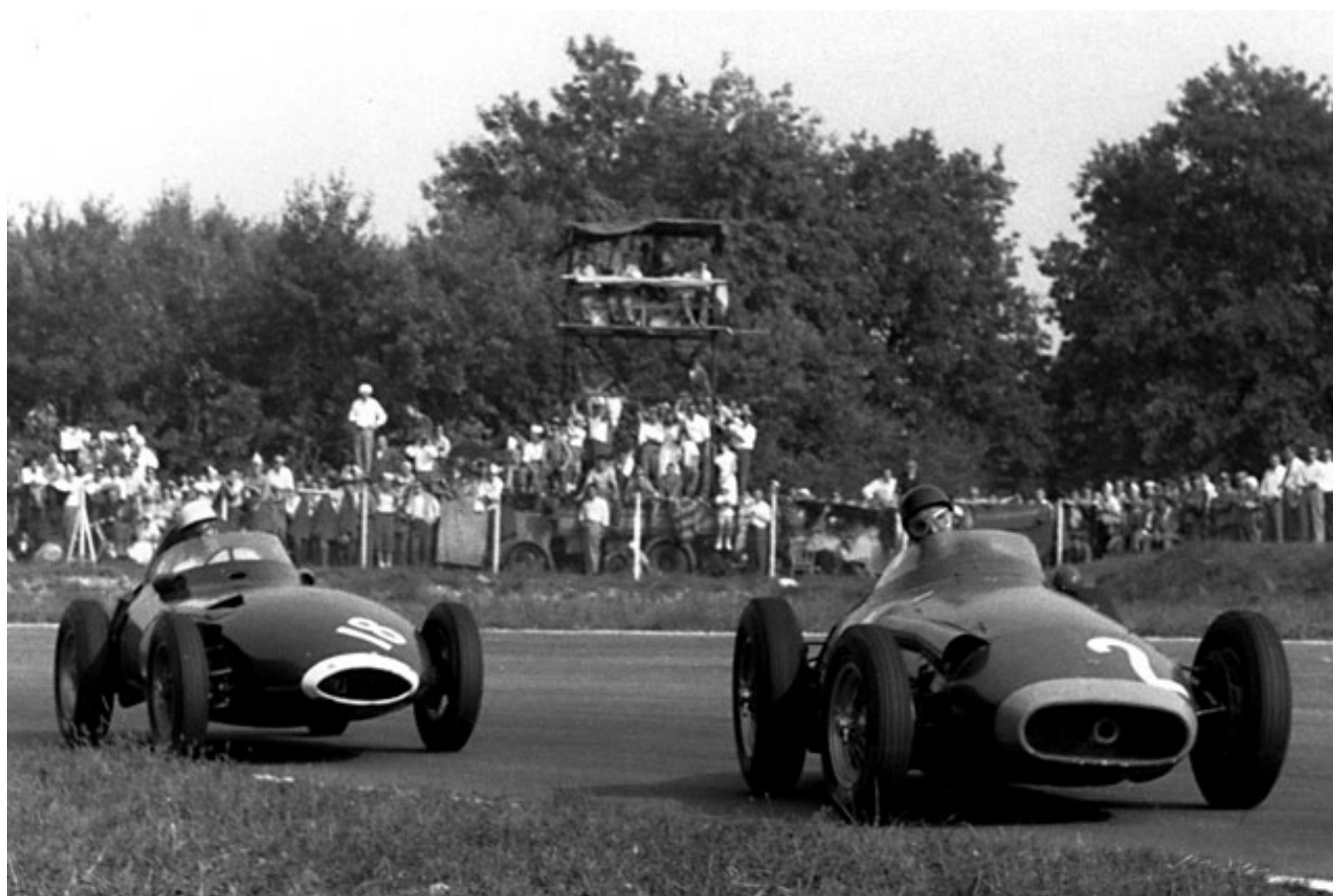
Castellotti) got round in under 10 minutes, while the best he could do was 10' 03.4".

The outright lap record for the Nordschleife still stood to Hermann Lang, who had recorded 9 mins 52.2 secs in his Mercedes W154 during his winning drive in the 1939 Eifel GP. In the opening laps of the GP, Fangio, Collins and Moss broke this handsomely several times, Moss getting down to 9' 45.3" on lap nine, only for Fangio to settle things once and for all on lap 14, when he recorded 9' 41.6".

From the start Moss held third place behind Fangio and Collins, moving up to second when Collins retired on lap nine. He could do nothing about Fangio and had a pretty uneventful race, enjoying the 250F's reliability for once, although with two laps to go he passed the pits pointing down to his gear lever, indication that all was not well with the transmission. He completed the 22 laps 46 seconds behind the World Champion and almost seven minutes ahead of his Maserati team-mate, Jean Behra.

For 1957 Moss joined Vanwall for Grands Prix but stayed with Maserati for sportscar racing. Fangio left Ferrari for Maserati and when the team arrived at the Nurburgring for the 1000 Kms race he was paired with Stirling in the fearsome, 400 bhp, 450S. They already had experience of this beast, having driven it in the Buenos Aires 1000 Kms race in January, but the clutch and gearbox failed when they were well in the lead. Then, in the Mille Miglia, Moss had the brake pedal snap off after just seven miles. The omens were not good for the Nurburgring.

Officine Maserati fielded two of these cars for Fangio/ Moss and Harry Schell/Hans Herrmann and a 300S for Jo Bonnier/Giorgio Scarlatti. Scuderia Ferrari entered a 4.1-litre 335S for Peter Collins/Olivier Gendebien; a 3.8-litre 315S for Mike Hawthorn/Maurice Trintignant and a 3-litre prototype for Masten Gregory/Olindo Morolli. There were two new, 3-litre DBR1 Aston Martins



1957 GP Italy Fangio and Moss

for Tony Brooks/Noel Cunningham-Reid and Roy Salvadori/Les Leston and although the British cars were fresh from a 1-2 victory at Spa, they were not considered a serious threat to the Italian cars - until the first practice session was over, that is.

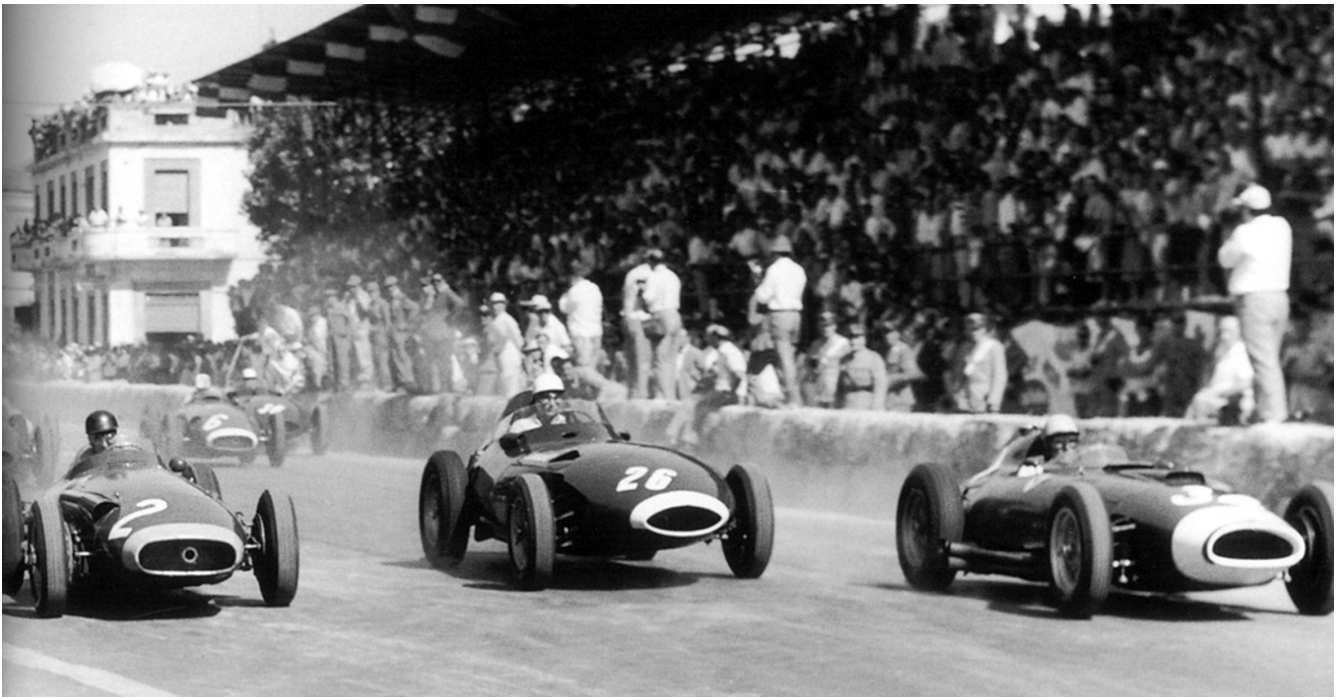
Then the writing was on the wall, for in wet and misty conditions, Tony Brooks was fastest with a time of 10 mins 16.5 secs. Moss was next with 10' 32.5" and Umberto Maglioli third, recording a remarkable 10' 37.0" in the 1.5-litre Porsche. On the Friday it was dry and Fangio restored the order, getting the Maserati round in 9' 43.6", but Moss could not break 10 minutes. Brooks could, however, and set tongues a-wagging with a sensational 9' 48.2" in the Aston. On the Saturday Moss at last hit his stride and went round in 9' 51.6" - still slower than Brooks.

Moss took the first stint and his race got off to a bad start when the Maserati refused to fire for many agonising seconds. He finally got away in the middle of the pack but the sheer grunt of the 450S allowed him to power his way up to fifth place at the end of the opening lap. Which was led, with some ease, by Tony Brooks in the Aston. After five laps Brooks was 23 seconds ahead of Harry Schell in the second 450S Maserati, but Moss was on the move. He passed Collins and then Schell

on lap six and at the end of lap eight swept past Brooks on the 3-km straight. In the process he demolished Fangio's 1956 lap record of 10 mins 05.3 secs with a time of 9' 49.9".

His lead was short-lived, for on lap 10 the Maserati broke a halfshaft at Schwalbenschwanz and the right rear wheel went bouncing into the fields. Stirling managed to bring the car to a halt without hitting anything and hitched a ride back to the pits. By the time he arrived Team Manager Nello Ugolini had replaced Harry Schell with Fangio in the second 450S, but after 16 laps Fangio was in for repairs, the fuel tank having come adrift. Two laps later Moss took it back into the race, now in 17th position. One lap was enough to tell him that the car was undriveable and so he retired.

As the Bonnier/Scarlatti 3-litre was in trouble with a broken shock absorber, Ugolini called in the 300S of private entrant Francesco Godia and Moss leapt into that, rejoining the race in 10th spot. By lap 35 he had moved up to fifth, losing that position momentarily when he stopped for fuel. Fangio then took over, regained fifth position and that was where the Maserati finished, one lap behind the victorious Aston Martin of Tony Brooks and Noel Cunningham-Reid. Moss and Fangio had both driven three cars and only had fifth place to show for it - not a good day at the office.



1957 Pescara GP - Juan Manuel Fangio (Maserati 250F), Stirling Moss (Vanwall), Luigi Musso

Things did not improve for Stirling in the Grand Prix. Fresh from his brilliant victory in the British GP, Moss (and his teammates) quickly discovered that while the Vanwall's suspension was fine and dandy for the flat fields of Aintree it was hopeless in the Eifel mountains. Tony Vandervell entered three of his cars for Moss, Tony Brooks and Stuart Lewis-Evans, but all were way off the pace in practice. Brooks and Moss were only fifth and seventh fastest, with Lewis-Evans tenth and Brooks was no fewer than 10.5 sees slower than Fangio's pole position time with the 250F Maserati.

'Observing around the second half of the circuit,' wrote Denis Jenkinson in *Motor Sport*, 'one saw that the Vanwalls were reluctant to stay in the Karussell "ditch", either driving too far in or sliding out... The bouncing and spinning of the Vanwall rear wheels could be heard from afar, while all along the course the steering wheel kick and front wheel patter were very noticeable.'

The race was a disaster for the Vanwall equipe, as Lewis-Evans crashed due to a seized gearbox, Moss came home in fifth spot, almost five minutes behind the winner, Juan Manuel Fangio and Brooks finished ninth. The team's only consolation was that the spectators had barely noticed their poor performance, as one and all were entranced by Fangio's heroic victory over the Ferraris of Mike Hawthorn and Peter Collins.

Despite 14 appearances at the Ring, Stirling had yet to establish himself as a Ringmeister, but he was to put that right in no uncertain fashion

with superb consecutive victories in the next four years.

Strapped for cash, Maserati had been forced to withdraw from racing at the end of 1957 and so Stirling joined Aston Martin for the coming season, staying with Vanwall for Grands Prix. He had enjoyed being a part of David Brown's team, so ably run by John Wyer, in 1956 and, in common with everyone else, he had been mightily impressed with the way Tony Brooks and the DBR1 had demolished the much more powerful opposition in the 1957 1000 Kms.

Astons took three DBR1s to the Ring for the 1958 event, confident of repeating their stunning success of the year before now that they had strengthened their team by the addition of Moss. Also in their favour, supposedly, was the fact that there was now a 3-litre capacity limit to the Sports-car World Championship and they had been racing 3-litre cars since the start of the decade. However, Enzo Ferrari had produced his new Testa Rossa, which had already swept all before it in the Buenos Aires 1000 Kms, the Sebring 12 Hours and the Targa Florio. Nonetheless, with Moss and Brooks on board, Astons were in a very strong position at the Ring. Stirling was paired with the up-and-coming Jack Brabham, Tony Brooks with Stuart Lewis-Evans and Roy Salvadori with Carroll Shelby.

Ferrari had a very powerful line-up, too, comprising Mike Hawthorn/Peter Collins; Taffy von Trips/Olivier Gendebien and Luigi Musso/Phil Hill. Then there were the very fast 1.5-litre

Porsches of Jean Behra/Edgar Barth; Paul Frere/Harry Schell and Richard von Frankenberg/Carel de Beaufort.

During the first practice session Moss found that his DBR1 was over-g geared and that its 3.36 final drive would only produce 5,900 rpm. He was second fastest with 9 mins 45.6 secs, behind the Ferrari of Hawthorn and Collins, who did 9' 45.3" and 9' 46.2" respectively. Stirling complained to Reg Parnell, who had now taken over from John Wyer as Aston's Team Manager.

'I told him that the car was much too over-g geared and asked if I could have a 3.62 ratio put in for the next day, assuring him that I would back off on the straight and down the Fuchsrohre.' said Moss in *Racing With The David Brown Aston Martins*. 'Reg agreed, but next morning I realised that he had only dropped to a 3.5, so I came in and said, "I'm sorry Reg, but I'm afraid we're going to have to change the engine."

"Why," he said, "what's wrong?"

"I know you dropped the ratio to 3.62," I said, keeping a very straight face, "but as I'm only getting 6,300 rpm when I should be getting 6,500, obviously the engine's off-tune." Reg was very surprised that I'd found him out and he had to admit it. He changed the axle again for the race.'

And to great effect, for Stirling made his usual superb Le Mans-type start and completed the opening lap almost 12 seconds ahead of the Ferrari of Mike Hawthorn. He held the lap record of 9 mins 49.9 sees (set with the 4.5-litre Maserati) and broke it on his first flying lap with 9' 47.0", reducing it on lap three to 9' 43.0". In fact he broke the old record every lap for his first ten laps.

His demand for the lower ratio paid handsome dividends, as he explains: "More than anywhere else that I can think of, the Ring was where you wanted to be very low-g geared, because you were only flat-out about three times - once on the straight; once through Flugplatz (where you only just touched maximum) and then after Fuchsrohre. If you're low-g geared you get to the maximum revs early, so you're going to have to back off. Let's say you peak 300 yards before the end of the straight, it means you're rolling back off the throttle for 300 yards and at the Ring, more than anywhere else, instead of being 300 rpm too high-g geared, you're bang on. The lower the ratio the faster you get to the maximum speed of that ratio and you then lift off, so although your maximum speed is lower, you have better acceleration."

The regulations stated that a driver could only do a maximum of three hours at the wheel at any one time, with no maximum time during the

race. Aston's plan was for Moss to make the most of this, as Jack Brabham had very little experience of the Ring and none of the DBR1. Due to the high rate of tyre wear, it was decided that Stirling would do the opening 10 laps, then Jack would keep the seat warm for three, after which the tyres would be changed. Moss would do the next 11 laps, Brabham the next five and Moss the final 15.

The plan worked like clockwork. Brabham took over from Moss after 10 laps, but was naturally no match for Mike Hawthorn in the Testa Rossa, who soon caught him and took the lead. After 12 laps he was 70 secs ahead and next time round Jack stopped on schedule, all four wheels were changed and Moss shot back into the race. Hawthorn then suffered a blow-out and lost time getting back to the pits. While the Ferrari was being refuelled and re-shod, Moss regained the lead and pulled further and further away from Peter Collins, who had taken over the Ferrari. By half-distance, Stirling led Peter by 2 mins 15.0 sees. Brabham held the position for his final five laps and then the rear tyres on the Aston were changed and Moss took over for the last spell. By lap 33 his lead had grown to 4 minutes and he eased up to win by 3 mins 44.0 secs from the Ferraris of Hawthorn/Collins, von Trips/ Gendebien and Musso/Hill.

'It is said that the finest drivers are outstanding on the most difficult circuits,' wrote Peter Gamier in *The Autocar*, 'if this is so then Stirling Moss, with a superb demonstration at the wheel of an Aston Martin

DBR1-300 in the 1000-km race at the Nurburgring last Sunday, is now the supreme champion. He drove for 36 of the 44 laps, a total distance of 510 miles - six hours of motoring on what is acknowledged to be the world's most punishing circuit for both car and driver. In doing so he also broke the lap record by 6.9 sees and raised the race average from last year's event (also won by Aston Martin) by 1.87 mph.'

With that remarkable drive Stirling finally established himself as a Ringmeister, but at some cost, as he revealed in *Racing With The David Brown Aston Martins*: 'It took me longer to get over that race than any other I can remember. Afterwards I had some food in the bath and felt completely dead-beat and quite ill - my pulse-rate was up from its normal 70-75 to 130. Next morning, after only a few hours sleep at the Sporthotel, I was up at eight and feeling really bad! I was always extremely fit, but I really over-drove that day, doing 36 of the 44 laps. I'd driven terribly hard for much too long and it took me a week to get over it - even more than I'd needed after the Mille Miglia.'

He had no such problems in the Grand Prix three months later, for his race lasted just three laps. Vanwall arrived at the

Ring after a spate of engine failures, so there were only two cars, for Moss and Brooks. They were up against the three Dino Ferraris of Mike Hawthorn, Peter Collins and Wolfgang von Trips and it was Mike who set the ball rolling in the first practice session with a time of 9 mins 27.3 secs. Next day Stirling reduced this to 9' 19.9" and Mike could only do 9' 21.9", but on the Saturday Hawthorn recorded a shattering 9' 14.0", beating Fangio's lap record by 3.4 seconds. And Brooks was only one second slower, so the two Vanwalls and the two Ferraris shared the front row of the starting grid.

Stirling made a superb getaway and completed his standing lap in 9 mins 26.6 secs, to lead Hawthorn by 6 secs. Next time round and he stopped the clocks at 9' 16.6" - a new record - only to demolish that on lap three with 9' 09.2". He now had a lead of 18 seconds over Hawthorn, who was in close company with Mon Ami Mate, Peter Collins.

'The car was still full of fuel and I really reckoned at that time that I could get down to under nine minutes when the fuel load had been lightened,' wrote Stirling a couple of years later in *A Turn At The Wheel*. 'This would have been quite something; the Ring has never been lapped in under nine minutes. I still think it could have been done. Everything was right, I was only taking the car to a little over 7,000 rpm. I was feeling in terrific form; the car was going splendidly and was handling particularly well.

'Then suddenly the engine stopped. It was just as if you had turned the ignition key off. What had actually happened was that a tiny screw inside the magneto had come adrift, dropped down and shorted it out.'

And also out was Stirling, who had come to a halt just before Schwalbenschwanz and had to watch the two Ferraris go by (with Collins now in the lead) some 20 seconds ahead of Tony Brooks, who would win the Grand Prix after a masterly drive.

But the race was marred by the death of Peter Collins, whom Stirling had known since they began racing as teenagers. 'His death was a blow to us all,' he wrote in *A Turn At The Wheel*, 'a loss that was not assisted by the furore that followed it. Always on these occasions one is asked: "Will you give up racing?"

'At the risk of appearing hard-hearted and unfeeling, I will say that I think this is a fatuous question. If a friend or an acquaintance dies of congestion of the lungs, you don't stop breathing

in sympathy. If an airliner crashes killing everyone on board nobody asks the airline if it will stop flying passenger aircraft. If we had all stopped motor racing after Peter's death it still would not have brought him back... His death was a shock to us all, but I cannot, in honesty, say that the thought of giving up motor racing because of it crossed my mind.'

Although his Aston Martins had now won the 1000 Kms twice, David Brown decided not to go for the hat-trick in 1959. Instead, he moved into Grand Prix racing and restricted his sports cars to the one race he had been trying to win for 10 years - Le Mans. However, Stirling Moss was well aware that the DBR1 could have been made for the Nurburgring, so he thought he had better have one for the race.

"The DBR1 was one of the most driveable cars that one could get," he recalls. "If you knew what you were doing you could position the car on the throttle, it was a very, very user-friendly machine. It wasn't as quick as the Ferrari in a straight line by any means, but it would allow you to get your foot on the throttle earlier and go through the corners faster because it was so agile. That's what made it such a stunning car.

«You could gain time at the Flugplatz (which was very fast) and then down Fuchsrohre, because you could hold it so much closer to the limit than something that wasn't as user-friendly. Then there was the descent to Adenau, with several corners that weren't quite flat where you had to roll off the throttle in 2nd or 3rd. All the way down there the Aston was very, very good and I would say very much better than the Ferraris.

"In 1955 I set fastest lap in the Eifel race with the Mercedes 300SLR at 10 mins 10.8 secs. My new lap record with the Aston in 1959 was 9' 32.0" - more than 40 seconds quicker, which is astonishing. Of course, I wasn't racing Fangio in 1955, just following him closely, whereas in 1959 I was in a real race and trying to make up for lost time. But 40 seconds is an amazing difference and shows just how good the Aston was."

So good, indeed, that Stirling called John Wyer and offered powerful team for '59. Tony Brooks left Astons for Ferrari, where he joined Phil Hill and Olivier Gendebien. They were supplemented by Dan Gurney, Cliff Allison and Jean Behra, all of whom were keen to score Ferrari's first victory in the 1000 Kms since 1953.

In practice Stirling began with the 3.62 rear axle he had used the previous year, but found he was only getting between 5,800 and 5,900 rpm. «I still felt the axle was too high,» he recalled in *Racing With The David Brown Aston Martins*, "and

we put in a 3.74 ratio which gave me 6,000 rpm. I then did 9 mins 43.1 secs (just .01 secs outside my lap record) and Jack did 10' 16.7". The next day Behra and Brooks in Ferraris did 9' 37.0" and 9' 39.0" respectively and Dan Gurney did 9' 41.0", so we needed to go a bit quicker, and I felt sure we could."

And how! At the end of the opening lap Stirling was 15 seconds ahead of the next man, Dan Gurney, in the Testa Rossa. With five laps completed his lead was 47 seconds which meant, as Denis Jenkinson noted in *Motor Sport*, 'that he had appeared over the horizon, gone past the pits, round the Sudkehre, back up behind the pits and round the Nordkehre while Gurney was still coming up the Tiergarten rise leading to the pits plateau.'

"I drove very hard indeed for 17 laps before handing over to Jack," says Stirling, "having broken my old lap record on 16 of them! I left it at 9' 32.0" - eleven seconds faster than the previous year."

Jack Fairman took the Aston back into the race after a stop of just 67 seconds but, as he did so, it began to rain. The Ferraris of Gendebien, Allison and Behra now went after him, scenting blood. They began to reduce his considerable lead lap by lap, only to have the race gifted to them - or so it seemed - when, on his sixth lap, Fairman slid off the road and into the ditch on the approach to Brunnchen. He tried levering the car out of the ditch with a fence-post and when that failed, he used his considerable strength to heave it back onto all four wheels and then drove to the pits.

Where Stirling was impatiently waiting to take over, but the minutes went by, as did the Ferraris of Gendebien and Behra, Olivier making a spinning motion with one hand. Stirling accepted defeat. 'He'd been gone so long I was convinced that he'd really stuffed it and was out of the race, so I had packed up my helmet, gloves and goggles and was just about to take off my overalls when they yelled that he was coming in. I pulled everything on again, yanked Jack out of the car almost before it had stopped rolling and was off.

'I thoroughly enjoyed myself from then on. Here was a great chance for me to have a go at the sort of motor racing I enjoyed the most - one Aston Martin against the full Ferrari team. I did ten laps and gave the car back to Jack with a two-minute lead.'

Well, yes, but Stirling's modesty fails to convey anything of the majesty of his phenomenal drive, which Denis Jenkinson described in awe-struck tones: 'The track was drying out fast and Moss lost no time in catching the Porsche (of Maglioli) and set out after the two Ferraris, which

were now over a minute ahead, the third Ferrari having stopped to refuel, change all four wheels and let Gurney take over. The way Moss closed on the Ferraris was quite fantastic and gave the impression that the Aston Martin was a far superior car, whereas in fact it was the sheer brilliance of the Moss ability that was doing it.'

After 33 laps Stirling handed over to Fairman with a lead of 2 mins 43 secs, but Phil Hill in the leading Testa Rossa demolished this and overtook the Aston as Fairman stopped to let Moss take over for the final ten laps. He was not to be denied.

'Moss was wildly encouraged by the crowd, and each one of his spectacular comebacks in the race was an extraordinary sight,' wrote Bernard Cahier, in *Road & Track*. 'The people were on their feet shouting and yelling and on the entire circuit you could see handkerchiefs and scarves waving as he went by. Although he was busy driving, he still found time to wave back at the crowds, delighting them even more.'

Stirling passed Phil at Flugplatz and went away from the Ferrari to take the chequered flag 41 seconds ahead of it. As I wrote in *Sportscar Heaven*: 'Juan Fangio's epic drive in the 1957 German Grand Prix has rightly passed into legend, but was it really more remarkable than Stirling's in this 1,000 Kms race? I think not. Consider the facts:

'After a lengthy pit stop which cost him his lead, Fangio in his 250F Maserati made up almost a minute in 11 laps to catch and pass the Ferraris of Mike Hawthorn and Peter Collins and during the 22-lap race he broke his 1956 lap record ten times.

'That was a fabulous performance to be sure, but get this: in the 1959 1000 Kms race Moss drove for 36 of the 44 laps and had to regain his lead not once, but twice. In the process he broke his 1958 sportscar record on no fewer than 16 occasions and put 5 minutes and 40.0 seconds - approaching eight and a half miles - between himself and the leading Ferrari in the opening 17 laps, which almost defies belief. Surely Stirling's performance that day surpassed even that of Fangio in the pantheon of Great

Drives, and I cannot think of anyone who has even approached either since.'

There was no German GP at the Nurburgring in 1959 because the AvD, in its wisdom, moved the race to AVUS, and in 1960 it was reduced to an F2 event, which was run on the Sudschleife. This did not, however, prevent Stirling Moss from adding another couple of victories to his name.

Having completed the hat-trick for Aston Martin and the DBR1 in the 1000 Kms, he did the same for himself by winning again in 1960. How-

ever, Astons had ceased racing sportscars altogether and it was extremely unlikely that even Stirling could pull yet another victory out of the hat with what was now a four-year-old car, so this time he raced a Maserati, the fascinating Tipo 61 Birdcage, so called because its chassis was an absolute maze of small-diameter tubes. No bird could have survived in it and the Nurburgring commentator named it 'spaghetti-auto', which was much more appropriate. Two of these cars had been bought by the American, Lucky Casner, who had persuaded Goodyear to finance his Camoradi racing team and Maserati to prepare the cars for him.

Stirling drove one at Sebring with Dan Gurney and they were well in the lead with about four hours to go when the final drive packed up. Then Umberto Maglioli and Nino Vaccarella were leading the Targa Florio when a punctured fuel tank brought the Maser to a halt.

Two cars were prepared for the Nurburgring, as Peter Gamier noted in *The Autocar*: 'Camoradi USA entered a couple of 2.8-litre Birdcage Maseratis, which must be the finest living illustrations of how far the racing-sports car has deviated from its production, for-use-on-the-road counterpart. The cars had just come from Modena where they had been completely overhauled after the Targa. Bertocchi looked after them and they were as near a works team as makes no difference. These were driven by Moss and Gurney and Masten Gregory and Gino Munaron.'

They were up against a bevy of Ferraris, including two V12 Testa Rossas for Phil Hill/Taffy von Trips and Cliff Allison/Willy Mairesse and RS60 Porsches in the hands of Jo Bonnier/Olivier Gendebien, Graham Hill/Edgar Barth and Hans Herrmann/Maurice Trintignant.

Things did not get off to a good start for Stirling and Dan. The weather was awful, which is how Stirling described the Maserati in his diary after the first practice, adding that it was 'overgeared with 6,100 rpm max - should be 6,6.' On the Friday he managed to record 9 mins 50.1 secs, which was nine seconds faster than Phil Hill in the Ferrari, but Jo Bonnier then took his 1.7-litre Porsche round in 9' 43.6", which won him pole position for the Le Mans start.

'Saturday was wet,' wrote Stirling. 'Car ready at 12. Dan did two laps and an oil pipe broke, so no practice for me. Suspension has been lowered and Dan says car feels better. We have to use Goodyear tyres at the front, Pirelli at the back.'

At 9am on the Sunday Moss made his usual superb start and completed the first lap 15 seconds ahead of Jim Clark in the Border Reivers DBR1 Aston and Masten Gregory in the other Maserati. In

a steady drizzle Stirling did his first flying lap in 10 mins 29.3 secs. The conditions were such that he did not get under 10 minutes until lap nine, when he recorded 9' 53.8", reducing that to 9' 49.5" one lap later.

As ever, he was relishing the Nurburgring and the difficult conditions. He completed his 13th lap in 9' 46.0" and next time round pulled into the pits with a lead of 2 mins 23 secs over the Bonnier/Gendebien Porsche. After 66 seconds, Dan Gurney joined the race, the Maserati still in the lead.

Five laps later Moss must have thought his chances of a hat-trick at the Ring were over, for Gurney brought the Birdcage into the pits, the cockpit awash with oil. A quick look under the bonnet revealed that, just as in practice, an oil pipe had broken. The mechanics worked feverishly to replace it and Dan rejoined the race 4 mins 37 secs behind the new leader, the Ferrari of von Trips.

A thick fog now enveloped the Eifel, something not seen since Bernd Rosemeyer's astonishing drive in 1936. Gurney rose to the occasion magnificently and carved his way through the mists, as did Jo Bonnier in the Porsche behind him. They caught von Trips and passed him on lap 28, Dan handing the Maserati back to Stirling two laps later. The order was now Bonnier, 60 seconds ahead of von Trips, who was 12 seconds ahead of Moss.

On the next lap the von Trips Ferrari expired and, with the fog clearing, Moss closed inexorably on the leading Porsche. When Bonnier stopped to hand over to Gendebien after 36 laps Stirling swept by into the lead and proceeded to extend it rapidly, from 55 secs to 67 to 105 and then 122 secs. He set a new fastest lap in the process with 9' 37.0" and took the chequered flag for the third successive year almost three minutes ahead of Gendebien in the Porsche.

It had been yet another great drive by the newest King of the Nurburgring and this time he was superbly backed up by Dan Gurney, whose luck at the circuit never matched his affinity for it.

«Dan was one of the best drivers around in those days,» says Stirling, «and he was quite brilliant in that race. The Camoradi

Maser was badly prepared, but it suited the wet conditions well. It had excellent brakes and a lot of torque, so it was quite an easy car to drive there, but I wouldn't say it was better than the Aston."

Stirling very nearly pulled off an unprecedented fourth successive victory in the 1961 1000 Kms. He and Graham Hill had been invited to drive for Porsche in the Targa Florio and came within a gnat's whisker of winning that, being forced out

when in the lead with just over four miles to go. They teamed up again for the Ring, driving one of three 1.7-litre RS61s, the others being in the hands of Jo Bonnier/Dan Gurney and Hans Herrmann/Edgar Barth. They were up against the Ferraris of Phil Hill/Taffy von Trips and Olivier Gendebien/Richie Ginther and the Camoradi Maserati Tipo 61 of Lucky Casner/Masten Gregory.

Despite bright blue skies on race morning, Porsche reckoned rain was in the offing and elected to start of Dunlop's D12 rain tyres, a gamble that nearly came off. Moss made his usual great start and although initially headed by Jim Clark in the Essex Racing Team Aston Martin, he completed the opening lap six seconds ahead of the works Ferraris of Phil Hill and Richie Ginther, the Aston of Clark and the NART Ferrari of Ricardo Rodriguez.

Phil Hill now began his sensational assault on Stirling's lap record of 9 mins 32.0 secs (See Ringmeister 8 - Phil Hill), set with the DBR1 in 1959, taking the lead on lap two with a time of 9' 31.9", which put him 17 seconds ahead of Moss, who could not begin to cope with the Ferrari on his rain tyres. Richie Ginther then followed Hill past the Porsche and the order stayed the same until Richie stopped to hand over to Gendebien, when Stirling moved up one. He then pitted on lap 12 and Graham Hill went back into the race, still on rain tyres and in fifth position.

On lap 16 it began to snow - fog last year, snow this - which played into the hands of Moss and Hill. Graham moved up to fourth place and was making time on the leaders in the very slippery conditions. On lap 19 he gave the car back to Stirling, who immediately began to close up on the Maserati of Gregory/Casner, passing it on lap 20 and then, when Gendebien spun due to his Ferrari icing up, Moss took second place and went after the Hill/von Trips car. Both the Ferraris made emergency pit stops in rapid succession, and although Phil Hill remained some 90 seconds ahead of the Porsche the Ferrari was sounding like a cement mixer and it seemed that Moss must take the lead.

But Stirling never completed the 22nd lap, as the Porsche's engine blew at Flugplatz. He made his way back to the pits to find his team in some disarray, as the Herrmann/Barth car was out and that of Bonnier/Gurney had lost more than three laps due to engine problems. However, there was a fourth car still running, an experimental Carrera fitted with a 1.6-litre engine and Porsche disc brakes. Driven by Herbert Linge and Sepp Greger, it was lying second in the 2-litre sportscar class,

behind the Lotus XV of Doug Graham and Chris Martin.

Moss and Hill were now nominated to take over this car and on lap 25 Stirling took the wheel. Enjoying the comfort of a closed car for the first time at the Ring, he set off after the Lotus. On lap 31 he caught up with the Elite of Peter Lumsden, who was not expecting to be overtaken by a very normal-looking Porsche and failed to make way for it. Moss visited the ditch while taking avoiding action, put a dent in the tail but continued. Two laps later he caught the Lotus XV and took the lead in the class, then handed over to Graham Hill on lap 36. Graham completed the final eight laps and the Porsche finished in eighth place overall, winning its class. And Moss, whose outright lap record had been reduced to an astounding 9 mins 15.8 secs by Phil Hill, had some satisfaction in making fastest lap in the Porsche's class with 9' 42.1".

Happily the Germans came to their senses in 1961 and the Grand Prix returned to the Nordschleife. Unfortunately, the FIA had lost its senses back in 1958 and decreed that from 1961 the maximum capacity for Grand Prix cars should be 1.5 litres.

Predictably, this was met with howls of protest but the FIA stuck to its guns. As a result, Grand Prix racing was diminished in both size and stature, with exciting, 280 bhp racing cars being replaced by 180 bhp roller skates. John Cooper had followed in the 1930s footsteps of Professor Ferdinand Porsche and placed the engine behind the driver, and once Colin Chapman applied his genius to the mid-engined layout of his Lotuses the little 'uns were soon lapping faster than the big 'uns, but much of the drama and excitement had been drained from the sport.

While the British teams had been complaining about the new Formula, Enzo Ferrari quietly got on with the job of turning his 1960 F2 car into an F1 machine, and the result was the iconic, Carlo Chiti-designed, 156 sharknose. A couple of non-Championship races early in the season showed that Ferrari had got the jump on the Brits and that Lotus, Cooper and BRM were short on bhp and pace, compared with the red cars.

However, in those far-off days it was still possible for an exceptional driver to make up for the deficiencies in his car. Enter Stirling Moss and the Colin Chapman-designed Lotus 18. Stirling was now driving for Rob Walker, who had purchased a Lotus in 1960, but when he tried to buy the latest Lotus 21 for 1961, the deal was vetoed by Esso, which backed Lotus, as Walker was backed by BP. To make matters worse, the new Coventry-Climax V8 was not ready, so Moss and everyone else had

to make do with the old four-cylinder F2 engine, which produced a puny 150 bhp, as opposed to the 190 of Chiti's new V6 Ferrari unit.

For the opening Grande Epreuve at Monaco, Ferrari produced three cars for Phil Hill, Taffy von Trips and Richie Ginther, the latter's fitted with the slightly more powerful 120-degree V6, as opposed to the 65-degree units in the other two. Rob Walker entered Stirling in the box-like Lotus 18 and, driving what was undoubtedly - till then - the race of his life, Moss kept the Ferraris at bay for the entire 100 laps, every one of which was faster than his pole position time. It is only fair to say that the extra power of the Ferraris was negated somewhat by the superior road-holding of the Lotus, but it is equally fair to say that no other driver in the world could have beaten the Ferraris in that car.

Predictably, the red cars won the next four GPs and then the teams went to the Nurburgring. By this time Rob Walker's Lotus had been up-dated with the rounded bodywork of the works cars and improvements to the rear suspension, but, even so, the Ferraris were favourites to win. More so by the time practice was over, for Phil Hill had stunned everyone, not least himself, with a banzai lap in 8 mins 55.2 secs, the first ever at the Ring in less than nine minutes and it is worth remembering that Moss was convinced that he could have broken nine minutes with the 2.5 litre Vanwall in 1958. Next fastest was Jack Brabham in the Cooper, now fitted with the first Coventry-Climax V8. He managed a splendid 9' 01.4", but the engine was brand new and troublesome, so he was an unlikely contender. Stirling was third fastest with 9' 01.7" and completing the front row was Jo Bonnier in the Porsche with 9' 04.8".

During practice Stirling was most impressed with Dunlop's D12, high-hysteresis tyre on a damp track, although in the dry they soon shed bits of tread. Innes Ireland had won the recent Solitude race for Lotus using these tyres and was convinced that with rain forecast for the Grand Prix, using the D12s was a risk worth taking. Stirling agreed, although Dunlop's Vic Barlow was adamant that they should not be used and refused to accept any responsibility if they were. Nonetheless, on race morning Stirling decided to fit them, even resorting to blackening out the green spot on the sidewall that denoted the D12s. Ferrari knew the rain tyres would never last on their cars, so they fitted regular R5s.

Guest of Honour Juan Manuel Fangio dropped the flag to get the race under way and it was Jack Brabham who led initially, only to slide off the road, due to having rain tyres on the front

of his Cooper and dry ones on the rear. Moss led the opening lap by two seconds from Phil Hill, the Porsches of Hans Herrmann and Dan Gurney and the BRM of Graham Hill.

After four laps Stirling was 14.9 seconds ahead of Phil Hill, who was nine seconds in front of von Trips. Moss completed his fifth lap in 9 mins 13.5 secs, as the circuit was drying out and von Trips began to close on Hill, passing his team-mate on lap eight and setting a new lap record of 9' 4.3" in the process. Stirling replied with 9' 2.8", only for Taffy to record 9' 1.6", reducing Stirling's lead to 9.4 seconds, with Hill just 1.5 seconds further back.

The Ferrari drivers were fighting each other for the World Championship, so there was no question of either one giving way in his pursuit of Moss. Hill and von Trips drove to such effect on lap 10 that both got round in under nine minutes, Taffy recording an astonishing 8 mins 59.9 secs and Phil being even faster with 8' 57.8" - staggering stuff! As Moss crossed the line after the

11th lap the gap between him and von Trips was just 6.9 seconds, and if Taffy could continue his charge he just might pip Stirling to the chequered flag.

However, as Philip Turner wrote in *The Motor*: 'Slowly Moss' lead rose to 7.5 secs to 10.7 secs. This increase under difficult conditions was by no manner of means simply a tribute to the rain tyres, it was also the product of the superb skill shown by Moss time and again this season in just such conditions, and what better setting for the exercise of that skill than the Ring, a heroic circuit on the grand scale on which only the heroic excel.

'Then on the 14th lap it began to rain again, a drizzle at first then with ever-increasing vigour and Moss led by 15 seconds, while Phil Hill closed right up on von Trips and passed him, only to be repassed on the next and last lap. So with spray flying from its wheels in the teeming rain, the Lotus came across the line as Moss won the 1961 German Grand Prix. Behind him, to the roar of cheers, came von Trips followed by Phil Hill and Jimmy Clark, the drivers making straight for their pits, there to leap into shelter from the pitiless deluge.'

The following week Turner wrote, 'What an astounding European GP that was. The Ring to me fully justifies its Wagnerian associations, for there men walk with the gods and high drama is hand in hand with high tragedy. Men came away murmuring that no matter who wins the world championship of drivers, they had seen the champion driver of the world win a very great race.' Quite.

Sadly, that was to be the last Championship win of Stirling's fabulous career, for at Goodwood



Above - 1963, Italy GP (Monza), Moss and Lorenzo Bandini
Center - 1964, 24 Le Mans, Moss, Dan Gurney, Bob Bondurant
Below - 1964, 24 Le Mans, Stirling Moss and Innes Ireland



on Easter Monday, 1962, he crashed inexplicably and raced no more. For many people that German Grand Prix remains his greatest race, but Sir Stirling himself is not so sure, as his drive at Monaco was something else, too. He is not even sure that it was his greatest victory at the Ring.

"I suppose the most important drive at the Ring was the 1961 GP, when I beat the Ferraris, although my two wins in the Aston were actually of more significance to me in a way. I always enjoyed having a go from the back of the field and when Jack Fairman dropped the Aston in a ditch in 1959 I was able to do just that, knowing that if I broke it Astons were not going to be upset. But the year before, with Jack Brabham, I really gave it everything I had and it left me totally knackered - for

whatever reason, I used all I'd got."

Unlike Tony Brooks, Stirling did not get a Nurburgring ring for winning the Grand Prix, or any of his sportscar victories. However, after finishing second behind Fangio's Mercedes 300SLR in the 1955 Eifel race, he was given three cups, a suitcase and a rug! Then after the 1961 1000 Kms he was presented with a gold cup to mark his hat-trick of wins in 1958, '59 and '60.

At that time he really was the King of the Nurburgring, emulating Alberto Ascari and Juan Fangio in winning a major race there every year for four years, something no other driver would achieve, although John Surtees would win four races in three years and Vic Elford an unprecedented four in two. Remarkably, although Moss started six 1000 Kms and six German GPs he only once won pole position, with the Vanwall in 1958. And he never set fastest lap in the Grand Prix, but set four outright lap records in the 1000 Kms and one class lap record.

"The Ring was my favourite of the longer circuits at 14.2 miles and equal with it, really, at 44.7 miles was the Targa

Florio," he says. "Monaco was the best of the short road circuits and then there was Spa. Bloody Hell, that was a dodgy place! It was an enormous challenge, but I never really looked forward to it and when it was over I felt great!

"I had no such fears about the Ring, which was much slower, of course. There were places where you were going bloody fast, but Spa was more daunting and tremendously exhilarating. You could really get your teeth into the Ring, which had a fantastic flow to it and if you could get the bit between your teeth it was amazingly rewarding. Then, coming into the straight you had about a minute when you could relax and check your instruments. And then you'd think, 'Christ - here we go again!' It was the most rewarding circuit of all."

MOSS AT THE RING					
YEAR	EVENT	LAPS	CAR	NUMBER	RESULT
1951	500cc	6	Kieft		PP&FL DNF
1952	Eifel GP	7	HWM F2	139	2nd
	500cc	5	Kieft	168	DNF
1953	Eifel GP	5	Cooper-Alfa	F2	6th
	500cc	5	Cooper-Norton	68	1
	Grand Prix	18	Cooper-Alfa	132	6th
1954	Eifel GP	5	Beart-Cooper	77	1
	Grand Prix	22	Maserati 250F	16	DNF
1955	Eifel GP	10	Mercedes 300SLR	3	2nd
1956	1000 Kms		Maserati 300S (with Jean Behra)	5	DNF
			Maserati 300S (with Jean Behra, Piero Taruffi and Harry Schell)	6	1
	Grand Prix	22	Maserati 250F	7	2nd
	Sports cars	7	Maserati 150S	32	2nd
1957	1000 Kms		Maserati 450S (with Juan Fangio)	1	DNF
			Maserati 450S (with Harry Schell and Juan Fangio)	2	DNF
			Maserati 300S (with Juan Fan- gio, Francesco Godia and Horace Gould)	4	5th
	Grand Prix	22	Vanwall	10	5th
1958	1000 Kms		Aston Martin DBR1 (With Jack Brabham)	1	1 st
	Grand Prix	15	Vanwall	7	1 st DNF
1959	1000 Kms		Aston Martin DBR1 (with Jack Fairman)	1	1 st
1960	1000 Kms		Maserati Tipo 60 (with Dan Gurney)	5	1
1961	1000 Kms		Porsche RS61 (with Graham Hill)	20	DNF
			Porsche Carrera (with Graham Hill, Herbert Linge and Sepp Greger)	22	8th
	Grand Prix	15	Lotus-Climax	7	1



RINGMEISTER

7

TONY BROOKS



1956 - 1961

On a bitterly cold day in December, 1954, Aston Martin held a driver test session at Chalgrove airfield, near Oxford. Four young hopefuls - Tony Brooks, Don Beauman, John Riseley-Pritchard and Jim Mayers - were let loose in a DB3S to show their stuff to John Wyer, Astons' Team Manager. Wyer later wrote, 'It was immediately obvious that in Brooks we had someone very special. The conditions were not good, it was wet and I need only say that on that particular day none of the other drivers did a lap in under two minutes and this young man Brooks never did a lap in over two minutes.'

Aston Martin later signed Brooks and Riseley-Pritchard for the 1955 season and they drove together at Le Mans. That was the year of the tragedy, when more than 80 people were killed and, as a result, Riseley-Pritchard's family persuaded him to give up racing. He then offered Brooks his F2 Connaught for a couple of races. Tony caught the eye of the Connaught works team and was invited to drive one of their cars in the Syracuse GP, late in October.

The 23 year-old was in two minds about this, as he was planning a career as a dentist and was studying for his exams. However, he agreed to go and continued his studies on the plane. Although he had never sat in a Formula One car before and had never seen the circuit, he simply destroyed the works Maseratis of Luigi Musso, Gigi Villoresi, Harry Schell and Carroll Shelby. He won by some 50 seconds, making history in the process by scoring the first GP victory by a British car and driver since Henry Segrave had won the French GP in a Sunbeam in 1924.

Needless to say, Aston Martin retained his services for 1956 and in March Brooks was paired with veteran Reg Parnell at Sebring for the 12-Hour race. They were in third place when the oil pump drive failed after 10.5 hours. Brooks had a strong dislike of Sebring and all airfield circuits, preferring road circuits such as Syracuse and Dundrod.

"The thing I learned most at Dundrod was what fantastic fun real road racing was."

He faced a road circuit with a vengeance in his next outing with Astons, when two DB3Ss were entered for him and Peter Collins and Roy Salvadori/Peter Walker in the Nurburgring 1000 Kms. Brooks was immediately in his element.

"I thought the Ring was fantastic. I tried to learn it to a degree before I went there, using a reasonably detailed map, to try and recognise the major changes in direction. There were certain landmarks which you couldn't miss and they were very important, for the danger on the Nurburgring is thinking you know where you are when you don't. So when I got there I had to learn the corners between the landmarks, doing it section by section. If I lost myself on one section I could re-start at the next landmark - if you didn't get these key points to start with you could do a whole lap with no benefit and you'd wasted 14.5 miles."

Knowing the Nurburgring's reputation as a car-breaker, to avoid punishing the race cars unnecessarily Astons also took two DB2/4s and had them scrutineered, so the drivers could use them for practice. On the Wednesday Brooks got his first look at the circuit and John Wyer suggested that Press Officer Alan Dakers accompany him.

"Tony handed me a map (which he had found in a magazine article on the Ring by Paul Frere) and asked me to read off the kilometre posts as we came to them. Our first lap took 16 or 17 minutes and on the third he said, 'Now I'll tell you where the corners are', so for the first time I was able to look up and see where we were going. I found Tony with his arms crossed on full right lock, saying 'I'm doing this ready for the left-hander round the next corner.' After four laps he had got his time down to around 14 minutes and seemed to have memorised everything."

Great drivers have the ability to learn even the most tortuous circuits quickly, and Brooks

showed his potential in the first official practice session. John Wyer restricted his men to three laps only in the DB3Ss, yet Tony got down to 10 mins 40 secs, which was faster than Salvadori (10' 59") and Walker (11' 09") and just 7 secs slower than Collins. The next day it rained heavily and only Collins got below 12 minutes. Brooks did just one lap, in 12' 12". On the Saturday Collins recorded 10 mins 29 secs, which made him 10th fastest, after the works Ferraris (led by Fangio) and Maseratis (led by Moss).

Although the regulations allowed drivers to do a maximum of three hours at a time, John Wyer was of the opinion that the Nurburgring was so demanding that 2 to 2.5 was a realistic limit for a race lasting almost eight hours. Looking at Tony Brooks one can understand his thinking, for Tony was skinny (to put it mildly) and no Mr Universe. However, although he always appeared to be completely lost inside his racing overalls he was very fit and, like all great drivers, was able to make the car do the work, whereas lesser mortals had to manhandle their machines around the circuit.

Wyer was also well aware that Roy Salvadori had recently had a big shunt in a Maserati 250F at Silverstone. His injuries included three broken ribs, so the Ring was not going to be a barrel of laughs for him. In the circumstances, Wyer decided that his drivers should do two, two-hour stints at the wheel, necessitating three pit stops.

Peter Collins was not in the best of moods that weekend. He had joined Scuderia Ferrari for the 1956 season, but was still under contract to David Brown's Aston Martin team for certain sportscar races. By the time of the Nurburgring he had already driven a Ferrari to victory in the Tour of Sicily and finished second in the Mille Miglia and, having tasted the power and durability of the Prancing Horse, he was none too happy driving the underpowered, four year-old Aston Martin DB3S.

Three, 3.5-litre Ferraris were at the head of the line for the Le Mans-type start, with Fangio, Luigi Musso and Phil Hill all under 10 minutes and 10 seconds. Even worse for Collins was the fact that the works, 1.5-litre Porsches of Hans Hermann and Wolfgang von Trips were quicker than the Astons!

Nonetheless, Peter made a very good start and at the end of the first lap was in fourth place, behind Moss (Maserati 300S); Fangio (Ferrari 860 Monza) and Mike Hawthorn (Jaguar D-type). On lap five, though, he stopped at the pits to complain that the Aston was misfiring on full throttle. The problem was eventually traced to a blocked main

jet and Collins rejoined the race in 18th place after a stop of 10 mins 16 secs, virtually a full lap of the Ring. He was now thoroughly disgruntled and, much to the annoyance of John Wyer, made no attempt to get back into the race.

Tony Brooks, however, was very keen to do just that. After 13 laps he took over from Collins with the 3S in 14th place and set about trying to rectify the situation. «Astons were always down on power compared to their competitors,» he recalls, «and although they handled and braked beautifully we were always struggling against the Jaguars, Ferraris and so on. Wherever there was any kind of straight we were really at a disadvantage, but this was good training in a way, because you really had to drive those Astons to be competitive. And because they handled so well it was easier to be competitive around Nurburgring than on other circuits, where you couldn't use the roadholding to the full.»

This did not go unnoticed by Motor Sport's Denis Jenkinson. He had been very impressed with Brooks in Syracuse and now he noted that, 'Random timing of most of the drivers through a series of ess bends showed Tony Brooks by far the fastest, not to say the smoothest.' Tony drove to such good effect that when he handed the car back to Collins at half-distance (22 laps) he was in eighth place.

Collins' second stint was even more lacklustre than his first, and an angry Wyer called him in a lap early so that Brooks could drive to the finish. Collins complained that the Aston had become unsafe, due to the deterioration of the shock absorbers, but Brooks made nonsense of this by harrying Olivier Gendebien's works Ferrari for three laps and then passing it, although he was a lap behind. Just to rub it in, Brooks completed his final lap in 10 mins 26 secs, 17 seconds quicker than Peter had managed in his second session.

In his Race Report, a despairing Wyer wrote, 'The performance of Collins, after the initial setback caused by the choked jet, was extremely disappointing and he made little or no effort to recover the lost ground. Brooks, on the other hand, drove splendidly, and fully confirmed our belief that we have a driver of the highest quality.' Just how high, Brooks would prove beyond doubt during Astons' next visit to the Ring, a year later.

He did not make it to Germany for the 1956 Grand Prix, having made the mistake - along with Mike Hawthorn - of joining BRM. The car looked very promising after its debut late in 1955, but at Goodwood on Easter Monday it crashed and spat Hawthorn out, then did the same to Brooks dur-

ing the British GP at Silverstone. Fortunately, neither driver was seriously hurt, but neither they nor BRM took part in the German GP.

So Brooks had to wait another year before he could return to the circuit he had enjoyed so much, but it was worth it. For 1957 Aston Martin produced the DBR1, a beautiful, state-of-the-art racer with a spaceframe chassis, disc brakes and rear mounted five-speed gearbox. With the exception of the gearbox, the Aston was entirely the work of one man, Ted Cutting, and although its 3-litre engine was a redesign of that in the DB3S and produced no more horsepower, Cutting's chassis was so right that the R1 was immediately much faster than its predecessor.

The DBR1 made its European debut at Spa, where Brooks and Roy Salvadori finished first and second. This was most satisfying for the Feltham equipe but Ferrari and Maserati were both taking part in the Mille Miglia that weekend, so there was no real opposition. Two weeks later, however, the big guns all arrived at the Nurburgring, Ferrari with a 4.1-litre, a 3.8-litre and a 3-litre prototype and Maserati with two 4.5-litre cars and a 3-litre. Among the drivers for the former were Mike Hawthorn and Peter Collins and for the latter Juan Manuel Fangio and Stirling Moss. In the circumstances, nobody gave the Aston Martins a chance - until the first practice session was over.

Then it was seen that, in the wet, Tony Brooks was fastest of all, with a time of 10 mins 16.5 secs, ahead of Moss with the Maserati on 10' 32.5". This caused a few murmurs up and down the pit lane, but by the time the second - and dry - session had ended, Brooks was the talk of the Eifel. In just four flying laps he had recorded the remarkable time of 9 mins 48.2 secs, a mere 4.6 seconds slower than Juan Fangio in the 4.5-litre Maserati and no fewer than 38 seconds faster than his best time in the DB3S the previous year.

As Denis Jenkinson noted in *Motor Sport*: 'The whole Aston Martin team were put very severely in their place by the unbelievable Brooks, and no-one was more embarrassed about it than Brooks himself, but he just cannot help being a superb driver and even when he is not trying he is faster than most, so that when he does "have a go" he shakes the very top of the tree, and it will not be long before some of the accepted stars will have to come tumbling down.'

The stars began tumbling sooner than he thought - to be precise at the drop of the starter's flag at 9 am on Sunday, May 26, 1957. Brooks made a superb getaway and was almost halfway towards the South Turn before anyone else had moved. Anyone

else, of course, included the acknowledged master of the run-and-jump start, Stirling Moss, and Mike Hawthorn. Happily for Aston Martin, both these key rivals couldn't get their cars started for many seconds and Patron David Brown, John Wyer and new Team Manager Reg Parnell watched, hearts pounding, as the illuminated scoreboard showed their Aston number 14 lead the field all the way round that 14.2-mile first lap, before rocketing past the pits, 1.3 seconds ahead of Harry Schell's 450S Maserati. Tony's standing lap had taken him just 10 mins 9.4 secs, the same as Olivier Gendebien's fastest practice lap in the 4.1-litre Ferrari.

In third place was Peter Collins in the 335S Ferrari and fourth Roy Salvadori in the second Aston Martin DBR1. Stirling Moss was fifth with the Maserati he was to share with Fangio and then came Masten Gregory in the prototype Ferrari, (which would become the 3-litre Testa Rossa).

After five laps the brilliant Brooks was 23 seconds ahead of Schell, who had Collins and Moss behind him. Stirling was making up for lost time and on the next lap passed both Collins and Schell to mount his attack on Brooks. The Aston was giving away some 160 bhp and 25-30 mph to the Maserati and on lap eight the 450S simply overwhelmed the DBR1 on the three-kilometre straight. "That Maser was so fast it wasn't true!" says Brooks. "So long as it was in the race there was nothing I could do about it - it was in a class of its own, on its own - never mind the fact that it had Moss and Fangio driving it!"

But Moss and Fangio were soon out of a job - temporarily - for on lap 10 the leading Maserati shed a rear wheel at Schwalbenschwanz. Moss calmly brought it to a halt and hitched a ride back to the pits, to find that Team Manager Nello Ugoletti had already brought in Harry Schell and sent Fangio back into the race in the second 450S instead of Hans Herrmann. Meanwhile, Tony Brooks continued on his merry way, now leading by 1 min 15 secs from Peter Collins/Olivier Gendebien (4.1 Ferrari) and Mike Hawthorn/Maurice Trintignant, (3.8 Ferrari), Mike having recovered superbly from his poor start.

On lap 16 Brooks brought the Aston in for fuel, oil and new rear wheels and 1 min 28 seconds later it returned to the fray in the hands of Noel Cunningham-Reid, a driver completely unknown to the vast numbers of spectators thronging the circuit. With a mere three seasons of racing and a handful of impressive drives in an HWM to his double-barrelled name, Noel had been signed by Aston Martin for 1957 and had found himself somewhat out of his depth in his first race for the

team, the British Empire Trophy at Oulton Park. If the 2.7 miles of Oulton caused him problems, how could he possibly redeem himself at the Nurburgring, with 14.2 miles and 172 corners to master?

But redeem himself he did, and in some style. In order to get to grips with the circuit he drove 15 laps in private practice with a Porsche-engined VW. This was just as well, as he had very few practice laps in the Aston, but they were sufficiently impressive for John Wyer and Reg Parnell to take a chance and pair him with Brooks. It turned out to be an inspired decision, for Noel not only kept the lead that Brooks had given him, he increased it and by the time he gave the Aston back, it was four and a half minutes ahead of the Hawthorn/Trintignant Ferrari.

This was a complete reversal of the previous year's scenario, when Brooks had a bored and frustrated Peter Collins as his co-driver and a DB3S that was simply not competitive. Now, Cunningham-Reid proved himself to be a very able and enthusiastic partner and the DBR1 was more than a match for anything at the Ring - other than a 450S Maserati driven by Fangio or Moss.

«The DB3S wasn't a bad car for its day,» recalled Brooks in *Sportscar Heaven*, "but it wasn't in the same class as the DBR1; the difference between the two was chalk and cheese, really. The DBR1 was without doubt the best-handling car of its time and it might have been made for the Ring because so many of the corners could be drifted and the Aston was so driftable. The sensation of drifting is so sensual it really is quite addictive, which is why I enjoyed the Ring and the Aston so much.

"In those days the road from Fuchsrohre on the run down to Adenau Bridge was lined with a tall, solid hedge either side and there was no margin for error, you couldn't see the exact curvature of the bends that were coming up so you had to memorise them. The hedges were so high it was almost like the Hampton Court Maze going down there and you could gain a lot of time on that section if you had learned it very well because it was completely blind. People tend to go more slowly downhill because they feel less confident than going uphill or on the flat. If you're going too quickly downhill it's more difficult to slow if you've overcooked it. Psychologically I always felt that I could make up a lot of time on competitors by going for it downhill, because they would be that much more tentative.

"The Aston was a fun car to drive at the Ring and you could really throw it about, because the circuit showed off its tremendous road-holding

qualities, which enabled us to take on the more powerful Ferraris and Maseratis. If only the R1 had had more power nothing would ever have got near it!"

Underpowered it may have been, but nevertheless the Aston Martin was now in a commanding lead. Brooks continued to pull away from the pursuing Ferraris and the 1.5-litre Porsche of Umberto Maglioli/Edgar Barth. The second 450S retired with a split oil tank and it was left to Fangio and Moss to save Maserati's bacon by taking over the privately-entered 300S of Godia/Gould.

But neither they, nor anyone else, could do anything about the remarkable Tony Brooks and the DBR1. Driving immaculately, Brooks simply ran away from the opposition until by lap 33 he was leading the Collins/Gendebien Ferrari by 5 mins 16 secs. He then eased off and completed the 44 laps to win by 4 mins 13.7 secs, recording the first major victory at the Nurburgring by a British car and the first by a British driver since Dick Seaman had won the German GP for Mercedes-Benz in 1938. Seaman, it must be said, had victory handed to him on a plate, for team-mate Manfred von Brauchitsch's car had caught fire in the pits when in the lead. However, no such luck had attended Tony Brooks who, with consummate ease, led for 29 of his 31 laps and established himself as King of the Nurburgring.

"The Nurburgring is the best circuit in the world," said Tony at the time. "It provides such variety and contrast that it resembles a true road circuit. You don't come up to the same stupid corner every minute and a half. The idea - which was the basis of motor racing - was to drive as fast as possible on public roads which, for safety, were closed to the public. Anything else is circus stuff. It's not motor racing."

A couple of months later, Brooks was back at the Ring for the German GP, but his earlier success was not to be repeated. He had wisely left BRM and joined Stirling Moss at Vanwall for 1957 and although Stirling scored a sensational victory in the British GP at Aintree after taking over Tony's car (Brooks had been injured when he crashed his Aston Martin at Le Mans and was not back to full strength at Aintree) the team was under no illusions when it arrived at the Ring.

This was Vanwall's first visit to the circuit and their spring rates and damper settings were completely awry. The result was that the cars were all at sea on the Ring's rollercoaster and Moss could only finish fifth and Brooks ninth. Tony was so shaken up in the Vanwall that he was physically sick during the race and afterwards announced



1958 Belgian GP, Spa - Tony Brooks (Vanwall)

that it was easily the most uncomfortable ride he had ever had in a racing car.

However, nobody was interested in Vanwall's woes, as they had witnessed one of the greatest drives of all time by Juan Manuel Fangio in his 250F Maserati. He had driven the race of his life to catch and pass the Ferraris of Mike Hawthorn and Peter Collins, when they appeared to have an unassailable lead (See Ringmeister 5 - Juan Manuel Fangio).

Aston Martin arrived at the Ring in May, 1958 with the entire Vanwall team in their line-up, Brooks having been joined by Stirling Moss and Stuart Lewis-Evans. Three DBR1s were entered on this occasion, to be driven by Moss/Jack Brabham, Brooks/Lewis-Evans and Roy Salvadori/Carroll Shelby.

Their chances of success were shortened on the very first lap, when Roy Salvadori came to a halt at the Karussell, unable to find any gears. Things then went from bad to worse, for the next time round Brooks spun to a halt on the approach to the Karussell - for no good reason that he could establish. A blow-back from the exhaust pipes (which exited under the driver's door) set fire to the paintwork momentarily, but this was quickly put out by a man who, as if by magic, appeared from the shrubbery with a fire extinguisher! Brooks rejoined the race, but the incident had dropped him from third to 14th place.

By dint of some very fast driving, Tony regained seven places in the next two laps and by the time he handed over to Lewis-Evans on the 15th lap he had fought his way back to fourth. Unfortunately, Lewis-Evans was not fully fit (he was suffering from stomach ulcers) and although he managed to hold position, he was losing time and eventually came in one lap early. Brooks then set off after the third place Ferrari of Taffy von Trips.

He was catching it, too, but his brilliant recovery was undone with just three laps to go when he was elbowed off the road.

"I was in the long left-hander after Flugplatz leading to the sharp right-hander at Aremberg. There was a Peugeot saloon on the left," Brooks recalled years later, with a shudder of disbelief, "leaving me plenty of room to go by but, as I approached to overtake he started moving over. I was too committed to brake and drop back as I was doing about 5,000 rpm in fifth - 130 or even 140 mph - so I had no option but to brake and allow him to push me into the ditch. The Aston was undamaged, but the ditch was so deep I couldn't get it out."

Happily for Aston Martin, Stirling Moss won the race, ably backed up by Jack Brabham, but for Brooks it was a big disappointment after his victory the year before. Two months later, however, Tony was back on the winner's rostrum, after what he regards as his finest drive at the Nurburgring and, indeed, of his entire career.

When the teams assembled for the 1958 German GP (now shortened from the original 22 laps to 15) Ferrari had good reason to feel confident. Their nemesis of the previous year, Juan Manuel Fangio, had recently retired; Officine Maserati had also left the scene, due to financial troubles and although the Vanwalls had won the Dutch GP (Moss) and the Belgian (Brooks), Ferrari had then won the French (Hawthorn) and the British (Collins). Scuderia Ferrari had vast experience of the Nurburgring over a period of eight years, whereas the Vanwalls had failed dismally on their only previous appearance the year before.

However, this time the green cars from Aston were really on song and, after practice, the race looked set to be a straight battle between the Ferraris of Mike Hawthorn and Peter Collins and the Vanwalls of Stirling Moss and Tony Brooks, for both Hawthorn and Brooks had broken Fangio's scintillating lap record - 9 mins 17.4 secs - of the year before with 9' 14" and 9' 15" respectively. The front row of the grid was completed by Moss (9' 19.1") and Collins (9' 21.9").

Moss and Brooks leapt into the lead from the start, but Tony was quickly overtaken by both the Ferraris. He had not been allowed to practice with his Vanwall on full tanks and, finding that it handled like a pig, he dropped back from the leading trio. Which soon became a duo, for Stirling's car came to a halt on lap four when the magneto failed. This left Hawthorn and Collins cheerfully swapping the lead all round the circuit, to the delight of the spectators, with Brooks in third place 32 seconds behind the playful Ferraris.

But not for long: as the Vanwall's fuel load lightened, Tony drove faster and faster and, just as Fangio had done the year before, began to eat into the Ferraris' lead. On lap five he reduced the gap by a full 10 seconds; by 5.1 on lap six; by 5.3 on lap seven and by 6.9 on lap eight.

The three cars passed the pits at the end of that lap with just two seconds separating each. 'An echoing roar came from the crowd,' wrote Stuart Seager in *Autosport*, 'for this was quite unexpected; it had been assumed that now Moss was out Ferrari would trundle home the winner - but it was not to be.'

Brooks was now in his element - the Vanwall was going superbly and he had the Ferraris in his sights. "As we passed the pits at the end of lap nine we were almost nose to tail in the order Collins, Hawthorn, Brooks," says Tony, "but I was able to use the Vanwall's superior disc brakes to go past Mike into the North Turn behind the pits, so I was now the meat in a Ferrari sandwich.

"Although the Vanwall did not like being thrown about, our cars were pretty evenly matched in handling, but the Ferraris had more power and were definitely faster on the straight (Stirling reckoned by some 15 mph), where Mike repassed me. This time, however, I outbraked him after the pits,

going into the South Turn, and then got by Peter going into the North Turn."

Stuart Seager again: 'In a flash the Vanwall was through into the lead and the crowd went wild! Yells, cheers and hats rose into the air as we witnessed a virtuoso piece of sheer driving skill, similar to Fangio's lead-taking manoeuvre in last year's race. This was a real motor race, with all the drama of the unexpected and Tony Brooks showing himself to be a true, top-line racing driver.'

But the drama of the unexpected manifested itself again all too soon, for it was on that eleventh lap that Peter Collins inexplicably lost control of his Ferrari at Pflanzgarten and crashed fatally. Brooks, who was a couple of lengths ahead of Peter at the time, saw nothing of the accident, but poor Mike Hawthorn was just a couple of lengths behind his great friend and 'Mon Ami Mate' and saw the whole thing.

Their team-mate Phil Hill was driving an F2 Ferrari in that race and his car ran out of brakes, as did the third F1 Ferrari of Taffy von Trips, who drove to the finish using his gearbox for braking. Phil believes that Peter may have suddenly suffered the same problem, which caused his accident, but Alan Dakers (Aston Martin's Press Officer) has another theory:

1958 German GP, Nurburgring - Peter Collins (Ferrari), Tony Brooks (Vanwall)





1958 German GP, Nurburgring - Tony Brooks (Vanwall)

"During the two seasons they drove together for Astons, Peter always regarded Tony Brooks as his pupil and had a tremendous regard for his skill. I can't help thinking that Peter's attitude to his former team-mate had something to do with his fatal crash at the Ring.

"In the 1957 German GP, Peter and Mike had been fooling around, swapping the lead, thinking that they had the race sewn up after Fangio had had to make a pit stop for fuel. But in that historic race The Old Man caught them napping and passed them both to win. The next year they were again in the lead in their Ferraris, knowing that Moss in the Vanwall was out. But, as so often happened, once Moss had retired Brooks went racing, and he passed both Ferraris into the lead.

"I honestly believe that this was too much for Peter. It was one thing to be passed by Fangio the year before, but losing the lead to Brooks - his former pupil - was not on. I think it more than likely that seeing Brooks go past aroused Peter's considerable fighting instinct and that, quite simply, he made a mistake. It was one of the very few he ever made, but it killed him."

In common with Phil Hill, Dakers thought that Peter's brakes might have been failing, but the Ferrari was given a thorough, independent exami-

nation after the race and was found to be in perfect mechanical condition.

Unaware of the accident, Tony Brooks pressed on at ten-tenths, determined to keep ahead of the Ferraris. "It was all very sad and peculiar. I had no idea what had happened and I was expecting Peter to come alongside on the straight. When I got there I had a good look in the mirrors and was rather surprised not to see him. I realised that I had achieved my objective of getting away from the Ferraris, but I didn't know how. I thought that Peter's must have blown up and my reaction was one of great disappointment, as I was now really into the swing of things and greatly enjoying our battle."

Sadly, the battle that had also enthralled the huge crowd spread around the Nurburgring, was over. Hawthorn's Ferrari expired on the next lap and he was so distraught by what he had seen that there was no fight left in him, anyway. Brooks had done it again. Just as he had scored the first major victory by a British car and driver at the Ring with Aston Martin in 1957, now he and Vanwall had become the first British combination to win the German Grand Prix. He was King of the Nurburgring once more. As Rodney Walkerley noted in *The Motor*:



1959 German GP, AVUS - Tony Brooks (Ferrari), Masten Gregory (Cooper-Climax)

'Brooks crossed under the chequered flag and the crowded stands and enclosures shook with the shouts of delight, while handkerchiefs fluttered like a snowstorm and hats sailed into the air. There can never have been a more popular victory on foreign soil. A magnificent triumph on the most difficult circuit in the world - and as the sun came out to light a serene evening after the greyness of the day, the dark shadow of Peter Collins' death saddened us all and tore away all our joy.'

Brooks can only agree. «The great satisfaction of winning was later spoiled when we found out about Peter, but immediately after the race all we knew was that he had had a shunt and that was it, so I was very happy and satisfied when I was

presented with the laurel wreath. It was not until after the prizegiving later that I learned that Peter had died on the way to hospital. Only he knows for sure, but the probability is that he made a mistake in the heat of the moment. We were all very much on the limit and, tragically, Peter just slipped over it."

Although the death of Peter Collins - one of the most popular men in racing - cast a pall over everything, it in no way diminished Tony's achievement, of which he is justifiably proud. Once he started to catch Mike and Peter from lap five onwards he was using his skill and knowledge of the

Ring to the utmost, and with remarkable effect.

«By now they had speeded up as they could see me catching them,» he recalls, «but over the next five laps I pulled back an average of 6.8 secs per lap, which was faster than Fangio had caught them the year before, although, of course, I had disc brakes and a more powerful car. There were some uncanny similarities to the 1957 GP, as in the first half of that race Fangio went away from the Ferraris at the rate of 4.6 secs per lap in his 250F Maserati, which started with half a tank of fuel. On lap 12 he stopped for more and new rear tyres, as planned, letting Mike and Peter into a 45-second lead. Over the next eight and a half laps he proceeded to catch them at the rate of 5.5 secs per lap and won what many people regard as the greatest Grand Prix of all time.

«Mike, Peter and I had a terrific race all round the circuit until Peter's accident. They were two of the very best and I feel that I performed well against them, even by Fangio's standards, which was very satisfying on the Nurburgring. I always thought the Ring was the greatest circuit in the world (with Spa) and even to do well there gave me more pleasure than winning on some others. My victory with Astons in 1957 was nice because it caught everybody by surprise; Noel Cunningham-Reid drove very well and it was a combined effort.

However, the German Grand Prix of 1958 was all mine - my finest drive at the Nurburgring and the race of my life.»

Tony Brooks joined Scuderia Ferrari for 1959 and shared a Testa Rossa with Jean Behra in the 1000 Kms. Unfortunately, Brooks was sick on the morning of the race and was not able to give of his best. They finished third, behind the Moss/Fairman Aston Martin and the Hill/Gendebien Ferrari.

Armed with the new Ferrari Dino, Tony was very confident of repeating his 1958 victory in the German GP, but, in their wisdom, the authorities moved the race to AVUS, of all places. Brooks won, but driving up and down three miles of straight autobahn did not exactly light his fire. He had his final race at the Ring in 1961, when his BRM failed to last the Grand Prix. Brooks was already completely disenchanted with the new 1,500cc F1 and he retired from racing altogether at the end of that season, his reputation as a Ringmeister secured by those two wonderful drives in 1957 and 1958.

Around the Ring with tony brooks

With the aid of gear changes he had marked on a map for John Wyer in 1957 and DBR1 Designer Ted Cutting's gear/speed chart, Tony Brooks describes a flying lap of the 14.2-mile circuit he had mastered so brilliantly with the Aston Martin that year:

"For the race the Aston has been fitted with a 3.38:1 final drive in fifth gear which, with the 6.5 x 16 inch Avon rear tyres, gives a maximum speed of 152 mph at 6,000 rpm, and I hold that speed past the pits, heading into the South Turn. The brakes on the DBR1 are pretty good so I go very deep into the corner, changing down through the gears to second. Although it looks fairly quick on the map, the South Turn is actually quite a tight semi-circle, so I power through it, balancing the car on the point of breakaway with the accelerator, moving up into third and snatching fourth at about 105 mph on the straight behind the pits which leads to the North Turn, which I also take in second. This is a double left-hander which I power through, taking third at 75 mph for a quite tricky series of corners known as Hatzenbach. The Aston drifts beautifully through here, and we rush downhill and over the bridge at Quiddelbacher-Hohe, which is the first of the Ring's big-dipper effects where I really feel the force of gravity pushing me down in the seat as we go over the bridge.

«Then it's into fourth gear at around 105 mph, still being pushed into the seat, soaring upwards and taking off just before a very tricky right-hander, drifting through that over Flugplatz, taking fifth with the road still rising slightly. At the top of the rise the Aston is doing 5,000 in fifth (124 mph) as we plunge downhill, reaching 136 mph before I drop down into fourth for a tricky left-hander and then into third for the tight right-hander which is Aremberg. We power through here and as the Aston drifts through the corner I feel it moving sideways and feed in the slightest opposite lock, straightening the steering at the same time as I ease off the accelerator to correct the slide. If I keep the power on I just spin the rear wheels and lose time, so I'm always trying to keep the rear wheels on the point of spinning, because that's the quickest way round.

'We then rush down to Fuchsrohre and the second big-dipper effect. This is very sharp indeed and puts a tremendous gravitational force on me as we hit the bottom, by which time the Aston is doing around 135 mph, before I change down to third and then second for the left-hander at Adenauer-Forst. That can catch you out, because the gravitational effect of the Fuchsrohre can leave you highly stimulated, if not quite stunned, so it is very easy to take the left-hander a little too fast. If I don't brake heavily here I am going to be on the wrong line for the sharp right which follows within 30 or 40 yards.

«Then it's maximum acceleration as the road curves gently to the left before tightening into a tricky second-gear corner, then turning sharp right at Kallenhard. Still in second gear I apply the power just enough to keep drifting, but not spinning the wheels and losing time. Then it's up into third for a longish right-hander before dropping to second again and drifting round Wehrseifen, which leads to a very tricky section going down to Adenau Bridge. Again, there is a tremendous gravitational effect as we rush down to it in third and then, having been forced into my seat over the bridge at around 85 mph, there is a very tricky climbing right-hander, Ex-Muhle. It is very important to get through this corner quickly because it leads on to quite a good straight where I take fourth at about 105 mph before dropping down to third again and then second for the right-hander at Bergwerk.

"This, too, is very important, because it leads onto the long climb to the Karussell and your speed out of the corner is even more important as you are then going uphill. The climb is a series of curves through Kesselchen, which I take accelerating

hard through third and into fourth and I have to feather the throttle lightly, but it is a corner where I can save a lot of time by getting it just right.

“So it is down to third and then second for the right-hander, accelerating hard up to the Karussell, snatching third very briefly and then back into second for the banking itself. I accelerate out of it and into third for the steep climb up to Hohe Acht, drifting round that right-hander and on through Wippermann before changing down to second for Brunnchen. I am drifting through most of these corners, balancing the car between the steering and the accelerator all the time and this is where I get a tremendous sensual feeling of poetry in motion, as the car moves from one drift into another.

«We continue rushing downhill through a series of corners of rather similar radius which makes it difficult to differentiate clearly one from the other. In many ways this section is the most difficult (after the rush down to Adenau) in that there is no visibility, the corners are blind and yet not so dissimilar that they are clearly marked in my mind as how best to take them. It is a tricky section of road where I am drifting to the right one minute and to the left the next, a marvellous sequence of drifts through corners of varying radius to the right-hander after Pflanzgarten. This I take in third gear before changing up to fourth at 105 mph and accelerating towards Schwalbenschwanz, the Little Karussell.

«I drop down to third for the right-hander over a bridge and then turn left into the corner that leads to the Little Karussell.

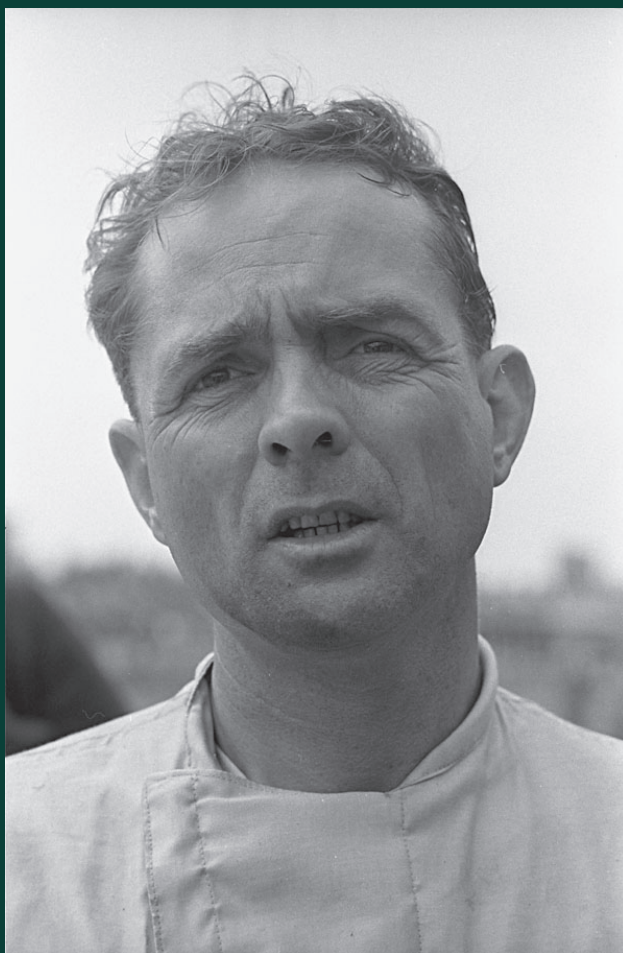
This is quite difficult because although it has a small concrete banking it is only wide enough to take the inside wheels, so I have to assess just how much additional grip this small amount of banking gives me. It is hard to satisfy myself that I have gone through that corner at the best possible speed - it would be much easier with a flat piece of road.

“We then go through a very wooded section to a double right-hander which is crucial in that it governs both the speed at which I enter the three-kilometre straight and just how soon I achieve maximum speed on it. This corner is completely blind and I must take the two apices in one broad drift, clipping the first apex and allowing the car to drift wide, but not so wide that I will miss the second apex, then allowing the curve of my drift to take me out to the full width of the straight.

Once on the straight I change into fourth at 105 mph before the bridge at Dottinger-Hohe and into fifth at 136 mph just before the second bridge. Accelerating hard, I reach 6,000 rpm (the Aston's maximum of 152 mph) just before the Antoniusbuche Bridge. Then there is a flat-out left-hander, slightly downhill, followed by a flat-out right-hander which is the trickier of the two. It is important to take these flat, as immediately after the latter the road climbs quite steeply before it plateaus in front of the pits. And that is a flying lap of the Nurburgring in the DBR1, 1957-style.”

BROOKS AT THE RING

YEAR	EVENT	LAPS	CAR	NUMBER	RESULT
1956	1000 Kms		Aston Martin DB3S (with Peter Collins)	9	5th
1957	1000 Kms		Aston Martin DBR1 (with Noel Cunningham-Reid)	14	1
	Grand Prix	22	Vanwall	11	7th
1958	1000 Kms		Aston Martin DBR1 (with Stuart Lewis-Evans)	2	DNF
	Grand Prix	15	Vanwall	8	1
1959	1000 Kms		Ferrari Testa Rossa (with Jean Behra)	3	3rd
1961	Grand Prix	15	BRM	16	DNF



RINGMEISTER

8

PHIL HILL



1956 - 1967

In January, 1956, Phil Hill and Olivier Gendebien drove a works, 3.5-litre Ferrari to second place in the Buenos Aires 1000 Kms, behind the 4.9-litre car of Juan Fangio/Eugenio Castellotti. It was Phil's second race for the Scuderia and, in common with the first (Le Mans the previous year) it had been arranged by Luigi Chinetti. Nello Ugolini was then Ferrari's Team Manager and, impressed with Phil's performance, he invited him to drive for the team in some European races, the first of which would be the Nurburgring 1000 Kms.

This was entirely appropriate, for Phil's career as a racing driver had been finally set in stone by three drives in the very Ferrari which Alberto Ascari and Nino Farina had driven to victory in the first 1000 Kms race at the Ring in 1953.

Despite his success in America, Phil had always had doubts about motor racing as a career and found it hard to reconcile the rewards with the dangers. For a while his insecurity gave him ulcers, but things changed for the better late in 1954 when Texan oil magnate and racing enthusiast Allen Guiberson sent him a photo of his latest acquisition, the Ascari/Farina 4.5-litre Ferrari. With the photo was a note saying, 'Guaranteed not to cause ulcers'.

Hill decided he just had to drive that car and after finishing second with it at March Field and then again at Riverside, he was entered in the Carrera PanAmericana by Guiberson. Accompanied by Richie Ginther, Phil finished second once more, behind the works Ferrari of Umberto Maglioli, but he had beaten Juan Fangio's 1953 race record and his overall result in Mexico convinced Phil that motor racing really was the career for him.

In the summer of 1955 he raced successfully with a Ferrari Monza owned by George Tilp, a wealthy New Jersey businessman. Tilp and his wife accompanied the 29 year-old to Germany for the 1956 1000 Kms race and borrowed a Mercedes saloon from the factory for the duration of their

stay. At the Nurburgring Phil met up with Fon de Portago, who was also in the Ferrari team.

"He had a Mercedes, too," recalls Phil, "and he offered to show me round the circuit. He spun going down the Foxhole and I got out and refused to get back in the car with him, so I had a long walk back to the pits. I used the Tilp Mercedes to learn the circuit and I loved the place. I was always surprised when people asked, 'How did you ever learn such a long and difficult circuit?' The answer was that it is very learnable. Every bit has a different look to it and I can look at any photo and know exactly where it was taken."

Scuderia Ferrari sent five cars for the 1000 Kms. They were all of 3.5 litres capacity and looked identical, but three were 12-cylinder, 290 MMs, the other two being 4-cylinder, 860 Monzas, the former producing more power, the latter more torque. It was a formidable entry, as was the driver line-up, led by World Champion Juan Manuel Fangio. Also present were Eugenio Castellotti, Luigi Musso, Olivier Gendebien, Maurice Trintignant and Alfonso de Portago.

In view of their successful first partnership in South America, Phil might reasonably have expected to be paired with Gendebien again. Instead, he found himself sharing a 12-cylinder car with Ken Wharton, who had been brought in to replace Peter Collins, contracted to Aston Martin for this race. The other 12-cylinder car was in the hands of Luigi Musso-Maurice Trintignant and the fours went to Juan Manuel Fangio/Eugenio Castellotti and Olivier Gendebien/Alfonse de Portago.

Ranged against the Ferraris were works entries from Maserati, Jaguar, Aston Martin and Porsche. Stirling Moss/ Jean Behra, Piero Taruffi/ Harry Schell and Cesare Perdisa/ Robert Manzon were in 300S Maseratis; Mike Hawthorn/ Desmond Titterton and Duncan Hamilton/ Paul Frère were in D-type Jaguars; Peter Collins/ Tony Brooks and Roy Salvadori/ Peter Walker were in

DB3S Aston Martins and Hans Herrmann/ Richard von Frankenberg and Wolfgang von Trips/ Umberto Maglioli drove the 1.5-litre Porsches.

Fastest in practice, inevitably, was Fangio with 10 mins 3.6 secs, followed by Musso (10' 07.8"). Having found his way round the Nurburgring in the Mercedes Phil quickly got to grips with the Ferrari and did himself proud by being third fastest with 10' 09.3". This put him ahead of Moss (10' 10.8"), Hawthorn (10' 16.7"), Taruffi (10' 25.0") and Herrmann (10' 26.1"), the latter being quicker than the fourth Ferrari and both Aston Martins.

On the very first lap Ferrari hopes suffered a setback when de Portago drove into the shrubbery. He got further than the Foxhole on this occasion, but not much. Leaving his braking too late for the Karussell, he failed to get into the banking and crashed through the hedge at the side of the road. Eventually he managed to extricate the car and returned to the pits with some very bent front bodywork and an overheating engine. The Ferrari mechanics got him back into the race, but down in 18th position.

As if this wasn't bad enough, Luigi Musso then overturned his Ferrari on lap three when going into the South Turn. He escaped with a broken arm, but Ferrari were now effectively down to two cars, with Fangio in second place behind Moss, Hawthorn third, Collins fourth and Hill fifth. Phil moved up a place on lap five, when Collins stopped at the Aston Martin pits for more than 10 minutes, but on lap nine de Portago was disqualified, news having reached official ears that getting his Ferrari out of the hedge at the Karussell had required the help of several policemen.

This put paid to Phil's chances of having a second turn in Ferrari number 4 because, for some reason, Nello Ugolini decided to give the wretched de Portago a second chance he did not deserve and put him and Gendebien in the Hill/Wharton car. The rules stated that both drivers - but not just one - of a retired car could take over one that was still in the race. Why Ugolini felt that de Portago and Gendebien were a better bet than Hill (who was quicker than both) and Wharton is a mystery, but his decision meant that Hill only had one stint in the car and poor Wharton never got to drive at all. Their car eventually finished third, behind the Fangio/Castellotti V12 and the winning Maserati of Taruffi/Schell/Moss/Behra.

So Hill had made third fastest practice time and then shared third place in his debut at the Nurburgring, which spoke volumes for his ability, so much so that he later heard that he might be offered a Ferrari for the forthcoming German

GP. Phil mentioned this to Mike Hawthorn, whose answer may well have affected Hill's entire career. "Whatever you do," said Mike "don't drive a Grand Prix car for the first time at the Nurburgring." As a result, when Team Manager Ugolini offered him the drive Phil replied hesitantly in his not very fluent Italian and Ugolini, concluding incorrectly that Hill was happy to stay with sportscars, withdrew the offer.

In view of Phil's considerable experience (he had been racing since 1948) and his excellent debut in the 1000 Kms, Mike's advice doesn't make sense. Perhaps "Don't drive at the Ring for the first time in a GP car," would have been fair enough, but Phil's 12 laps in the 3.5-litre Monza 860 had been a useful introduction to the most demanding circuit in the world. And the fact that he had driven some pretty powerful (not to say hairy) Ferraris in his time makes it unlikely that the 2.5-litre Lancia-Ferrari Grand Prix car would have given him much trouble. However, by not accepting Ugolini's offer with alacrity Phil may well have kissed goodbye to a GP drive for the next two years, for Enzo Ferrari refused to put him in a single-seater until 1958.

Meanwhile, Ferrari entered three cars for the 1957 1000 Kms, a 4.1-litre 335S; a 3.8-litre 315S; and a 3-litre prototype of what would become the Testa Rossa. There was also a 250GT Berlinetta for practice. The original line-up was Mike Hawthorn, Peter Collins, Maurice Trintignant, Olivier Gendebien, Taffy von Trips, Masten Gregory but, despite his fine showing the previous year, no Phil Hill. His absence is doubtless due to nothing more sinister than the fact that he was still in America ("Ferrari wasn't going to send me an air ticket if he could possibly avoid it!"), whereas Gregory was in Europe and had just finished a fine third in the Monaco GP, driving a 250F Maserati.

However, Ferrari could really have done with Hill's services, for von Trips crashed the GT car during practice and wound up in hospital. There were no experienced drivers available so new Team Manager Romolo Tavoni had to settle for OSCA driver Olindo Morolli to share the prototype with Masten Gregory. Even with Phil Hill, Ferrari could have done nothing about the remarkable Aston Martin DBR1 of Tony Brooks and Noel Cunningham-Reid, which defeated the might of Maranello and Modena for the first time - and on the Nurburgring - which made the victory all the sweeter for the team from Feltham.

At Le Mans one month later Hill began what would become a very fine, albeit brief, partnership with Peter Collins. It began badly, for Peter equalled the previous year's fastest lap (4 mins

20.0 secs) on his standing lap and blew the engine on his second. This, after Phil had spent some time the previous night running-in a new V12 in their 335S on the road to Tours.

They did better in the Swedish GP, finishing second behind the Moss/Behra 450S Maserati and came good in Venezuela, winning by a lap from team-mates Hawthorn and Musso.

Phil and Peter began 1958 with a flourish, winning both the Buenos Aires 1000 Kms and the Sebring 12 Hours in the new, 3-litre Testa Rossa, but they could only finish fourth in the Targa Florio. Still, winning three races out of six was not bad teamwork and so, after practice at the Nurburgring, Phil was distinctly miffed to be told by Romolo Tavoni that he would not be driving with Peter. As always, Tavoni took his orders from Enzo Ferrari by phone and The Old Man told him to pair the drivers according to their practice times. As Collins had lapped within one-tenth of a second of Hawthorn, they joined forces and Phil found himself driving with Luigi Musso. Why change a winning combination? That odd decision was par for the course for Enzo Ferrari, who liked to keep his drivers off-balance, making the point that it was his wonderful cars that won races, not the drivers.

There were two other Testa Rossas, for Taffy von Trips/ Olivier Gendebien and Wolfgang Seidel/ Gino Munaron but, as in 1957 the Ferraris could do nothing about the Aston Martin DBR1 and the red cars had to settle for second, third and fourth places. This time the Aston was in the hands of Stirling Moss and, for a few laps, Jack Brabham. Stirling simply ran away from the opposition to win by almost four minutes from Hawthorn and Collins, who were six minutes ahead of von Trips and Gendebien. Phil finished fourth with Musso and it was a race he did not enjoy. "We had those Houdaille shock-absorbers and we had to double-up on them at the Ring. Even then they would froth the fluid and we never seemed to be able to anticipate what adjustments should be made to keep them from frothing up the castor oil, so the roadholding on the Ferraris always deteriorated in a big way. The following year we had Konis and coil springs and all that trouble went away."

In addition to this problem Phil suffered a burst tyre when leaving the Karussell on the 18th lap. He stopped at Hohe Acht to change the rear wheel, only to find that the spare was a smaller front wheel. He finally made it back to the pits to be criticised for not driving straight back on the flat, as Hawthorn had done earlier. However, Mike had suffered his blow-out at Pflanzgarten, which is some five miles nearer the pits than Hohe Acht, as Phil was quick to point out.

Five weeks later and Hill finally made his debut in a Grand Prix, but not in a Ferrari. At Le Mans he had found himself driving with Olivier Gendebien for the first time since Buenos Aires in 1956. They immediately formed a relaxed and very fast partnership and drove their Testa Rossa to a superb win in one of the wettest Le Mans races on record. That was Phil's third sportscar victory of the year and he had virtually won the Manufacturers' Championship for Ferrari, yet still there were no Grand Prix drives forthcoming. The day after the race, Jo Bonnier offered him his spare 250F Maserati for the French GP at Reims. Phil was not alone in thinking that Enzo Ferrari was wilfully ignoring him for Grands Prix and, urged on by several friends, he took up the offer.

As soon as Romolo Tavoni heard about it he advised Phil not to drive the Maserati, which meant that The Old Man did not approve. However, Phil had had enough of waiting around for Enzo to give him the nod and ignored the barely disguised threats from Maranello that if he raced the Maser he would never drive for Ferrari again.

The French GP was Fangio's final race, so not many people paid attention to Hill's appearance on the grid in a Maserati. But Scuderia Ferrari could not fail to notice that he qualified Bonnier's two-year-old car in 13th position, only 5.5 secs away from Fangio in the very latest 250F and ahead of the other 250Fs of Bonnier himself, Carroll Shelby and Troy Ruttman. He finished seventh in the Grand Prix and was feeling pretty pleased with himself until he learned that Luigi Musso had left the road in his Ferrari and been killed, early in the race.

Despite the threats beforehand, Phil's decision to drive the Maserati had the desired effect and to his surprise he was offered a Ferrari for the German Grand Prix four weeks later. But not an F1 Ferrari - he was given the F2 car which Peter Collins had driven to second place in the F2 race at Reims and which was essentially an F1 car with a smaller engine and wheels.

The 'little' Ferrari caused considerable amusement on the first day of practice at the Ring, for it was driven to the starting area by a mechanic and, as it arrived at the Ferrari pits, right in front of the pretty full grandstand, a rear wheel fell off! Someone had forgotten to add the wing nut...

Nothing daunted, Hill set out to see what he could do with the baby Grand Prix car. The F2 lap record stood to Roy Salvadori (Cooper) with a time of 10 mins 03.8 secs and Phil quickly broke that with 9' 59.0", but he was put into the shade by Jack Brabham, who got his F2 Cooper-Climax round in a remarkable 9' 43.4". On the Saturday,

Phil improved considerably to 9' 48.9" and on race day found himself first of the F2 cars on the grid as Brabham was relegated to the back -he had not completed the required number of qualifying laps.

To begin with Phil not only ran away with the F2 race but also harried the back markers of the F1 brigade. By lap four he was seventh overall, but then hit trouble. "I lost my brakes, which is how I came to the opinion that the same thing must have happened to Peter Collins." (See Ringmeister 5, Tony Brooks). "You brake just as hard in an F2 car as in an F1 and mostly you go just as fast - you just lack the power to get out of the corners and up the hills as quickly as an F1 car. I lost the brakes at Wehrseifen, just before the Adenau Bridge, and I avoided a crash by the skin of my teeth. Later on I spun going down that same hill, but further up. I was very disappointed, because with good brakes I would have won the F2 race and finished about fifth overall."

And maybe higher than that, for at the time of his troubles he was ahead of Maurice Trintignant, who went on to finish third in the works 2.2-litre Cooper. But Phil's problem in the race paled into insignificance compared to that of his friend and team-mate, Peter Collins, who crashed fatally when he and Mike Hawthorn were involved in a titanic battle for the lead with Tony Brooks in the Vanwall.

Peter's death catapulted Hill into the Ferrari F1 team, for the Scuderia had now lost two drivers in the space of one month and Phil found himself entered for the Italian GP. Although Enzo Ferrari never attended races Monza was the perfect place for Phil to show The Old Man the folly of his ways. He did so in style, leading the race for the first four laps and setting a new lap record at 125.0 mph/201.16 kph in the process. (This was the first race lap at more than 200 kph on the Monza road circuit). At the end he eased up to avoid passing Mike Hawthorn (slowing with a slipping clutch) allowing Mike to finish second and keep his lead in the World Championship. Hill did much the same thing at Casablanca, finishing third again, behind Moss and Hawthorn. In these two races he proved that he could handle a Grand Prix car as well as anybody and was instrumental in helping Hawthorn beat Moss to the World Championship by just one point.

Having won the Championship, Hawthorn retired, only to be killed in a road accident a few months later. Phil now became a full-time member of Ferrari for 1959, competing in both Grands Prix and endurance races as part of one of the Scuderia's strongest-ever line-ups, which also included

Tony Brooks, Jean Behra, Olivier Gendebien, Dan Gurney and Cliff Allison.

The Scuderia went to the Nurburgring for the 1000 Kms armed with three of their new 3-litre Testa Rossas. to be driven by Phil Hill/Olivier Gendebien, Tony Brooks/Jean Behra and Dan Gurney/Cliff Allison. Once again they were undone by Stirling Moss and Aston Martin.

In Motor Sport, Denis Jenkinson noted that, It was not until Saturday morning that the Ferrari drivers concluded their now continual arguments as to what they wanted in the way of handling and road-holding... During all this "chassis tuning" there had been an occasion where the rear shock-absorbers were more powerful than the coil springs and the suspension was staying compressed as if on a ratchet; this caught out Phil Hill on a fast bend near Flugplatz and he slid into violent contact with a bank, so that the sounds of panel-beating rang from the Ferrari garages for some time after that.'

As in the previous year Stirling Moss simply drove away from everybody and won the race. Jack Fairman was his co-driver but in reality it was another one-man show. Hill and Gendebien held third or second place for much of the race, and even took the lead for a while when Fairman dropped the Aston into a ditch. But in the end Moss was not to be denied and he took the chequered flag 26 seconds ahead of Hill.

As the 1959 German GP was moved to AVUS, Phil did not have a chance to drive a pukka GP car at the Ring that year. However, he was back again for the 1960 1000 Kms, driving one of two 3-litre Testa Rossas. "I drove with von Trips," recalls Phil, "Our car had independent rear suspension and I was able to prove to (Design Engineer) Bizzarini that it was not yet much good. I was in the lead at one stage, but then the engine blew up when Taffy was driving and I took over the second Testa Rossa, which had a de Dion rear end and handled much better. I went like stink and got it up to third place in the end."

Phil and Taffy did indeed lead the race for a while, but only when the eventual winner, the Maserati Birdcage of Stirling Moss and Dan Gurney, was delayed by a broken oil line. In the Allison/Mairesse car Phil managed to steal third place from the Herrmann/Trintignant Porsche, which gained some valuable Championship points for the Scuderia.

With the new and much derided 1,500cc Grand Prix Formula on the horizon, the Germans did everything they could to help Porsche by making their 1960 Grand Prix for F2 cars. In keeping with this 'dumbing down' of GP racing they also held



1961 German GP, Nurburgring - Phil Hill (Ferrari 156)

the event on the Sudschleife. Although Enzo Ferrari was not in favour of the 1.5-litre F1, he bowed to the inevitable and experimented with new cars in 1960, while the British teams were wasting time by complaining and trying to gain recognition for a 3-litre Inter-Continental Formula. Initially, two F2 Ferraris were entered in the GP for Hill and von Trips, but Phil can't have been disappointed when they were they withdrawn at the last minute.

Ferrari bowed to the inevitable again by allowing Carlo Chiti to follow the Cooper and Lotus trend and put the engine behind the driver. Naturally, he did this with sportscars, as well, and when his beautiful new, sharknose F1 racers were shown to the Press in January, 1961 there was a gleaming, mid-engined sportscar present, too, the 246SP, with shapely bodywork by Fantuzzi and a V6 engine designed by Vittorio Jano.

Once the season got under way it quickly became apparent that the new mid-engined Ferraris were the cars to beat and 1961 should have been Phil Hill's 'Year of Glory', especially at the Nurburgring. However, although he established himself as a Ringmeister during both the 1000 Kms and the Grand Prix, he did so without winning either race. And in the wider picture he went on to win the Drivers' World Championship, but his success was to be overshadowed by the death of his teammate, Taffy von Trips.

Phil's season got off to a fine start when he and Olivier Gendebien won the Sebring 12 Hours in a Ferrari V12 TR61. It all went wrong in the Targa Florio, however, where Ferrari entered two of the new 246s, one of them for Hill and Gendebien again. Phil's problem began when Gendebien, who had been told to start the race, refused to do so at the last minute. Flustered and furious, Hill had to do the first stint and promptly put the car off the road on the opening lap. Tavoni then put the Targa-wise Gendebien into the car Wolfgang von Trips was due to share with the inexperienced Richie Ginther and they went on to win the race, which must have made Phil's day.

The SP was repaired in time for the 1000 Kms and was given to Phil to share with von Trips. There was a similar car for Gendebien and Ginther. Their main opposition came from Porsche, whose number one driver was the number one driver, Stirling Moss, winner of four of the last five 1000 Km races. The Stuttgart concern presented 1.7-litre RS61s for Moss/Graham Hill, Jo Bonnier /Dan Gurney and Hans Herrmann /Edgar Barth - in truth a more formidable line-up than Ferrari could muster.

The previous year's winners Camoradi were back with just the one Maserati Birdcage for Lucky Casner and Masten Gregory, who were not regarded as likely winners in view of the opposition.

In Thursday's practice Phil set the fastest time with 9 mins 34.3 secs, just six-tenths of a second faster than Gurney in the Porsche. Third was Masten Gregory who, like Phil, loved the Ring and flung the Birdcage round in 9' 45.9". (In 1958 Masten had wheeled the Ecurie Ecosse D-type Jaguar round in 9' 58.0", taking 18 seconds off Mike Hawthorn's best time in 1956!).

It rained heavily on the Friday and the Ferraris stayed indoors, but on Saturday the weather was better and Taffy von Trips won pole position for the Le Mans start with 9' 33.7". Moss recorded 9' 37.1".

For this race Ferrari used the British Dunlop high-hysteresis rubber for the first time, but they only had one set per car. These tyres were to be Phil's undoing in the end, but initially they propelled him to a series of lap records in a display of sustained brilliance that puts him alongside those of Bernd Rosemeyer, Juan Fangio, Stirling Moss and Jacky Ickx.

The race got under way at 9 o'clock with Moss, for once, being beaten in the run-and-jump start by Jim Clark in the now ancient Aston Martin DBR1 of the Essex Racing Stable. Martin Watkins described the opening lap on this great circuit in Autosport: 'On the snaking downhill section that leads to the Aremberg right-hander - a downhill near-hairpin, with a falling-away camber - Stirling Moss took the lead from Jim Clark... At Bergwerk Stirling was well ahead, but Ginther had taken Clark's second place. Fourth was the Gregory/Casner Maserati and fifth the Porsche of Dan Gurney, just ahead of Phil Hill in the No.1 works Ferrari.'

Between Pflanzgarten and the Schwalbenschwanz Phil Hill passed Jim Clark to take third place; the Gregory/Casner Maserati dropped back to fifth, behind the Aston Martin and as the field streamed past the pits to start all over again it was Moss, six seconds ahead of Phil Hill, Ginther, Clark, Rodriguez (Ferrari) and Gregory.'

'Stirling's lead was not to last for long: Phil Hill, in the leading works Ferrari, overhauled him on the back leg of the circuit and after 14 kilometres of the second lap - at the Karussell - held a seven-second lead. At the end of the lap his lead was 17 seconds and he completed the tour in 9 mins 31.9 secs, to set a new sportscar lap record for the circuit.'

And that was just the start of Phil's breathtaking assault on the record. It stood to Stirling Moss, who had stunned everyone in 1959 by taking the DBR1 round in 9 mins 32.0 secs but now, lap by phenomenal lap, Hill demolished that. On lap three he recorded 9' 31.5"; lap four - 9' 29.2"; lap

five - 9' 25.9"; lap six - 9' 22.2"; lap seven - 9' 18.4" and finally, on lap eight - 9' 15.8".

To the best of my knowledge only one other driver has ever recorded a more blistering series of ever-faster laps at the Nurburgring and that was Jacky Ickx, during the 1972 German GP, which he won for Ferrari. He reeled off a staggering nine-lap sequence, which was spoiled only by his fifth lap, being just one tenth slower than his fourth.

Not even Rosemeyer or Fangio had managed such a sequence during their legendary drives in the 1936 and '57 GPs. Rosemeyer broke von Brauchitsch's 1935 record 12 times in 14 laps with the Auto Union and Fangio broke his own 1956 record 10 times in 22 laps, but not even they could match the seven consecutive ever-faster laps of Phil Hill and Jacky Ickx.

In the 1957 1000 Kms Stirling Moss, driving a 450S Maserati, set a new sportscar record in 9 mins 49.9 secs. In 1958, driving an Aston Martin DBR1, he broke that record every lap for the first ten laps, but not by an ever-increasing margin, so Hill's seven-lap blitz stood along for a decade, until Jacky Ickx came along.

This performance virtually marked Phil as a Ringmeister before he had even won a race there, for he was not destined to win the 1000 Kms in 1961. After 10 scintillating laps he handed over to Taffy von Trips and their one and only set of the high-hysteresis Dunlops was removed, worn out by Phil's assault on the lap record. Von Trips set about increasing their lead of around three-and-a-half minutes over the Gendebien/Ginther Ferrari, which had the Gregory/Casner Maserati and the Moss/Hill Porsche behind it. Then on lap 16 it began to rain and in moments the rain had turned to snow.

On lap 20 Olivier Gendebien arrived at the Ferrari pits having spun and stalled his engine. As Denis Jenkinson explained in Motor Sport: 'On the flat smooth tail of the rear-engined Ferrari are some louvres which feed air into a funnel extending down to the three double-choke, downdraught carburettors. As was discovered before the Targa Florio the air flow over the Ferrari tail is exceptionally good, so that the air and icy rain water was flowing beautifully into these louvres, filling the carburettor intakes with water.'

In addition the very cold air temperature was causing icing conditions and Gendebien had the greatest difficulty in re-starting due to this ice forming round the carburettors... The car was refuelled, the tyres changed and the louvres to the air box were hammered flat to try and keep out the icy air and water. By the time Ginther rejoined the

race the car had dropped to fifth place.'

The next lap von Trips came in to hand over to Hill. The Ferrari was refuelled and fitted with the part-worn high-hysteresis tyres from the Gendebien/Ginther car. As a precaution, the air intake louvres were hammered flat, but the damage had already been done. Phil rejoined the race still in the lead, but the V6 was popping and banging like champagne corks at a wedding and the champagne was about to go flat. Moss was forced out of the race when the Porsche's engine blew up, so Phil now led from Lucky Casner (Maserati) and Ricardo Rodriguez (V12 Ferrari), but not for long, as on lap 25 he flew off the road just before Kaltenhard. "The road had dried out, but then there was another shower which left a rivulet across the road at that point. I was on Richie's Dunlops and the front wheels got through the rivulet, but the back wheels didn't. I was sideways in an instant and went for miles like that. Eventually, the nose went into the hedge and that spun me round and round and into a ditch, where the car caught fire briefly."

Meanwhile, Richie Ginther persevered with the other 246 down in seventh place and as the weather improved somewhat the V6 began to behave itself again. So much so that when Ginther pitted on lap 31 Romolo Tavoni put von Trips in

the car instead of Gendebien and Taffy proceeded to drive very fast indeed, to such effect that, with the help of a couple of retirements, he was in third place at the finish.

The bad luck that dogged Hill in the 1000 Kms stuck with him in the German Grand Prix which, mercifully, had returned to its rightful home, the Nordschleife at the Nurburgring. There he became locked in battle for the World Championship with his team-mate, Taffy von Trips. The beautiful sharknose Ferrari 156 was clearly the class act of the 1961 cars, but Stirling Moss was still the class act among drivers and, at Monaco, he produced a mesmerising performance to defeat the Ferraris with Rob Walker's Lotus-Climax, von Trips then won the Dutch GP from Phil, who then won the Belgian from Taffy, but both failed to finish the French GP. Taffy won the very wet British GP and when they arrived at the Nurburgring von Trips led the title race with 27 points to Phil's 25, with three rounds to go.

As ever, Enzo Ferrari refused to nominate a team leader, much to Hill's chagrin. "I was very much the senior driver, having been with Ferrari since 1955, but The Old Man refused to nominate me as Number One. I always got along with Trips, but I never considered him a rival, as he had been on and off the team a couple of times. More to the

1962 German GP, Nurburgring - Phil Hill



point, he had had a number of accidents and had earned himself the nickname, von Crash. By 1961 it was hard to tell if he had matured or not. It was an awkward position to be in because, even though I was supposed to have an advantage, there was none because my principal adversary was von Crash, and that was not a pleasant situation."

That is fair comment, but it is equally fair to say that by 1961 Taffy had matured, and considerably. In common with Hill the new, mid-engined Ferraris were very much to his liking and by this time had won the Targa Florio (with Olivier Gendebien) as well as two GPs. Taffy was on a roll and had every chance of becoming Germany's first World Champion, which would put him among the pantheon of German drivers with the pre-war giants Rudolf Caracciola, Bernd Rosemeyer and Herrman Lang. To do that and to win the German Grand Prix at the Nurburgring in the process would make Taffy an opera-style hero of Wagnerian proportions!

In the first practice session on the Friday morning it was Jo Bonnier in the works Porsche who was fastest, with a time of 9 mins 06.6 secs, comfortably inside the lap record of 9' 09.2", which Stirling Moss had set with the Vanwall in 1958. Now in the Lotus-Climax, Stirling recorded 9' 10.5", but was shaded by Phil Hill with 9' 10.2", whereas von Trips could only manage 9' 23.5" before the Ferrari's V6 dropped a valve. This required an engine change, so he missed the afternoon session completely.

In Taffy's enforced absence, Phil Hill continued where he had left off in the 1000 Kms race, by pulverising the lap record and becoming the first man to get around the Nurburgring in under nine minutes. Ferrari were again using Dunlop's new, high hysteresis D12s, which were essentially rain tyres but which also provided a tremendous improvement in the dry - for a few laps. Team Lotus and Porsche were also equipped with D12s and, as Denis Jenkinson reported in *Motor Sport*: 'Phil Hill was having to work very hard to get his times down below Bonnier, who had done 9 mins 04.8 secs and was driving with great determination. Hill was lapping at around 9' 03.0", leaping and bouncing about and getting round some corners more by luck than judgement, when suddenly he got the car in step with the bumps and twists and went round in a shattering 8' 55.2". Next lap he was back above nine minutes and admitted freely that it had been a freak lap in which everything had gone right for once, but there was little hope of repeating it.'



1962 German GP, Nurburgring - Ferrari's reigning World Champion Phil Hill in the pits

Nobody else broke nine minutes and Phil's astonishing lap (which apparently left him glassy-eyed and grinning from ear to ear) gave him pole position, ahead of Jack Brabham (Cooper-Climax V8) on 9' 01.4", Stirling Moss (Lotus-Climax) on 9' 01.7" and Jo Bonnier (Porsche) on 9' 04.8". In Saturday's practice von Trips recorded 9' 05.5", which put him on the second row.

Phil Hill looked set to record his first win at the Nurburgring, but a change in the weather was to put paid to that. By 1 pm on the Sunday it was cloudy and wet, so all the teams on Dunlop fitted the D12 rain tyres. By 1.45 the sun was shining and Vic Barlow of Dunlop was telling everyone to fit dry-weather tyres. Ferrari and Porsche did as they were told, but Team Lotus and Stirling Moss refused. Two weeks before Lotus had completed a full race on D12s at Solitude and felt sure that they could do the same at the Ring. They were right, and their decision played right into the genius hands of Stirling Moss.

The race began in the dry, but there were wet patches all round the circuit. At the end of the first lap Moss led from Phil Hill, Hans Herrmann



1962 Nurburgring Winner Phil Hill in the Ferrari 246 SP

(Porsche), Dan Gurney (Porsche), Graham Hill (BRM-Climax) and von Trips. Despite the fact that the rain held off for most of the race, Hill and von Trips were unable to get past Moss, who managed to keep ahead of them by eight to ten seconds most of the time. After Monaco, British journalists had made much of the fact that Stirling had beaten the Ferraris despite his 4-cylinder Coventry-Climax engine having some 20-30 bhp less than the V6. True enough, but they failed to mention that what the Lotus lacked in bhp it more than made up for in superior roadholding. That, allied to Moss' extraordinary skill, had put paid to the Ferraris at Monaco and was now doing the same at the Nurburgring, which is Monaco times seven.

So with Moss out in front the race was actually for second place between the two Ferrari drivers and Hill was having a hard time keeping von Trips behind him. Taffy knew the Ring very well, having raced there many times since making his debut on his motorbike in 1951. Now he put his knowledge to good use, determined to win his home Grand Prix in front of a vast crowd of more than 300,000, reportedly the largest since the days before the war. With von Trips in a Ferrari and Porsche out in force, the Germans had every expectation of a home win and Taffy was determined to provide it for them.

On lap eight Moss set a new lap record in 9 mins 2.8 secs and Taffy got past Phil for the first time. He then lapped in 9' 1.6" and all round the circuit the spectators greeted the announcer's news with keen anticipation of a sub nine-minute lap. They didn't have to wait long, as Gregor Grant described in Autosport: 'The 10th lap was a real sizzler. Moss did a lap in around nine minutes flat, but von Trips was announced as having broken the nine minutes barrier for the first time with 8 mins 59.9 secs. No sooner had this been recorded, than the PA came out with the news that Phil Hill had reduced this to 8 mins 57.8 secs. The two Ferraris were now virtually wheel to wheel, 8.7 secs behind Moss.'

On the next lap Phil dived inside Taffy as they went into the South Turn, but by the time they reached the bridge at Adenau the German was back in second spot, although neither of them could get to grips with Moss. Then it began to rain and Hill regained second place. At the end of the 14th and penultimate lap he led von Trips across the line by a few feet, but now some 15 seconds behind Moss. On that last lap the rain became much worse and as they entered the 3-km straight for the last time Taffy was once again ahead of Phil, which was just what Phil wanted.

"You always got a good tow on that straight in those days," he recalls, "so Trips and I tried to out-fumble each other on that last lap. We both wanted to be behind so that we could slipstream the other and be first across the line. I was behind and just about to gobble him up when we hit a rain squall as we were going through the swerves after the Antoniusbuche bridge. He hit it first and I saw him lose his Ferrari just before I lost mine.

"It looked as though we were in for a monumental crash that would take us both out and as we slithered around I was trying to dodge him. Bearing in mind my feelings about von Crash I shouldn't have let myself get tangled up in that mess, but I did. When we got straightened out he was further ahead than he had been originally, so he finished second behind Moss."

And 21.4 seconds behind Moss, to be precise, with Hill 1.1 secs further back. Moss, the Ringmeister supreme, had done it again. 'Many people are no doubt puzzled by the fact that the two Ferraris which made the fastest laps finished behind Moss, who never went round so quickly on any single lap,' wrote Philip Turner in *The Motor*. 'The answer to this is that the race had three distinct phases: Phase One when the circuit was still wet from the morning rain and Moss was faster than the Ferraris; this merged gradually into Phase Two as the roads dried and the Ferraris became as fast as, and then faster than, Moss and so began cutting down his lead. But then came Phase Three, when it began to rain again and the Ferraris slowed and began to fall back from Moss. The effects of Phase One and Phase Three were magnified by the oil on the circuit.'

But the real answer (aside from the Moss factor) lay in those high-hysteresis tyres, which Ferrari decided not to use on the advice of Dunlop. "Stirling out-fumbled us by using those Dunlops," says Phil, "but we couldn't have done that because the Ferraris would never have completed the race on one set. Our cars were much harder on tyres than the Lotus and, even so, Stirling's were in tatters at the end."

In tatters, but triumphant! Stirling's win left von Trips four points ahead of Hill in the World Championship as they went into the next and penultimate round, the Italian GP at Monza. That became a tragedy with the death of von Trips and 11 spectators on the second lap of the race and Phil, aware of the crash but not of its outcome, drove his Ferrari 156 to victory and the World Championship, albeit in the saddest of circumstances.

The tragedy brought the Italian church and press crashing down on Enzo Ferrari, who was pil-

loried by both for building cars that killed people. A few days later Hill went to see him at his home and he played the grief-stricken padrone, almost begging Phil to stay with him for 1962. He agreed, only for Ferrari to announce shortly afterwards that he would not be sending his cars to America for the USGP at Watkins Glen, in October. Ferrari had won the Manufacturers' and Drivers' Championships, so what was the point?

Which is how Phil Hill was denied the opportunity of racing before his countrymen as America's first World Champion. His year, which had started out with a victorious bang at Sebring, ended not so much with a whimper as a slap in the face. And it got worse for in November, just days after Hill signed his contract for 1962, he learned that Ferrari had sacked no fewer than seven of his key personnel, including Chief Designer Carlo Chiti, Engineer Giotto Bizzarini and Team Manager Romolo Tavoni.

The result of all this upheaval chez Ferrari meant that the Scuderia had a disastrous season in F1 yet, perversely, made a clean sweep of the Sportscar Championship, which comprised a pathetic four races. Phil won two of them, starting with the 1000 Kms at the Nurburgring and it is unfortunate that his one and only Ferrari victory at the Ring should have been in what Autosport's Martyn Watkins called 'an unusually dull race'.

The Scuderia sent a truly mixed bag, comprising two V6s - a 196SP for Giancarlo Baghetti/Lorenzo Bandini and a 246SP for Hill/Gendebien; one V8 - a 268 SP for the Rodriguez brothers, and a V12 - a 4-litre GTO for Mike Parkes/Willy Mairesse. There were two flat-eight Porsches for Graham Hill/Hans Herrmann and Dan Gurney/Jo Bonnier; a Birdcage Maserati with revised bodywork for Masten Gregory/Lucky Casner and two entries from John Ogier's Essex Racing Stable, the 1.5-litre Lotus 23 for Jim Clark/Trevor Taylor and the Aston Martin DBR1 for Bruce McLaren/Tony Maggs.

The practice sessions were held in wet or damp conditions, so although Phil Hill was fastest, his time of 9 mins 25.2 secs was well outside his remarkable lap record of the year before. Next up was the Parkes/Mairesse Ferrari GTO (powered by a 4-litre Superamerica engine) with 9' 34.8" and then the Porsche of Bonnier/Gurney in 9' 36.4". Bruce McLaren got the seven-year-old Aston round in a remarkable 9' 43.1" (just 0.1 secs shy of Moss's lap record in 1958!) and Jim Clark recorded 9' 48.9" in the little Lotus - seventh fastest overall.

It had been raining heavily just before the start and Clark was able to put all 100 bhp of the

Lotus onto the tarmac and led all the more powerful opposition for 12 laps until the Lotus went off the road (See Ringmeister 11, Jim Clark). This left Willy Mairesse momentarily in front with the big GTO, but when he stopped to hand over to Mike Parkes, Phil Hill moved into the lead and he and Gendebien stayed there until the end. Mairesse and Parkes finished a splendid second, ahead of Graham Hill/Hans Herrmann (Porsche) and Bruce McLaren and Tony Maggs, who brought their venerable Aston home in a very creditable fourth place. Phil set fastest lap in 9 mins 31.9 secs and had at last won a race at the Nurburgring, but that apart it was an unremarkable victory with no fireworks - rather a damp squib, in fact.

But a victory at the Nurburgring is worth several at lesser circuits and Phil was delighted to have won at last on his favourite track. "It was something of a surprise, actually," he remembers. "Olivier and I were not optimistic beforehand because Ferrari had such a poor record in the 1000 Kms. Ascari and Farina had won the first one, in 1953, but that was it."

Poor Phil was even less optimistic when he returned for the Grand Prix in August, for although he and Gendebien had won Le Mans again, in truth his career with Ferrari was in free-fall. The 1962 version of the once successful sharknose 156 was hopeless, having had no real development since the departure of Carlo Chiti and Phil was also at loggerheads with the new Team Manager, Eugenio Dragoni. The latter was determined that his protégé, Lorenzo Bandini, should become Italy's first World Champion since Alberto Ascari and was constantly singing his praises to Enzo Ferrari while denigrating Hill's performance at every given opportunity. (He would do the same with John Surtees a couple of years later). And there was a strike at the Ferrari factory.

The Scuderia sent three cars with the 120-degree V6 engine for Hill, Lorenzo Bandini and Giancarlo Baghetti and a 1961 car with the early, 65-degree V6 for Ricardo Rodriguez. Ricardo was not pleased to be given this old nail and showed his displeasure by being fastest of all the Ferrari drivers in practice, recording 9 mins 14.1 sees. This was a tremendous performance to be sure, but it was still a massive 19 sees away from Hill's pole position time of the previous year. Even more worrying was the fact that, in the latest 120-degree Ferrari, Hill himself could only manage 9' 24.7", which was almost 30 seconds slower! Despite Rodriguez' bravura performance, it was clear that the Ferraris were going backwards, fast. Just to rub their noses in it, Dan Gurney took pole position in his Porsche with a stunning 8' 47.2".

When the Grand Prix eventually got under way, after some very heavy rain, it was Gurney who led on the opening lap, closely followed by Graham Hill (BRM) and Phil Hill, who had made a terrific start from the fourth row. In the very damp and misty conditions Phil held his own for a while and briefly did battle with Jo Bonnier (Porsche) and Ricardo Rodriguez, but on lap five he stopped at the pits to have his windscreen cleaned and a new vizor fitted to his helmet, as both were covered in oil. By now the Ferrari was handling very badly and, after soldiering on for a while Hill came back into the pits at the end of lap nine to retire with broken rear suspension. Just to complete his day, Rodriguez brought the 65-degree 156 home in sixth place.

After winning four out of six Grandes Epreuves in 1961, Ferrari failed to win a single one in '62. Disillusioned, and furious with Dragoni, Hill left the Scuderia at the end of that season and signed up with ATS, the team formed by Carlo Chiti and Romolo Tavoni, among others, after their departure from Ferrari. It was a disastrous union and the less said about it the better.

Phil was back at the Ring in May, 1963 for the 1000 Kms, driving a works, 2-litre, flat-eight Porsche with Jo Bonnier. They were in third place when the race was handed to them on a plate. On lap 17 the leading Ferraris of John Surtees/Willy Mairesse and Mike Parkes/Ludovico Scarfiotti got tangled up when Parkes spun at Aremberg. Mairesse managed to rejoin the race, but Parkes was out and Phil found himself with a healthy lead.

'For five glorious laps Hill led the race, while Mairesse worked his way back through the field into second place at the end of lap 21,' noted Auto-car. 'Then it was Hill's turn to go -when he missed a gear and crashed not far from the spot where Ferrari had lost its second car for the weekend. This was too much for the German crowds, whose patriotism must be almost unparalleled in motor racing, and they began a steady flow away from the circuit.'

In fact, Hill's crash was not due to a missed gear, but to one of those isolated rain showers that frequented the Nurburgring. "I went off the road at Aremberg, just before the Fuchsrohre," says Phil. "I was being urged to go faster and faster by our Team Manager, Huschke von Hanstein, because one of the two Ferraris which had crashed into each other was back in the race and catching me. I was going as fast as I could, but then we had a typical Eifel shower and you come to a little rise when you get to view the turn at Aremberg before the Fuchsrohre and if it has been raining

you're never going to stop. I came over that rise, the road was wet and I did everything I could to get slowed down enough to get under the bridge and down the hill. I failed, slid off the road and hit a sapling, which bent the exhaust pipe over on the Porsche. Had it been a Ferrari I could have stuck a branch up the exhaust and straightened it, but you couldn't do that with a Porsche, so I was out of the race. Everybody was very unhappy, especially Huschke!"

And with good reason, for up to that point Porsche were looking at their first outright win at the Ring.

Phil joined the fledgling Ford team in 1964 and he and Bruce McLaren were entered for the 1000 Kms in the Lola-Ford GT prototype, designed by Eric Broadley and powered by Ford's 4.2-litre V8. It was no surprise that John Surtees should be fastest in practice, recording 8 mins 57.9 secs in the P4 Ferrari, but Phil surprised everybody by posting second-fastest time with 9' 04.7".

At the end of the first lap Hill was in second place behind Surtees. He was soon overtaken by the Ferraris of Graham Hill (275P) and Mike Parkes (GTO) but managed to keep in touch with them until gear selection problems slowed him. After 11 laps Phil handed over to McLaren, but the Lola-Ford was retired with broken rear suspension mountings four laps later.

After the ATS debacle, Hill had joined Cooper for GPs in 1964, but it was a case of leaving one shambles for another. In the German GP, Phil qualified eighth fastest and his Climax V8 blew up halfway down the 3 km straight on the second lap, so he parked the car in the hedge and walked back to the pits.

That was the last time he took part in the German GP, but in the 1965 1000 Kms he and Bruce McLaren shared one of the two Shelby American-entered Ford GT40s. Theirs had a 5.3-litre V8, whereas the Chris Amon/Ronnie Bucknum car had a normal, 4.7-litre unit. Ferrari entered a 330P2 for John Surtees/Ludovico Scarfiotti and a 275P2 for Mike Parkes/Jean Guichet. There was also a 275P2 for Graham Hill and Jackie Stewart, entered by Maranello Concessionaires, Stewart having his first race at the Ring.

In Motor Sport, Denis Jenkinson opined: 'The only driver among the 126 taking part who was capable of challenging John Surtees, given an equal car, was Graham Hill, but as he was driving a 3.3-litre Ferrari against the 4-litre of Surtees, the outcome was inevitable.' Jenks got the wrong Hill, for it was Phil who chased Surtees from the start, although the GT40 was no match for the P2 and



1962 German GP, Nurburgring, Phil Hill



1966 Nurburgring, Phil Hill

after three laps Surtees led Hill by 30 secs. After seven laps a driveshaft broke and Phil was out. He and Bruce McLaren were then put into the 4.7-litre GT40 after it had lost some 12 minutes by running out of fuel. They brought it home in eighth place.

In 1966 the gifted and innovative Jim Hall took the brave step of embarking on a European racing programme with his remarkable Chaparral cars, beginning with the Nurburgring 1000 Kms. Hall himself stayed at home to prepare for Le Mans, entrusting his entry for Germany to his partner, Hap Sharp. Hall may have been a Texas oil millionaire, but his foray into European racing was a stark contrast to that of Ford, which was already throwing millions of dollars at its racing programme.

Team Chaparral rolled into the Nurburgring garage square with the car on a trailer towed by a Chevy pickup and accompanied by Sharp, his wife Susie and just three mechanics. No one seeing the arrival of this minimalist entry making its debut at the Ring would have given it a chance of victory. However, while the trackside personnel were undoubtedly Nurburgring virgins, their drivers were most definitely not, for Hall had persuaded Phil Hill and Jo Bonnier to drive for him, and they would pull off a stunning victory.

The 2D was powered by a 5.4-litre, Chevrolet V8 which produced 420 bhp and drove the rear wheels through a modified Corvair gearbox which, with the help of General Motors, Jim Hall had modified for racing. The European press referred to it as a two-speed automatic, but in fact it was a torque-converter which allowed clutchless shifting between gears. The car ran on Firestone tyres and Hap Sharp and his men had cut two grooves round each on one set, which was for really wet weather. It would be needed.

The Chaparral was in the Prototype class, up against the 4-litre Ferrari P3 of John Surtees and Mike Parkes and three 2.2-litre Porsches. There were also two works, 2-litre Dino Ferraris present, one for Ludovico Scarfiotti and Lorenzo Bandini, the other a North American Racing Team car for Richie Ginther and Pedro Rodriguez, both of which would prove to be indecently quick. John Surtees was fastest in practice, getting the P3 round in a stunning 8 mins 31.9 secs, but it was Phil Hill who set tongues wagging by making second fastest time in the Chaparral with 8' 35.4".

And it was Surtees who led from the start, completing the opening lap 17 secs ahead of the Dino Ferrari of Scarfiotti/ Bandini, with Jo Bonnier in third place with the Chaparral. Jo was up to second after three laps, but Surtees now had a lead of 50 seconds and was running away with the race.

Not for long, as at the end of lap six he came trundling into the pits with broken rear suspension and by the time the Ferrari mechanics had fixed it and sent Mike Parkes back into the race, the Ferrari was down in 21st position.

And the Chaparral was now leading! But only just, for Scarfiotti was driving an inspired race in the 2-litre Dino and giving Bonnier in the 5.4-litre Chaparral a very hard time. Indeed, the Dino took the lead at the end of the 11th lap, when Bonnier stopped to hand over to Hill. One lap later and Bandini took over from Scarfiotti, but he proved to be no match for Phil, who proceeded to drive away from the little Ferrari and by the end of lap 16 he had a lead of more than 90 seconds.

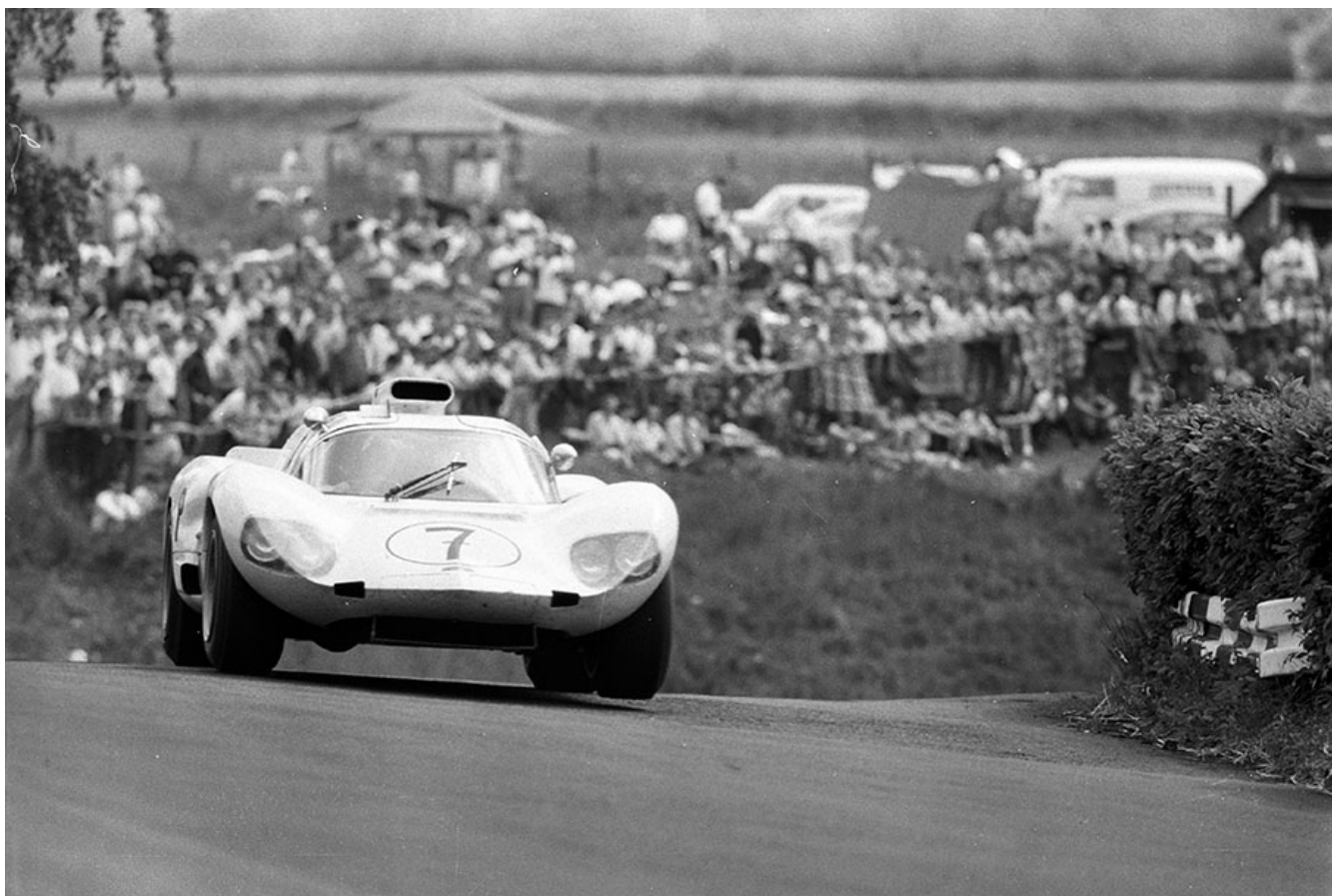
Meanwhile, Mike Parkes was climbing back through the field with the 4-litre Ferrari, but no sooner had Surtees taken over again than the same suspension trouble occurred and by the time that was put right he was more than a lap behind Hill. Who drove superbly to consolidate the Chaparral's lead before handing back to Jo Bonnier at half-distance. Jo kept the momentum going and when Hill took over for the final stint the white car from Texas was more than three minutes ahead of the Scarfiotti/Bandini Dino, with the sister car of Ginther/Rodriguez a further 21 seconds behind.

The race had started in bright sunshine, but now the rain clouds were gathering ominously and the Chaparral team produced their specially cut Firestone rain tyres, should they be needed. They were, as Denis Jenkinson reported in *Motor Sport*: 'At the end of the 37th lap the Chaparral stopped at the pits, by which time the rain had almost stopped and blue sky was appearing, but Hill knew that the storm was still drifting across the 14-mile circuit and that he was going to have to drive into it again. The special Chaparral-Firestones were fitted, the change of wheels taking a long time as they use a six-bolt hub fixing and there was further delay when the rear ones would not go under the wheelarches until the car was jacked up higher than the quick-lift jack would raise it... No one was quite sure how Hill would get on with the ribbed tyres, nor how they would handle if the track dried completely, but all doubts were dispelled when he pulled out 24 seconds more lead over the Dino in one lap. The next lap the lead was 96 sees, so all was well and obviously Phil Hill had everything well under control.

'He was not having an easy time for the wind-screen wiper had gone berserk, first only wiping half of the screen and then disappearing down under the scuttle, even though the arm was still

1967 Nurburgring, Phil Hill





1966 Nurburgring. The winning Chaparral 2D Chevrolet, driven by Joakim Bonnier (S) and Phil Hill (USA)

flailing about. As he went through the slow bends at Adenau-Forst he took the opportunity to open the gull-wing door, lean out and wipe some of the muck off the screen.'

"I knew I had to do something," says Phil, "but I couldn't risk shutting off the engine because the batteries were so small that I was afraid I wouldn't be able to get it restarted. And I could not stop the car because crunching it into gear when the engine was running was a definite no-no."

Phil's out-of-car activity caused consternation in the Chaparral pit, for it was seen by a TV camera and this led to a report that the car had broken down and Hill was climbing out. Happily, this was not the case and Phil roared past the pits to begin his last lap. As Jenks wrote, 'he put all his concentration into the last 14 miles to bring the mud-spattered but very healthy Chaparral over the line to win the 1966 ADAC 1000 kilometre race. Hap Sharp, who was in charge of the team, his wife, who kept the watches going, and the three mechanics, were justifiably overcome with joy and they just hugged each other like a happy family, not knowing whether to laugh or cry. Among the first to congratulate them were Mike Parkes, John Surtees and Mauro Forghieri.'

It was indeed a famous victory, which made Phil King of the Nurburgring and consolidated his place in the gallery of Ringmeisters. And he almost did it again the next year. Driving with Mike Spence this time, Phil took the Chaparral 2F, with its huge rear wing, round in 8 mins 31.9secs to win pole position on the grid. He lost time at the start, as Denis Jenkinson noted in *Motor Sport*: 'Nothing happened in the Chaparral for a long time, as Phil Hill was struggling into his safety harness...'

At the end of the first lap Jo Siffert (Porsche) led from the Porsches of Stommelen, Mitter, Neerpasch and Hawkins 'and, accompanied by a gasp from the vast crowd, Phil Hill, who thundered by in the Chaparral, headlamps blazing. Just how many cars he had got by on that opening lap no one will ever really know, but it must have been at least half the entry and he had been passing them on all sides. With five Porsches still in front of him he set off on the second lap, picking them off one by one, during which time he recorded the fastest lap of the race, and was already catching and lapping the tail end of the field. In spite of practically coming to rest while two "club racers" had a battle without looking in their mirrors, Hill lapped in 8 mins 42.1 secs and was in third place at the end of the lap and in sight of Stommelen.'

He soon caught him but miscalculated the number of Porsches he had overtaken and, despite pit signals telling him he was in second place, thought he was leading and eased off. Eventually, the penny dropped and he went after Siffert, taking the lead as they started their ninth lap. It would be nice to report that Phil went on to win what was his last race at the Nurburgring but, sadly, his brilliant drive brought no reward. No sooner had he handed the car to Mike Spence than the automatic gearbox failed.

Two months later they scored a tremendous win with the 2F in the BOAC 6 Hours at Brands Hatch, beating the Ferrari P4 of Jackie Stewart and

Chris Amon by almost a minute. And that was when Phil decided to retire from motor racing, America's first (and then only) World Champion saying farewell with an impressive victory in an American car.

However, it is not one of his two Nurburgring victories that Phil regards as his finest drive there, nor his double assault on the sportscar and F1 lap records in 1961. "I guess it would have to be my very first drive in 1956. To be able to pass people like Taruffi and some of the other top European drivers on the Ring made me feel awfully good. The whole package was tremendously challenging. It was my favourite circuit of all, I loved it."

HILL AT THE RING					
YEAR	EVENT	LAPS	CAR	NUMBER	RESULT
1956	1000 Kms		Ferrari 290MM (with Olivier Gendebien and Fon de Portago)	4	3rd
1958	1000 Kms		Ferrari Testa Rossa (with Luigi Musso)	5	4th
	Grand Prix	15	Ferrari Dino F2	23	9th F2 5th
1959	1000 Kms		Ferrari Testa Rossa (with Olivier Gendebien)	4	2nd
1960	1000 Kms		Ferrari Testa Rossa (with Wolfgang von Trips)	1	DNF
			Ferrari Testa Rossa (with Cliff Allison and Willy Mairesse)	2	3rd
1961	1000 Kms		Ferrari 246SP (with Wolfgang von Trips)	3	RL DNF
	Grand Prix	15	Ferrari 156	4	PP & RL 3rd
1962	1000 Kms		Ferrari 246SP (with Olivier Gendebien)	92	PP & FL 1
	Grand Prix	15	Ferrari 156	1	DNF
1963	1000 Kms		Porsche Flat 8 (with Jo Bonnier)	100	DNF
1964	1000 Kms		Lola-Ford GT (with Bruce McLaren)	140	DNF
	Grand Prix	15	Cooper-Climax V8	10	DNF
1966	1000 Kms		Chaparral 2D (with Jo Bonnier)	7	1
1967	1000 Kms		Chaparral 2F (with Mike Spence)	4	PP DNF



RINGMEISTER

9

GRAHAM HILL



1958 - 1974

In common with Tazio Nuvolari, Graham Hill's reputation as a Ringmeister rests principally on one magnificent victory. Graham's achievement was not that he overcame a number of more powerful cars than his to win the German Grand Prix, as Tazio had done, but that he held off two of his greatest rivals for almost 14 laps of the Nurburgring, when the slightest mistake could have lost him the race.

Graham's career began with an advert in a magazine, offering four laps of Brands Hatch in a 500cc Cooper-JAP for the princely sum of £1. That was a good chunk of his weekly wage at the time, but the investment changed his life - those four laps sold him on the idea of being a racing driver. Soon afterwards Graham went on the dole so he could work full-time and for nothing preparing two cars at a new racing drivers' school at Brands, teaching the hopefuls how to race! To gain experience for this he had a couple of races himself in the Cooper on Easter Monday, 1954, only to part company with the school in the summer.

He went to Brands for the August Bank Holiday meeting, where he met Colin Chapman, Guv'nor of the fledgling Lotus Cars. Graham cadged a lift back to London with him at the end of the day, Colin showed him the Lotus works and invited him to come round and make himself useful any time he liked. A year later he was working there full-time. This was important as he was now a married man, having wed Bette Schubrook, whom he had met four years earlier at the London Rowing Club, Bette having represented Great Britain in the European Games.

His racing career began in earnest in 1956 (when he was 27 years old) mainly with a Lotus Eleven owned by Jack Richards. He had a number of races in this car, winning a couple, and was once disqualified at Brands for spinning at the same corner four laps in a row. The next year he drove another Lotus Eleven for Doc Manton, a DB3S Aston for Tommy Atkins, a Tojeiro-Jaguar

for John Ogier and an F2 Cooper-Climax for John Willment. Colin Chapman was impressed enough to give Graham an F2 Lotus for a couple of races at the end of the year, then invited him to drive for him in F1, F2 and sportscars in 1958. Four years after his four laps at Brands, Graham Hill was a works racing driver.

He made his Grand Prix debut at Monaco, a circuit he would virtually own in years to come, but not this year. He managed to put his F2 Lotus 16 on the back row of the 16-car grid, equal slowest with Jo Bonnier and his Maserati 250F. 'When the race started I was last,' wrote Graham in his autobiography, *Life at the Limit*, 'but by the seventy-fifth lap I found myself in fourth place, and I hadn't overtaken a soul. A piece of cake, I thought; my first Grand Prix, and running fourth already. Then my back wheel fell off.'

Sadly, this was a not uncommon occurrence with Lotuses, for Colin Chapman was the leader of the 'add lightness' brigade. Graham retired in the Dutch, Belgian, French and British GPs before making his first visit to the Nurburgring for the German GP. Unfortunately, he makes no comment about the circuit anywhere in his autobiography and of this race he says only, 'I had to start from the back of the grid and this time an oil line split and the engine oil came out, not onto me but on to the exhaust pipe, creating a thick cloud of white smoke. I couldn't see a thing and I tried desperately to remember which way the road went as I slowed down to a stop just on the edge of a steep drop.'

Understandably, perhaps, Graham omits to mention that in practice he spun the F2 Lotus into a bank when the water pump drive sheared and the engine tightened up. He then went out in team-mate Cliff Allison's F1 car and spun that into a bank, too, giving the Lotus mechanics plenty of work before the race. As a result, Graham started from the back row of the grid again, with the official time of 18 mins 56 secs, which must be a re-

cord of some kind.

After two fruitless and frustrating years with Team Lotus, Graham joined BRM for 1960. He was also invited to drive for Porsche in sportscar races and returned to the Ring to drive an RS60 with Edgar Barth in the 1000 Kms, an event that gets no mention in *Life at the Limit*. The Porsche team comprised two 1.7-litre cars for Jo Bonnier / Olivier Gendebien and Hans Herrmann/Maurice Trintignant and a 1.6-litre for Edgar Barth and Hill.

Barth knew the Ring well, having raced there since 1954, so he took the first stint, leading the up to 1,600cc class easily. Graham kept that lead, but then on lap 28 Barth went off the road after falling foul of another car and their race was over.

As the 1960 German GP was for F2 cars on the Sudsbleife, Graham's next visit to the Ring was for the 1961 1000 Kms, when he again drove for Porsche, this time with Stirling Moss, who had won the race for the previous three years. They drove an RS61, as did Jo Bonnier/Dan Gurney and Hans Herrmann/ Edgar Barth.

They were up against the formidable Ferrari team, which comprised two 246 Dinos for Phil Hill/Taffy von Trips and Richie Ginther/ Olivier Gendebien and a 3-litre Testa Rossa entered by the North American Racing Team for Pedro and Ricardo Rodriguez. Then there was a Birdcage Maserati 61, entered by Camoradi for Lucky Casner / Masten Gregory.

Moss, naturally, did the opening stint, but could do nothing about the meteoric Phil Hill, who proceeded to shatter Stirling's 1959 lap record of 9 mins 32.0 secs time after time. He did this to such effect that when he handed the Ferrari to von Trips after ten laps, Taffy went back into the race still 38 seconds ahead of the second man, Moss, who stopped two laps later.

By the time Graham rejoined the race he was back in fifth spot. The weather now played into the hands of the Porsche team, for it began to snow! The Ferraris suffered badly from this, as freezing water poured down their air intakes and into the carburettors, slowing them drastically (See Ringmeister 8, Phil Hill). The Porsches were on Dunlop SP tyres, which suited the conditions admirably and first Graham and then Stirling took full advantage of the situation to claw their way back up the field. After 20 laps Moss took second place from the ailing Ginther/Gendebien Ferrari, only for the Porsche's engine to blow on lap 22.

He and Hill then took over the disc-braked Carrera of Herbert Linge/Sepp Greger and drove that to victory in the up to 2-litre sportscar class, finishing eighth overall.

Stirling had better luck in the Grand Prix,

beating the Ferraris of Phil Hill and Taffy von Trips with Rob Walker's Lotus in what was to be the last of his legendary drives. For Graham, however, the race was over almost before it was begun.

After outqualifying his BRM team-mate Tony Brooks (a two-time winner at the Ring) he had a contretemps with the Porsches of Dan Gurney and Hans Herrmann at the South Turn on the second lap. As he explained in *Life at the Limit*, 'I tried to take Hans Herrmann on the inside and he closed the door on me and I had to brake hard. The car got slightly out of control, slid across the track and bumped into Dan Gurney, who was trying to get by me on the other side... As I hit Gurney the force of the impact on the front wheel broke the steering on my car and I went out of control, flew straight over a bank and right over the top of a cameraman's camera bag. Fortunately, I landed the right way up but it was rather a nasty old moment and, of course, it put the car out of the race. I had a lonely walk back to explain why, in fact, I was walking instead of driving, which was a bit embarrassing.'

It is odd that Graham should recall this ignominious event in his memoirs, and then omit his third place in the 1962 1000 Kms with Porsche altogether. He was paired with Hans Herrmann in a flat-eight RS62 spyder, while Jo Bonnier and Dan Gurney were given the closed car that had run in the Targa Florio. They were up against the V6 Ferraris of Phil Hill / Olivier Gendebien and Giancarlo Baghetti / Lorenzo Bandini and the V8 of Pedro and Ricardo Rodriguez.

However, they were all left for dead by the little Lotus 23 of Jim Clark, which ran away with the race in the opening laps (See Ringmeister 11, Jim Clark). Just before the start it began to rain, and the Porsche mechanics fitted the Hill / Herrmann car with Dunlop SP rain tyres moments before the flag fell. But the rain did not last and Graham, taking the first stint, suffered as a result. He managed to hold fourth place throughout, but could not keep pace with Dan Gurney in the other Porsche. The car was fitted with dry tyres when Herrmann took over, only for the rain to fall again.

Jim Clark crashed the Lotus when overcome by exhaust fumes and the Ferraris of Willy Mairesse/Mike Parkes (4-litre GTO) and Hill and Gendebien (2.4-litre Dino) took charge of the race. Phil Hill took the lead soon after and he and Gendebien drove on to victory. The Porsches were third and fourth, until Bonnier's gearbox failed on the penultimate lap. The Hill/ Herrmann car was thus elevated to third place overall and won its class, with Graham making fastest lap in 9 mins 36.8 secs.

That was Graham's fifth visit to the Nurbur-



*Pit stop for the Porsche 718 WRS of Graham Hill and Hans Herrmann with team manager
Huschke von Hanstein keeping an eye on things*

gring and he had learned it well. Just how well he was to show in the German Grand Prix, which was undoubtedly the finest drive of his career, a career that was very nearly cut short during practice. After faffing around with four-cylinder engines in 1961, when they had let Scuderia Ferrari steal a march on them in the opening season of the new, 1.5-litre Formule One, the British teams had got their acts together for '62. Coventry-Climax had produced a V8 which now powered Lotus, Cooper, Brabham and Bowmaker Lola, while BRM had built their own V8 and Porsche a Flat 8. The two BRMs of Graham Hill and Richie Ginther were up against the Lotuses of Jim Clark and Trevor Taylor, the Porsches of Dan Gurney and Jo Bonnier, the Ferraris of Phil Hill, Giancarlo Baghetti, Ricardo Rodriguez and Lorenzo Bandini, the Coopers of Bruce McLaren and Tony Maggs, Jack Brabham's lone Brabham and the Bowmaker Lolas of John Surtees and Roy Salvadori.

During the first practice on the Friday morning nobody got close to Phil Hill's 1961 lap record of 8 mins 57.8 secs, but his namesake was fastest in the session with 9' 01.8". Porsche were naturally taking their home Grand Prix very seriously and had spent several days at the Ring before the recent British GP, doing three full-length practice

sessions, during which Dan Gurney was reported to have lapped in 8 mins 43.0 secs. It was hardly surprising, therefore, that in the afternoon Gurney beat Hill's record by more than 10 seconds, recording 8' 47.2". Graham was next up, with 8' 50.2", and Jim Clark and John Surtees were also under nine minutes. Hill was driving a brand new BRM that had only been used in practice for the British GP at Aintree. However, just as he was getting into his stride there occurred an extraordinary incident which could have had fatal consequences. Carel de Beaufort was allowed to do a lap in official practice with a German TV company's 16 mm movie camera fixed to his Porsche. The camera fell off and Graham was the first on the scene.

'I was rushing down the "Foxhole", which is a very steep, twisty descent about a third of the way round the circuit,' he recalled in *Life at the Limit*. 'I appeared round a hedge doing something like 120-130 mph when I saw a rather large black object in the middle of the road. Now, I was unable to move across the road to avoid it at this stage because of the speed I was travelling and I was having to cut the corners on this sort of zig-zag downhill road, I could only move about six inches off-line, so that my wheels didn't hit it - I didn't know what it was as I ran straight over the top of it, and unfortunate-

ly it pierced the oil tank which was just behind the radiator.

'The oil dropped onto the road and got onto my back wheels. I spun round and went into a ditch on the left of the road, going forwards again, and went down this ditch rather like a giant mole at great speed - tearing off wheels and suspension bits - and eventually I came to a stop halfway up the other side, looking very denuded, lying in the ditch, more or less just a chassis. Luckily I was still in it, albeit a bit breathless. I remember thinking: Thank God it didn't turn over. I got out of the car - I was a bit winded - and had just climbed to the top of the ditch; as I was peeping over the top with my eyes level with the track I was just in time to see Tony Maggs rushing down the "Foxhole", hitting my oil, spinning round like a top and bouncing end to end off the hedge - eventually destroying his car but without injuring himself. I then ran down the track waving my arms just in time to save Maurice Trintignant from doing the same thing.'

In Motor Sport, Denis Jenkinson was incensed by this foolishness, 'For the sake of getting a few feet of bad film, two drivers' lives had been risked and two cars demolished, but the all-powerful Television racket seems able to get away with such things. When everyone got back to the pits and the various stories were pieced together there was a right old shin-dig and practice ended in a bit of a shambles one way and another.'

Maggs was now relegated to Cooper's spare four-cylinder car, but Graham was luckier in that he was able to use the V8 he had raced at Aintree two weeks before. On Saturday it rained, so there was no improvement in times and Gurney remained on pole, with Hill, Clark and Surtees alongside him on the front row.

'When practice was over,' noted Denis Jenkinson, 'the sun came out and the track dried up, and after lunch Hermann Lang did a lap of the circuit in a 1939 Mercedes-Benz Grand Prix car, with 3-litre engine with two-stage supercharging, running on nitro-benzine fuel mixture, making fine noises and smells. At the end of the lap it went by the grandstands and pits at a speed which made a lot of people jump backwards and say "Oh!". Naturally, such a car has nothing in the way of brakes, tyres or road-holding compared with modern Grand Prix cars, but it certainly had an engine, and that V12-cylinder power unit in a chassis designed by Colin Chapman would make quite a good racing car.' Clearly, Jenks had little time for the puny 1.5-litre Formula, but it was to provide an unforgettable German GP which would make Graham Hill a Ringmeister.

The police estimated that more than 350,000 people crowded around the Nurburgring, in the hope of seeing a Porsche victory. The race was supposed to start at 2 pm but, as Philip Turner noted in *The Motor*, 'As the cars assembled after lunch in front of their pits, the rain was still falling and the tower of the Schloss Nürburg up on its hill drifted in and out of the mist... Then suddenly the heavens opened and a solid wall of water fell from the skies, drenching anyone out in the open to the skin. A river flowed past the pits and the start was postponed, first for 15 minutes, then for half an hour to allow the flood water on the track to subside. Then, with the rain still falling, the drivers set out on a lap of reconnaissance before returning to the pits for fuel tanks to be topped up and the cars at last to assemble on the grid. Four minutes to go and at the command of the commentator the enormous crowd rose to its feet and stood in silence in memory of von Trips, who this time last year seemed destined to win the World Championship for Germany.'

It was still raining when the race began. Jim Clark forgot to switch on his fuel pumps and kissed goodbye to his chances of victory (See Ringmeister 11, Jim Clark), but Phil Hill made a demon start from row four. The man who had stunned everyone with the first sub-nine minute lap the year before could only manage 9 mins 24.7 secs in the 1962 Ferrari, but he got away superbly and was rather incongruously given as race leader at Breidscheid by the illuminated Dunlop scoreboard. This was quickly corrected, but Phil was in third place, behind Gurney and Graham Hill.

Gurney's standing lap was completed in a tardy 10 mins 42.9 secs, due to the heavy rain. During lap two Graham Hill closed right up on him and John Surtees (Lola) and Jo Bonnier (Porsche) both overtook Phil Hill. Gurney completed that lap in 10' 22.5" but Graham was harrying him with 10' 21.8" and early on lap three he moved into the lead, never to lose it. He also lapped in 10' 12.2", which was to remain the fastest of the race, giving a good idea of just how bad the conditions were.

As all the cars were on Dunlop D12 wet-weather tyres, Graham had removed both front and rear anti-roll bars from his BRM, in the hope of gaining some advantage in the appalling conditions. Considering that he was suffering from heavy bruising and had strained muscles in his neck, chest and arms in his practice shunt he was driving a sensational race, which was not made easier when his fire extinguisher was jolted out of its clip and began rolling around on the floor of the cockpit.

'Graham Hill now began tentatively to increase his lead,' wrote Peter Gamier in *Autocar*, 'there was no question of anything very forceful, as the circuit was far too treacherous. It must have been a heart-in-mouth business for those who were fighting for the lead, for still very little indeed separated the foremost cars. By the end of lap 4 he led Gurney by 2.5 secs, Gurney now being only 2 secs ahead of Surtees.'

That changed during lap five, when the battery on Gurney's Porsche came loose. He reached down to fix it, ran wide on a corner and Surtees was through in a flash. After seven of the 15 laps Graham was just 4.2 secs ahead of Surtees, with Gurney almost seven seconds further back. Three laps later and Dan had reduced that gap to one second and there were fewer than three seconds separating the three leaders. But Hill was a match for the others, completing lap 12 in 10' 30.7" and lap 14 in 10' 23.5".

As he said to John Surtees afterwards, "It was sickening. Every time I looked in the mirror there was that red nose of your motorcar. Why didn't you slow up or something?" Surtees might well have said the same to Gurney, for they took the chequered flag with just 2.5 seconds between the BRM and the Lola and less than two seconds between the Lola and the Porsche - after two-and-a-half hours on the Nurburgring in the pouring rain. All three men had driven outstandingly well, but there could only be one winner and that was Graham Hill, Ringmeister.

That was Graham's second Grande Epreuve win of the year (he had already won the Dutch) and he would go on to win the Italian and South African GPs to secure the Drivers' World Championship for himself and the Constructors' Championship for BRM.

In 1963 Graham scored the first of his five wins in the Monaco Grand Prix, the pin-point precision of his driving that had served him so well in the Eifel mountains being just as vital on the streets of the Principality. His next two visits to the Nurburgring were unsuccessful, however. He did not take part in the 1963 1000 Kms, but was back for the GP with BRM, the team entering three cars for Graham, Richie Ginther and Scuderia Centro-Sud, whose driver was Lorenzo Bandini. The Italian embarrassed the other two by being third fastest in practice, almost three seconds faster than Hill and almost seven faster than Ginther. Graham's race lasted just two laps before a broken quill shaft in the gearbox brought him to a halt in the South Turn.

The next year Hill drove a Ferrari with Innes

Ireland in the 1000 Kms. Just as Scuderia Centro-Sud had backed up the BRM team in the previous Grand Prix, so Colonel Ronnie Hoare's Maranello Concessionaires backed up Scuderia Ferrari with a 3.3-litre 275P, run alongside the works cars of John Surtees/ Lorenzo Bandini and Ludovico Scarfiotti/Nino Vaccarella.

On the second lap Graham moved into second place behind John Surtees and took the lead when Bandini replaced John on lap 14. This lasted for one lap until Innes took over the Maranello Ferrari and then he began to harry the works cars as Hill had done. This did not go down well with Ferrari Team manager Eugenio Dragoni, who suggested to Ronnie Hoare that as the Ferraris were running 1,2,3 he should tell Ireland to ease off. The Colonel was having none of this and told Dragoni to slow his cars instead!

The problem was resolved in the Scuderia's favour when Ireland failed to complete his 29th lap. At least, he completed it, but the Ferrari did not, having run out of fuel on the main straight. By the time Innes had run back to the pits to explain the situation he was absolutely knackered, so Graham picked up a five-gallon drum of fuel and set off back down the road.

'If you've ever tried to run carrying a five-gallon drum of fuel you will know that it's pretty difficult,' he wrote in *Life at the Limit*. 'But with 50,000 people in the stands watching you you've got to make a bit of an effort; I didn't like to slow down too much, though I felt like it, and it wasn't until I had disappeared from view over the hill that I slowed to a walk - my lungs were bursting and I was absolutely whacked.'

It was a wasted effort. Although he got the car back into the race he was soon black-flagged, the regulations stipulating that refuelling only be done in the pits. In fact, the Ferrari had suffered a split fuel tank, so they would not have completed the race anyway, but it was tough on Ronnie Hoare's private team, which had given the works Ferraris a severe fright.

In the Grand Prix Hill was partnered once more by Richie Ginther and both BRMs suffered blown engines during practice. Graham could only manage fourth place on the grid, 5.4 secs behind pole-sitter John Surtees in the Ferrari. Dan Gurney (Brabham) gave Surtees a very hard time for the first half of the race and Graham was locked in combat for third position with Jim Clark, until the Lotus expired at the end of the seventh lap. Gurney then hit trouble due to overheating and Hill overtook him on lap 10. So it was Il Grande John who won the GP (for the second year running),



1965 Germany GP, Nurburgring

Graham struggling home in second place with a badly misfiring V8. The BRM had never looked like winning and Graham had to be grateful for the misfortunes of others.

He drove for Col. Ronnie Hoare again in the 1965 1000 Kms and was given a first taste of the phenomenon that was his new BRM team-mate, Jackie Stewart, who was to be his co-driver in the Maranello Concessionaires Ferrari. In practice John Surtees took pole in the works, 4-litre Ferrari P2 with 8 mins 53.1 secs and Stewart, whose first visit to the Ring this was, put the 3.3-litre P2 next door to it for the Le Mans start with a remarkable 8' 58.8" in just four practice laps.

Graham took the first stint and held second place behind Surtees, until overtaken by his namesake, Phil, in the new Ford GT40. When that dropped out, Graham duelled for second place with Mike Parkes in the works 3.3-litre P2, until the electrics failed on lap 10 and the car came to a halt at Schwalbenschwanz, leaving Jackie Stewart without a drive.

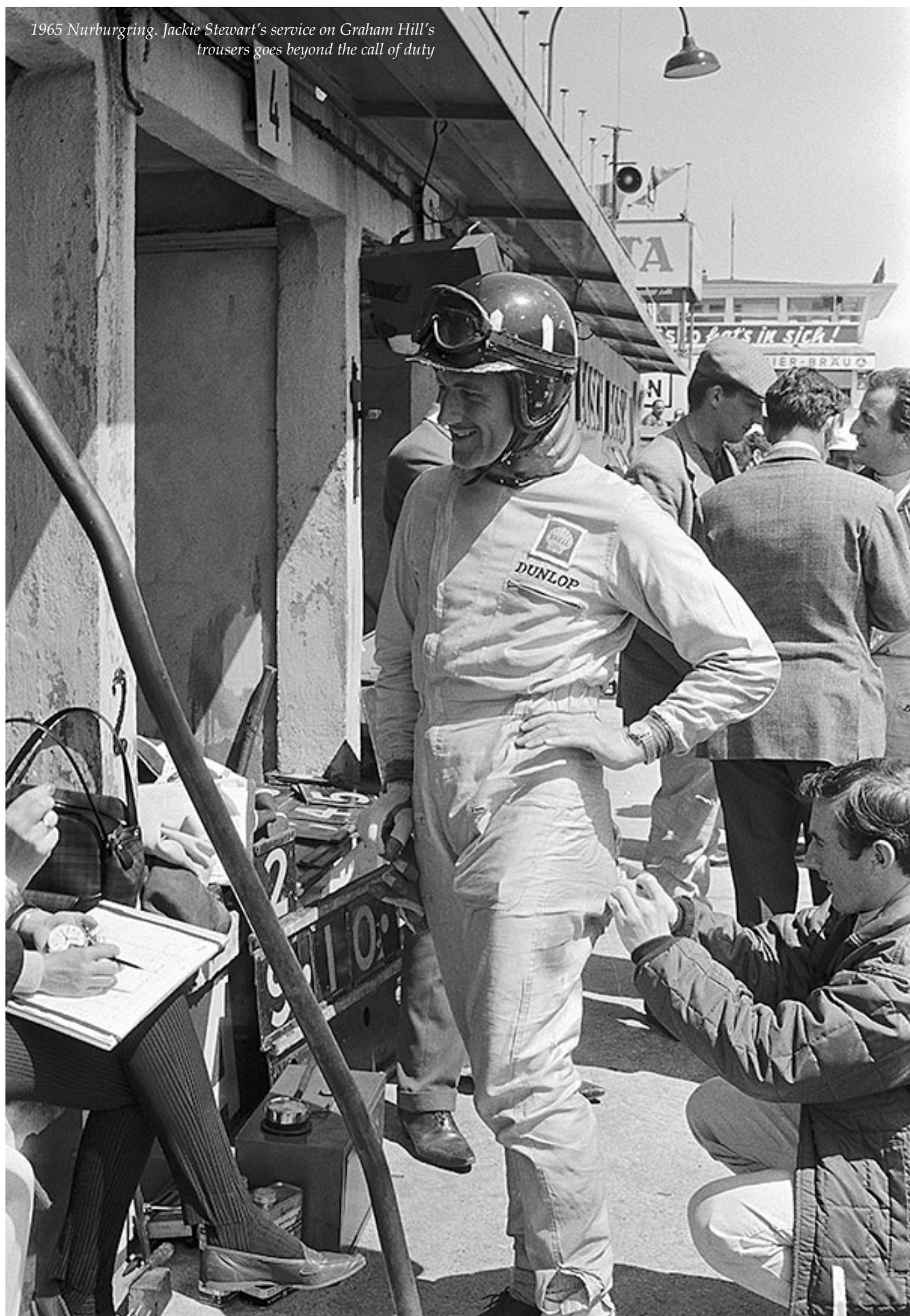
Jackie gave Graham (and everyone else) another severe fright during practice for the German GP, when he was second only to Jim Clark, beating Graham by 0.7 secs, only to damage the BRM's suspension on the second lap of the race.

Hill, however, drove superbly, holding second place throughout, but he could do nothing about Clark, who won his sixth Grand Epreuve in a row to clinch the World Championship with his first victory at the Ring.

The year 1966 got off to a great start for Graham, who went 'down under' with BRM and won both the New Zealand and Australian GPs. Back in Europe he could only finish third at Monaco for a change, having won the previous three races, the first hat-trick in the history of the event. The following weekend he became the first Englishman and only the second rookie to win the Indianapolis 500, driving John Mecom's Lola-Ford to a superb victory. Coupled with his 1962 World Championship, the win at Indy meant that he had now achieved Parts 1 and 2 of what was to become his Triple Crown, although he would have to wait until 1972 for his Le Mans victory.

Grand Prix racing became Grand again in 1966 with the advent of the new, 3-litre Formula. Unfortunately, there were still not many 3-litre engines about by the time of the German GP and BRM and Lotus were using 2-litre versions of their 1.5-litre units. This did not prevent Jim Clark from gaining pole position with a shattering 8 mins 16.5 secs, but the best Graham could do with the BRM

1965 Nurburgring. Jackie Stewart's service on Graham Hill's trousers goes beyond the call of duty



was 8' 26.6", which was only 10th fastest. The race provided a fine victory for Jack Brabham (3-litre Repco-Brabham) who beat John Surtees (3-litre Cooper-Maserati) to the flag by more than 40 seconds. Graham was fourth, more than six and a half minutes in arrears.

Towards the end of the year Graham was approached by Henry Taylor, Competitions Manager of Ford, who asked if he might be interested in going back to Lotus for 1967. Ford had financed the new V8 Cosworth engine which, initially, was to be for Team Lotus only and they wished to safeguard their investment - a whopping £10,000 - by having a second top-flight driver to back up Jim Clark. At the time, Graham had given no thought to leaving BRM, but he had been there for seven years and, by his own admission, was now regarded as part of the scenery. 'People were far too used to me and I was becoming less effective,' he explained in *Life at the Limit*, 'they were becoming immune to my constant proddings.' After a great deal of thought he decided to return to Lotus, where he was given equal Number One status with Clark.

Although he did not win a single race in 1967 he enjoyed his new surroundings. He and Clark got on famously and formed a very strong partnership. Jim managed to win four Grandes Epreuves,

yet the World Championship that year was won on points by Denny Hulme, with just two wins to his name. The second of those was the German GP, in which both Hill and Clark failed to finish.

Graham almost failed to start, following a big accident during practice on the downhill run to Adenau Bridge. 'I was having some trouble with the brakes,' he recalled, 'they didn't feel quite right. I got to a point where I just didn't slow down enough - I went up one of the banks and did a great big wall of death act.

'Stewart, who was following me, said he saw me come right out of my seat - we weren't wearing seat belts in those days. The car came back down on the road again going backwards and I was able to step out of it a trifle breathless.'

The Lotus 49 was badly damaged, so the mechanics had to prepare the spare car for the race. And as Graham hadn't completed the requisite five qualifying laps, he had to borrow Jimmy's machine and do a gentle lap in that, while Jimmy chewed his nails with even more vigour than usual.

As a result of all this Graham was on row four of the grid, whereas Jimmy was in pole position. Within seconds of the start, Graham was spinning in the South Turn, having been nudged by someone, and had to set off in pursuit of the en-

1965 Germany GP, Nurburgring. Second placed Graham Hill and third placed Dan Gurney joke around with Jim Clark during the podium ceremony





1965 Germany GP, Nurburgring. Kurt Ahrens, Hubert Hahne, Lucien Bianchi (above), Jacky Ickx (above), Jean-Pierre Beltoise (below), Piers Courage (below), Jackie Oliver (below), Jo Siffert and Graham Hill

tire field. A few laps later he noticed that one of his front wheels was about to fall off. He made it back to the pits where the wheel nut was tightened, but not long afterwards the rear suspension broke and that was that.

The following year Jim Clark was killed in an F2 race at Hockenheim, leaving the motor racing world stunned and mystified, as it had been following Stirling Moss's career-ending crash at Goodwood in 1962. Team Lotus soldiered on in a daze, Colin Chapman being simply devastated by the death of the driver who had become his closest friend. It was up to Graham to pull the team together, which he did to remarkable effect, winning the Spanish and Monaco GPs in the space of two weeks.

Throughout the whole weekend of the German GP the weather was atrocious. Graham qualified his Lotus in fourth place, 42 seconds slower than pole-sitter Jacky Ickx (V12 Ferrari), but almost eight seconds quicker than his old BRM team-mate, Jackie Stewart, now in Ken Tyrrell's Matra-Ford. However, Ickx and his Ferrari team-mate Chris Amon made poor starts and both Jackie and Graham made very good ones, and it was the Matra that went into the lead when the race began in a foggy downpour.

The rest of the field never saw which way Stewart went. The Matra was on super-sticky Dunlops and they combined with Jackie's extraordinary skills to defy the appalling conditions and let Ken Tyrrell's machine run away with the race from the drop of the flag. At the end of the opening lap Stewart led Hill by just eight seconds, and Graham had Chris Amon right behind him. The brilliant young New Zealander was not known for his fondness of the rain, but on this occasion he put his worries behind him and drove his Ferrari superbly in the blinding spray thrown up by the wheels of the Lotus.

At half-distance (seven laps) Stewart was an astounding 90 seconds ahead of the battling duo and Hill was a bare two seconds ahead of Amon. As they passed the pits to complete lap 11 the Ferrari was almost alongside the Lotus and it seemed as though Amon must take second place. However, as Patrick McNally reported in *Autosport*, 'Something was apparently amiss with the limited-slip diff, and going into the second part of the North Turn the Ferrari spun wildly on the slippery surface, finishing up on the grass bank completely undamaged but stuck firm in the mud.'

A dispirited Amon received a huge ovation as he trudged back to the pits. The pressure was now off Graham Hill, but due to the flying spray he was unaware that Amon was no longer with him and was pressing on as hard as ever. It was almost his undoing, for he spun in the Esses after Hohe Acht, as he recalled in *Life at the Limit*:

'On lap 12 it started to rain really hard and I came sailing over the top of a hill blind and plunged down into a little stream running across the road. I simply did not see it - it hadn't been there last time round. I hit it with a wallop and the car spun round like a top. Suddenly, there I was slap in the middle of the road: Oh Lord, I thought, where's Amon? I was trying to keep an eye out for him and also to get the car out of the way. It wouldn't start on the starter and I had to get out and push it, thinking that Amon was going to hit me at any moment.'

These two contretemps allowed Jochen Rindt in the Brabham to move into third place, now just a few seconds behind Graham. Hill managed to hold him off for the remaining two laps and finished second in the German GP for the third time. He finished second again in the USGP at Watkins Glen and then won the final round in Mexico City, to become World Champion for the second time with 48 points to the 36 of Jackie Stewart.

He was back at the Ring in May, 1969, for the F2 Eifel GP on the Nordschleife and put his Lotus 59 on the front row, beside Stewart (Matra) and pole-sitter Jo Siffert (BMW). Jackie ran away with the race and Graham held second place for a while, but then both he and his new Lotus team-mate, Jochen Rindt, were forced out with broken front wishbones.

No fewer than nine drivers got under eight minutes during practice for the Grand Prix and Graham was the ninth, nine seconds slower than Rindt, who was almost six seconds slower than poleman Jacky Ickx in the works Brabham.

Jackie Stewart (Matra) got the jump on Ickx at the start and held the Brabham at bay for six laps. Jacky's persistence finally paid off, however, and he passed Stewart and to score a magnificent victory. Graham was down in sixth place initially, moving up to fifth behind his team-mate Rindt, on lap six. He was relegated to sixth again by Bruce McLaren (McLaren) a lap later and was down to seventh on lap 10. Happily for him, McLaren, Hulme (McLaren), Beltoise (Matra) and Siffert (Lotus) all retired in the closing laps and Graham, his Lotus now lacking fourth gear, found himself in fourth place at the end.

At the end of the year he had a huge accident during the USGP at Watkins Glen, damaging his legs severely. He was in hospital for some time and many people hoped that he would take the opportunity to retire from the sport he had graced so well for so long. He was now 40 years old, the age at which Juan Manuel Fangio had begun his F1 career, but for all his success at the wheel Hill was no Fangio and so it was unfortunate, to say the least, that he, in common with far too many sports stars, refused to accept that time had caught up with him.

Colin Chapman now had the very fast Jochen Rindt on his books and wanted to be rid of Graham without hurting his feelings, so he suggested that Rob Walker take him on to drive his Lotus 72 in 1970. Walker already had Jo Siffert as his driver, but when he left to join March, Graham replaced him.

Hill made a remarkable comeback, but his season with Walker was not a success and they parted company at its end. He now went to Brabham, which had been taken over by designer Ron Tauranac following Jack Brabham's retirement.

After a year's hiatus while the Nurburgring was redeveloped, the German GP returned to the Nordschleife in 1971. Graham was 13th on the grid, almost 6.5 seconds slower than his new team-mate, Tim Schenken. In the race Schenken finished sixth and Hill ninth, more than six-and-a-half minutes behind the winner, Jackie Stewart. Sadly, he still refused to accept that he was over the hill and re-signed with Brabham (now owned by Bernie Ecclestone) for 1972. That year he was invited to drive a works V12 Matra at Le Mans and he and Henri Pescarolo won the race, completing his Triple Crown.

In the German GP Graham could only manage 15th place on the two-by-two grid, with his new Brabham team-mate, Carlos Reutemann, in sixth spot. The race was another runaway win for Jacky Ickx, this time in a Ferrari. At half-distance (seven laps) Graham was way down in 16th place and the sad truth was that the Ringmeister of 1962 was barely making an entry in the race reports a decade later. Thanks to several retirements and pit stops he eventually finished sixth, just ahead of his other team-mate, Wilson Fittipaldi. Despite the fact that he was making his debut at the Ring in a Brabham that was badly undergeared, Fittipaldi had shadowed Graham for almost the entire race.

Hill left Brabham at the end of the year and still refused to retire. As no one else would employ him for 1973 he found backing from Embassy cigarettes and set up his own team, buying two Shadow F1 cars, designed by Tony Southgate. He



1965 Germany GP, Nurburgring. Graham Hill in the Gold Leaf Team Lotus 49B races through the mist and the rain

finished 13th in the German GP that year and ninth the next, by which time the Shadows had been replaced with Lolas.

Graham's remarkable career finally ground to an ignominious halt at Monaco in 1975, where he failed to qualify for the race he had won five times. At last he got the message and retired to run his team with the very promising newcomer, Tony Brise, at the wheel. That ended in tragedy on November 29 after a test session at the Paul Ricard circuit in the South of France. The Piper Aztec which Graham was flying home crashed in thick fog on the approach to Elstree Airfield. Graham, Tony Brise and four other members of the team were killed instantly.

Graham Hill is rightly remembered as a double World Champion, five times winner of the Monaco Grand Prix and holder of a unique Triple Crown: winner of the World Championship, the Le Mans 24 Hours and the Indianapolis 500. But he sold himself short here by ignoring his victory at the Nurburgring, a circuit that surely makes more demands of a driver than Le Mans and Indianapolis together. How he, and others, could have ignored the race that made him a Ringmeister is a mystery.

His triple was, in fact, a quartet and it is surprising that the man who had such a great sense of humour should not have borrowed the title of those other icons of the Swinging Sixties, John, Paul, George and Ringo and proclaimed himself holder of the Fab Four, the fourth being the German Grand Prix of 1962. Any victory on the Nordschleife was pretty special, but having two drivers of the calibre of John Surtees and Dan Gurney snapping at his heels for two hours and forty minutes in the pouring rain without making a mistake was an extraordinary achievement, and unquestionably the greatest drive of Graham Hill's career.

HILL AT THE RING

YEAR	EVENT	LAPS	CAR	NUMBER	RESULT
1958	Grand Prix	15	Lotus 16	25	DNF
1960	1000 Kms		Porsche RS60 (with Edgar Barth)	30	DNF
1961	1000 Kms		Porsche RS61 (with Stirling Moss)	20	DNF
			Porsche 911 Carrera (with Stirling Moss, Herbert Linge & Sepp Greger)	22	8th
	Grand Prix	15	BRM P48-Climax	17	DNF
1962	1000 Kms		Porsche Flat 8 (with Hans Hermann)	111	3rd
	Grand Prix	15	BRM P57 V8	11	1
1963	Grand Prix	15	BRM P61 V8	1	DNF
1964	1000 Kms		Ferrari 275P (with Innes Ireland)	142	DNF
	Grand Prix	15	BRM P261 V8	3	2nd
1965	1000 Kms		Ferrari 275P2 (with Jackie Stewart)	4	DNF
	Grand Prix	15	BRM P261 V8	9	2nd
1966	Grand Prix	15	BRM P261 V8 2-litre	5	4th
1967	Grand Prix	15	Lotus 49-Cosworth	4	DNF
1968	Grand Prix	14	Lotus 49B-Cosworth	3	2nd
1969	Eifel GP F2	10	Lotus 59B-Cosworth	1	DNF
	Grand Prix	14	Lotus 49B-Cosworth	1	4th
1971	Grand Prix	12	Brabham BT34-Cosworth	24	9th
1972	Grand Prix	14	Brabham BT37-Cosworth	11	6th
1973	Grand Prix	14	Shadow DN1-Cosworth	12	13th
1974	Grand Prix	14	Lola T370-Cosworth	26	9th



RINGMEISTER

10

JOHN SURTEES



1955 - 1971

Reference: German Grand Prix at the Nurburgring

Mr Surtees, who was recommended to us by Mr Aldington, started in this race for the first time on an RS machine with 52 horsepower engine and four-speed gearbox. Although Mr Surtees knew neither the Nurburgring nor the BMW engine, he soon settled in and rode the third-fastest time in practice. During the race, after a bad start, he worked his way through the whole field to third place, but then had to stop to change a spark plug. He worked his way back to third position and then had to abandon the race because of continued oiling up of the spark plugs (the reason for this was a flooded flotation chamber).

If we want to take part as a works team in next year's races, it would be necessary for Mr Surtees to commit himself soon.

*v. Falkenhausen,
Sporting Division*

Alex von Falkenhausen sent that note to the directors of BMW after John had taken part in the German motor cycle GP at the Nurburgring on June 26, 1955. John actually raced three times that day, crashing his own NSU in the 250 cc race; finishing third on his Norton in the 350 cc event and finally riding the horizontally opposed BMW twin in the 500 cc race.

von Falkenhausen also made it clear to his bosses that John Surtees was 'the man who can win races for us,' but they weren't listening. However, as Surtees recounts in his autobiography, 'I think it was my performance on this bike which alerted Count Agusta to my potential and indirectly led to the invitation to join MV the following year. In fact, if BMW hadn't dithered around I might well have ended up riding for them in 1956, rather than for the Italians.'

BMW's indifference to John's performance that day undoubtedly shaped his career and it is indicative of his astonishing skills that he should shine on his very first appearance at the Nurburgring. Alright, so he made an inauspicious start, falling off the NSU and flying through a hedge on the very first lap of the 250 cc GP, but that was due to having the wrong tyres rather than anything else. In the next two races he rode with great skill and made the Continentals sit up and take notice.

He learned the Nurburgring by driving round it when it was open to the public, "and when possible, I would walk, getting a picture in my mind of exactly where I was. The Ring was 14.2 miles round, so I would walk a section at a time. I always picked up circuits pretty quickly."

In 1956 John rode for MV Agusta and won the 500 cc World Championship for the first time. The motor cycle GPs did not return to the Ring until 1958, when he tied up the 350 and 500 cc titles by winning both races on the MVs. In its GP report, punningly headed 'Surtees Makes Certain!', The Motor Cycle noted that, 'Surtees' determination to leave nothing to chance in the 350cc race was obvious from the drop of the starter's flag. Closely shadowed by Hartle, he fairly rocketed away from the rest of the field and, on his very first flying lap, shaved 0.10 secs off Geoff Duke's 500 cc lap record (made on a Gilera in 1955) to turn what eventually proved to be the fastest lap of the day in 10 mins 23.2 secs (81.83 mph).'

He would undoubtedly have improved upon that in the 500 cc race, had not a thunderstorm almost drowned the proceedings. 'Rain fell with the force of hailstones and the track was awash,' reported The Motor Cycle. Just how bad were the conditions is reflected in the race speeds, John completing the 7-lap 350 cc race at 80.47 mph and the 9-lap 500 cc event at 68.97 mph, with a fastest lap in 11 mins 18.5 secs. He won by more than 30 seconds and the magazine declared, 'To counter the argu-

ment that his task has been easy in the absence of worthy opposition, his faultless ride in the appalling weather which marred the 500 cc race was real championship stuff.' The absent 'worthy opposition' comprised Gilera, Mondial and Moto Guzzi, teams which had all retired from racing at the end of 1957, but that did nothing to alter the fact that with his two victories John had established himself as a Ringmeister, and not for the last time.

That year, the 24 year-old Surtees won an astonishing 12 World Championship races on the trot, starting with the Junior and Senior TTs in the Isle of Man. In December he attended the BBC-TV Sportsman of the Year Dinner in London and found himself at the same table as Mike Hawthorn (who had just become Britain's first World Champion racing driver); Tony Vandervell (whose Vanwalls had won the first Constructors' Championship) and Reg Parnell (Team Manager of Aston Martin). During the evening Mike suggested that John really ought to see what he could do in a racing car and Tony Vandervell immediately offered him a drive in a Vanwall at any time.

However, Hawthorn died in a road accident a few weeks later and then Vandervell announced his retirement from racing, so Surtees thought no more about cars and went back to motor bikes. Remarkably, he won the 350 and 500 cc Championships again in 1959 and increased his run of consecutive Championship victories to 13!

Shortly before the Italian GP in September he received a phone call from Reg Parnell, who reminded him of Mike Hawthorn's suggestion and, in his usual, no-nonsense manner, virtually ordered John to go to Goodwood in October, when there would be an Aston Martin DBR1 waiting for him. John agreed and found himself sitting in a racing car for the very first time; and not just any old racing car but the one which Stirling Moss had driven to victory in sensational fashion in the Nurburgring 1000 kms a few months earlier. It was a true meeting of Ringmeisters.

Although he had never contemplated a career on four wheels, Surtees had always enjoyed driving fast cars. He started with a Jowett Jupiter, went through several Fords and a Porsche and owned and enjoyed a DB2/4 Aston for some time. His great love was a BMW 507, which he had bought from the factory in 1957 and owns to this day. He had driven a considerable number of high speed miles on the Continent in this car and so quickly found himself at home in the DBR1 at Goodwood.

"The Aston felt really good," he recalls. "It was a fabulously forgiving car, which was a big benefit to somebody as inexperienced as I was. Its engine

was very flexible and I have very fond memories of the test. I must admit that the Aston felt a little strange after a bike, from which you get quite a different view of the track, but the lines didn't seem much different and I got down to about the same times that Stirling had done in the Tourist Trophy a month or so earlier. I enjoyed driving a racing car far more than I had anticipated and although I had gone to Goodwood with no real intention of moving into motor racing the Aston aroused a new interest in me. Nevertheless, I was completely taken aback when I stopped at the pits and Reg asked me to sign a contract with Astons for 1960!"

Surtees was in no position to do any such thing, being already committed to MV Agusta, but Parnell was persistent and a few days later John was back at Goodwood driving the DBR1 again. Reg was so impressed with John's abilities that he again asked him to sign for Aston Martin (Patron David Brown had not yet announced his withdrawal from sportscar racing). By now Surtees really had the car racing bug, but was convinced that he ought to get some 'grass roots' experience under his belt before he signed with a works team.

Tony Vandervell thought otherwise. Learning of his trial with the Astons, he scornfully told him that he was wasting his time and should drive a proper racing car. So John found himself at Goodwood once more, this time in a Vanwall and, predictably, Vandervell immediately asked him to sign a contract. John reminded him that he had retired from racing, but Vandervell just shrugged and said, "Doesn't matter. I'll build a car for you."

At this time Surtees had never seen a motor race, let alone taken part in one, yet here he was with offers of a works drive from two of the biggest names in the game. He was flattered, of course, but very wary, for he had seen how his great rival, Geoff Duke, had tried to move into motor racing (also with Aston Martin) in 1952 and failed. Such was Duke's prowess on two wheels that the press were hailing him as a World Champion on four before he had started a race. This did not go down well with his team-mates and he was never happy at Astons. As a result, although Team Manager John Wyer was convinced he had the makings of a great racing driver, Duke returned to bikes.

Determined not to suffer the same fate, Surtees decided he would go motor racing, but in his own time. He turned down the offers from Aston Martin and Vandervell and went home to prepare for his 1960 programme with MV. But then, just as BMW's lack of interest in him had led him to MV Agusta, the latter's disinterest in races other than Championship events led him to motor racing. In



1965 Nurburgring.

1957 John had built up a couple of Nortons and raced them as well as the MVs, winning several races in England. The Italian press made much of this, to the effect that 'Surtees doesn't need MV Agusta to win races'. Needless to say, this did not go down well with Count Domenico Agusta, who told Surtees that as from 1958 he would only be allowed to race MVs and they would only be competing in World Championship events.

At a stroke, John's racing programme was reduced from the 46 events of 1957 to just 16! He was not impressed, convinced that a rider could only remain on top form by racing constantly, but he was under contract to MV so he put up with it - for two years. However, there was nothing in his contract that said he could not race cars, so in 1960 he bought an F2 Cooper.

His very first car race was a Formula Junior event at Goodwood, which the RAC agreed would be enough to qualify him for his competition licence. He won pole position on the grid in Ken Tyrrell's Cooper and finished second in the race to Jimmy Clark. 'A most impressive first appearance -,' wrote Michael Durnin in *Autosport*, 'a new star is in the ascendant.'

Surtees duly won his licence, took his F2 Cooper to Oulton Park and finished second to Innes Ireland's works Lotus. Colin Chapman was so impressed that he invited Surtees to race an F1 Lotus when his MV commitments would allow. John accepted and duly turned up for the International Trophy meeting at Silverstone in May. In practice he was almost six seconds slower than pole man Moss, but held his own in the race initially until the Lotus lost all its oil and he had to retire when in fourth place. Shades of Bernd Rosemeyer at Avus in 1935. Then came Monaco.

Whereas Rosemeyer had found the savage twists and turns of the Nurburgring easy to master, Surtees was, as he freely admits, completely outfumbled by the twists and turns of Monaco. "I had a dreadful time. I was able to cope with the faster circuits quite easily, as the relationship between cars and bikes wasn't much different, but the techniques required on slow corners were very different and to begin with I always had a bit of trouble. So Monaco was a new experience, with all that stop-start business. On top of that we had lots of gearbox problems and the Lotus ground to a halt after 18 laps. Then I went to Silverstone for the British GP and finished second, which upset quite a few people!"

For someone who was taking part in only his sixth motor race Surtees' drive in the 1960 British GP was remarkable but, as Denis Jenkinson noted



1966 Germany GP, Nurburgring. John Surtees gets the drop on Jim Clark, Jackie Stewart and Ludovico Scarfiotti. The eventual winner Jack Brabham (No. 3) is on the second row

in Motor Sport, it went almost un-noticed, 'as he had driven such a smooth and unspectacular race, but one of such precision and smoothness that it put many accepted stars to shame.' He had indeed made several look rather ordinary and there was a certain amount of resentment directed at him afterwards for making Grand Prix racing look so easy.

He did the same thing again in his very next race, the Portuguese GP. He won pole position, took the lead on lap five and seemed to have his and Team Lotus' first GP victory locked up for the next thirty laps, only to make a mistake and spin out of the race.

His success on two wheels continued unabated, however, and once again he was double World Champion. For the last time however, as at Monza (where he won the 500 cc GP) Count Agusta told him that he would still only be competing in Championship races in 1961. This was not good enough for Surtees, who decided to give up racing bikes altogether and concentrate on cars. Colin Chapman immediately told him that he would be Number One at Lotus for the coming season, unfazed by the fact that he had already given that position - in a contract! - to Innes Ireland.

Distinctly unhappy at Chapman's cavalier behaviour, Surtees joined Reg Parnell and Yeoman

Credit's team of Coopers for 1961. It was not a successful union. Nevertheless, John returned to the Nurburgring for the first time since 1958 on four of John Cooper wheels instead of two of Count Agusta's. The Cooper was last year's car and so another victory at the Ring was out of the question, but John gave a good, if undistinguished, account of himself, being tenth fastest in practice with 9 mins 11.2 secs, which was almost 11 seconds faster than his team-mate, Roy Salvadori. The German GP was all about Stirling Moss in Rob Walker's Lotus beating the Ferraris (See Ringmeister 6, Stirling Moss) and John brought the Cooper-Climax home in fifth place, behind another youngster - and future Ringmeister - who was also making his Nurburgring debut in a GP car - Jim Clark.

John found that quite a few people in racing still resented the fact that he had more or less started at the top, without serving an apprenticeship. One man who was quite unfazed by this was Enzo Ferrari, for having had Tazio Nuvolari and Achille Varzi driving for him in the past, he was well aware that great motor cycle racers often turn into great racing drivers, so he invited

Surtees to join his Scuderia for 1962. John declined, convinced that he was still too new to motor racing to join such a prestigious team. Also, he was already involved with Eric Broadley in



1966 Germany GP, Nurburgring. John Surtees

the making of the Lola GP car and convinced Reg Parnell that Yeoman Credit should dump the uncompetitive Coopers and go racing with the Lolas, which they did.

The 1962 German Grand Prix was remarkable in that three drivers, Surtees, Graham Hill and Dan Gurney, were within a few yards of each other for the entire 15-lap race, and in the most appalling conditions. Gurney (Porsche) led initially from Hill (BRM) and Surtees (Lola), but Graham took the lead on lap two and despite the best efforts of the others, stayed there until the chequered flag. (See Ringmeister 9, Graham Hill)

"The BRM had a bit of an edge over the Lola uphill and along the 3 km straight to the finish," says John. "In order to get by Graham I had either to do so before Adenau, or going onto the straight, but the conditions were very wet and misty, making it very difficult to overtake. The right-hander up and over the hill leading onto the main straight was where Graham always took a pretty wide line. I reckoned that I could get on to the straight considerably faster than him and once I did that I could make the Lola very wide, particularly with the weather conditions.

"So my demon plan was to tuck in behind Graham before the right-hander and dive through

on the inside on the final lap. This wasn't as easy as it seemed, bearing in mind how much spray was flying around and while I was right up Graham's exhaust pipe, I had Dan scrambling all over me on the tight sections of the track. So, although I needed to drop back slightly in order to take a run at Graham through that right-hander, I couldn't slacken the pace too much because Dan was looking for any opportunity to push me down to third.

"I was nicely placed for a big effort, came flying over the brow into that right-hander - and who was cruising along in the middle of the road? Heini Walter in a slow, four-cylinder Porsche! My demon plan was dashed! All three of us had to scramble round the Porsche and I had to settle for second place behind Graham and just ahead of Dan."

And that was as good as it got with the Lola so when, at the end of the year, Enzo Ferrari approached Surtees again, John was in a receptive mood. Joining the Scuderia for 1963 posed an enormous challenge, for following Phil Hill's World Championship in 1961, Ferrari had fired seven of his key men including Designer Carlo Chiti and Team Manager Romolo Tavoni. Although the Scuderia won the 1962 Sportscar Championship, the F1 season had been a disaster, with the virtually all-conquering 156 sharknose of 1961 lacking de-

velopment and being unable to catch its own shadow in '62. A thoroughly disillusioned Phil Hill left the team and morale was at a very low ebb when Surtees agreed to join it for 1963.

But the Italians had enormous affection and respect for the man they called *Il Grande* - the Great - from his days with MV Agusta and, with its new Chief Engineer, Mauro Forghieri, John set about revitalising the team. The season began well with a Surtees/Ludovico Scarfiotti victory in the 12 Hours of Sebring. Porsche then won the Targa Florio, but at the Nurburgring the Ferraris, led by the 250P of Surtees and Willy Mairesse, simply dominated the event.

The three works entries were reduced to two when Nino Vaccarella went into the woods at Hocheichen on his first practice lap, breaking his arm and writing off the car. Surtees won pole position with a lap in 9 mins 13.1 secs, taking 2.7 secs off Phil Hill's lap record set in 1961. Mike Parkes made second fastest time in his 250P with 9' 21.1". Next up were the Porsches of Herbert Linge/Edgar Barth and Phil Hill/Jo Bonnier.

'At 9 am, with the enormous crowd already assembled, the starter lifted his flag and half the field ran towards their cars while the other half waited until he dropped it,' wrote Patrick Mc-

Nally in *Autosport*. 'The result was a very ragged start with Peter Lindner in the lightweight E-type streaking into the lead followed by the two works Ferraris of Scarfiotti and Surtees.'

Lindner held the red cars at bay for the whole of the first lap, but they roared past him in front of the pits and by the end of the next lap were 18 seconds ahead of the Jaguar. On the sixth lap the Porsche of Jo Bonnier overtook Lindner and by lap 10 Surtees had pulled out a lead of 2 mins 38 secs over the Porsche, setting a new lap record of 9' 16.0" in the process.

Bonnier handed over the Porsche to Phil Hill on lap 11, by which time the two Ferraris had lapped all but the six cars immediately behind them. Three laps later Surtees stopped, the Ferrari was refuelled and Willy Mairesse took it back into the race, now in second place behind team-mate Scarfiotti. But a lap later he, too, was in and Mike Parkes rejoined the fray still in the lead, his pit stop having been the quicker.

The race had become something of a procession, with the two Ferraris running in close formation and ever-increasing their lead over the Hill/Bonnier Porsche. But now it was raining and the track became very slippery indeed, so much so that on lap 17 Parkes lost his 250P at Aremberg and

1966 Germany GP, Nurburgring. John Surtees Cooper-Maserati leads Brabhams Brabham-Repco and Rindts Cooper-Maserati briefly, before Brabham overtakes Surtees to win





1966 Germany GP, Nurburgring. Freiherr von Diergardt presents Jack Brabham with the winners trophy, watched by second placed John Surtees, whilst Fuerst von Metternich hands Jochen Rindt his cup for third place

hit the stone support for the bridge there. This removed much of the rear suspension; Mairesse was too close to avoid running over some of it and suffered a punctured front tyre. Aremberg is fewer than six kilometres into the lap, so Willy stopped to fit the spare wheel before returning to the pits to check for further damage.

He rejoined the race in fourth place, behind new leader Phil Hill (Porsche), the privately-entered GTO Ferrari of Pierre Noblet/Jean Guichet and Lindner's Jaguar. After 21 laps Mairesse had fought back to second place and inherited the lead when Phil Hill suffered the same slippery fate as Mike Parkes and crashed at Aremberg. After 28 laps Surtees took over once again and comfortably held his lead until lap 40, when he gave the Ferrari back to Mairesse for the final hour.

So John Surtees scored his first victory for Ferrari at the Nurburgring, and the circuit would prove to be a happy hunting ground for the man who had stuffed his bike through a hedge on his first visit there. But while he enjoyed sportscar racing, his main objective was to win the Drivers' World Championship, which meant turning the once-victorious Ferrari 156 into a winner again. He lost no time in doing so. Ferrari were on the floor and the only way to go was up.

During his years with MV-Agusta John had developed a taste for things Italian. He spoke the language and quickly established a good rapport with the Ferrari team and with Mauro Forghieri in particular. "He was a new boy and I think I was able to inject a little of my experience into things, so there was something of a fresh approach. It was all a hotch-potch really, because we had to choose from a great pile of bits and pieces to put something together. We started with this hacked-about tubular chassis car which I thrashed around Modena. That little V6 was a good engine."

The 1963 car was still designated the 156, but its dramatic sharknose bodywork was removed, one reason being that it was all too visibly the work of Carlo Chiti, who was no longer persona grata at the Scuderia. As a result the new Ferrari looked just like any other F1 car, but as the season progressed, it became more and more successful. Surtees retired in the Belgian and French GPs, but from the start of the season he and the 156 rose progressively in the results sheets: fourth in the Monaco GP; third in the Dutch and second in the British. Next was the German GP at the Nurburgring where, numerically at least, the Ferrari ought to finish first.

The Germans were celebrating their 25th German Grand Prix, so it was unfortunate that Porsche had withdrawn from Fl after just one season. Nevertheless, the entry comprised the works teams of Ferrari, Lotus, Cooper, BRM and Brabham, with BRP, ATS and Scirocco making up the grid.

Before the race, Surtees spent several days with the technicians at Bosch, sorting out the fuel-injection system to give the best mid-range torque. This was done to such effect that in the first practice session he set an unofficial lap record with a time of 8 mins 46.7 secs, beating Phil Hill's official 1961 record by just over 11 seconds. In 1962 the 156 had gone backwards, the fastest time in practice being set by Ricardo Rodriguez at 9' 14.2", so Surtees and Forghieri had really made progress with their new version of the car.

By the time practice was over only Jim Clark in the Lotus had managed to better John's time - by just 0.9 secs - and the GP turned out to be a battle between the two. Jim made a terrific start, but by the time the cars reached Breidscheid he was back in third place, behind the BRM of Richie Ginther and the Cooper of Bruce McLaren, and Surtees was right behind him. At the end of lap one it was Ginther leading Surtees, Clark, McLaren and Graham Hill (BRM), with virtually nothing between them.

Then, as they swept out of the North Turn and through the twists and turns of Hatzenbach, Surtees forced the Ferrari to the front, ahead of Clark and Ginther. The 156 was now really to his liking and with his confidence sky-high, John set a new lap record of 8 mins 48.6 secs on that second lap, leading Jimmy across the line by two seconds. But the Lotus was in trouble, now running on seven cylinders from time to time. 'Every now and again Clark's eighth cylinder would go back to work,' reported *The Autocar*, 'and the Lotus would temporarily retake the lead, clearly the faster car when running properly. The battle between the two leaders was so intense that the race speed was well over 95 mph and the two cars, separated by feet, were together pulling away from McLaren.'

Clark had won the previous four GPs and was trying to emulate Jack Brabham's 1960 feat of five wins in a row, but Surtees was not about to let that happen. After eight of the 15 laps, he was 5.3 secs ahead of Jimmy and set another lap record with 8 mins 47.0 secs. Team Lotus were given a smidgeon of hope when the Ferrari was heard to go onto five cylinders as Surtees accelerated out of the North Curve, but it was only a momentary stammer, whereas the Lotus was now very definitely on seven cylinders and Clark had given up

any more thoughts of victory.

By lap 11 the Ferrari was almost 20 secs ahead of the Lotus, and although the V6 stuttered again at the start of the final lap, the Lotus now sounded like a V6 itself and Clark was slowing visibly. Surtees took the chequered flag 1 min 17.5 secs ahead of him, to record his first GP victory and the first for Scuderia Ferrari since the Italian GP of 1961.

John had driven the 156 flat out all the way, the proof of his stunning performance being reflected in his race average of 95.82 mph, which was within 1 mph of his fastest lap - 96.81 mph - and was faster than the old lap record of 94.89 mph. To win his first Grande Epreuve was exciting enough, but to win it at the Nurburgring and after such a monumental drive in a car built up "from a box of bits", as he described it, was very special indeed.

And he became the first and only man ever to win the 1000 Kms and the Grand Prix in the same year, an achievement which, in one fell swoop, established him uniquely as King of the Nurburgring, on four wheels as well as two.

There was also a delightful bonus in store, for after the race he was congratulated by Rudolf Caracciola's widow, Alice, who told him, "You drive the Ring just like my Rudi!"

"That was one of the nicest compliments I have ever been paid," says John. "I regard my victory that year as my finest drive at the Ring and it marked the beginning of our recovery at Ferrari, which led to the World Championship in 1964."

Although he had put a stop to Jim Clark's run of success in Fl, Ferrari failed to win another GP that season. They did win the Sportscar Championship, however, and set out to retain their title in 1964 with the new V12, 3.3-litre 275P. Three of these cars were sent to the Ring for the 1000 Kms, two as works entries to be driven by John Surtees/Lorenzo Bandini and Ludovico Scarfiotti/Nino Vaccarella; the third for Ronnie Hoare's Maranello Concessionaires in the hands of Graham Hill and Innes Ireland.

Surtees won pole position, with a time of 8 mins 57.9 secs, but a surprise in second spot was the new V8 Lola-Ford, which Phil Hill took round in 9' 04.7". John went into an immediate lead and completed his standing lap in 9 mins 17.7 secs, a mere 1.3 secs slower than his own sportscar record. Phil Hill was some way behind, ahead of Scarfiotti, Graham Hill and Jo Bonnier in a 2-litre Porsche 904.

After five laps Surtees had a 50 sec lead over Graham Hill, Scarfiotti and Phil Hill. He had extended this to well over a minute when, after 14 laps, he handed over to Bandini. Graham Hill now



1967 Germany GP, Nurburgring. John Surtees

moved into the lead, but his namesake was out of the running, the Lola-Ford retiring with suspension problems. Graham stopped next time round and by the time Innes Ireland went back into the fray the two works Ferraris were ahead of him. Then Vaccarella passed Bandini and Ireland began to threaten both.

After 27 laps Bandini stopped at the pits, thinking he was running out of fuel. Surtees then took over with full tanks and new rear tyres, and set off after Vaccarella and Ireland. Two laps later the former made a scheduled stop, during which the mechanics took their time, allowing Surtees to catch up and go into the lead once more, as Ireland's Ferrari had run out of petrol due to a split fuel tank.

Scarfiotti rejoined in second place and with their two main rivals out of the race, Scuderia Ferrari looked set for an easy 1,2 victory. But just as Surtees was cruising along nicely, stretching out his lead over Vaccarella, the right-hand rear axle shaft on the 275P broke and suddenly John was driving a three-wheeler. This happened at Hocheichen and the car went into the bushes. John was unhurt, but his race was over. Happily for the Scuderia, there were no more alarms and excursions and the Scarfiotti/Vaccarella car went on to win.

It was no substitute for another victory but, as he had done the previous year, Surtees had dominated the event (while he lasted) and had made fastest lap in both practice and the race, the latter being a new record in 9 mins 09.0 secs.

By the time of the German GP, however, John was very concerned with the way Enzo Ferrari put most of his team's efforts into sportscar racing until Le Mans was over and done with. This was because victories in these races helped sell his road cars and this, in turn, helped finance his racing programme. John was fully aware of this, but was understandably frustrated by the way it held back the development of the Grand Prix cars. The new V8 was ready in time for Monaco, but John failed to finish there. He was second in Holland, retired in Belgium and France and was third in the British GP. This gave him a paltry 10 Championship points from five races, whereas Jimmy Clark, with three wins, had amassed 30!

Ferrari sent three cars to the Nurburgring, two 158s for Surtees and a 156 for Lorenzo Bandini. Clark had a brand new Lotus 33, but it would be Dan Gurney in a Brabham, not Clark, who would give John a hard time in the race. In the first practice Graham Hill (BRM) set the ball rolling with an impressive 8 mins 44.4 secs, shaving 2.6 secs of

John's lap record. He replied with 8'45.2" in the V8 and Gurney did 8' 47.8", only for Bandini to beat them all with 8' 42.6" in the V6 Ferrari.

On the Saturday Surtees reasserted his superiority at the Ring with a time of 8 mins 39.2 secs in the morning, followed by 8' 38.4" in the afternoon. This secured pole position, but only just, as Jim Clark had the Lotus really wound up and was a mere 0.4 secs slower. Finally, Dan Gurney and Lorenzo Bandini locked up the front row with 8' 39.3" and 8' 42.6", respectively.

Bandini led into the South Turn from the start, but it was Jim Clark in the lead as they fled down the back straight behind the pits. He was still there as they came past the pits after the first lap, but Surtees was right on his tail, with Gurney, Hill and Bandini in close attendance. As they went into the South Turn Surtees dived inside Clark who went wide and mounted the bank briefly. He was then seen to shake his fist at Surtees.

On that first lap the engine of Mike Hailwood's Lotus-BRM blew up and left oil on the road for some distance. This slowed the others considerably and after a standing lap of 8 mins 49.6 secs, Surtees completed the second tour in 8' 58.2". Dan Gurney now went after Jim Clark, as *The Autocar* reported:

'Just before Breidsheid, where the road takes to open country and a brief, right-curving 130 mph "straight", Gurney was through to second place, with Clark 100 yards or so behind. By the Karussell, the Brabham was right up behind the Ferrari and as the field raced at 150 mph down the final straight Gurney was slipstreaming Surtees, the two cars close together. At the end of the straight, past the pits, he pulled out to try and nip through before the South Turn, but it didn't work and it was Surtees who led into the curve and out onto the fourth lap... On the twisting climb up from Adenau Bridge to the Karussell, Gurney pushed his Brabham past the Ferrari and into the lead - a wonderfully exciting battle immediately developing between these two cars which slowly began to pull away from the next two.'

There was nothing between the two and neither driver was giving way or making it easy for the other, so that the 300,000 or more spectators were treated to some truly magnificent Grand Prix racing all around the magnificent Nurburgring. At the end of lap six Gurney and Surtees were still together and were jointly credited with the fastest lap in 8 mins 47.5 secs and had left Graham Hill and Jim Clark some way back.

Gurney's Brabham-Climax was now in trouble, for Dan noticed that the pressure in the water

system was going up and the temperature was rising. He decided to ease off a little and John moved ahead, setting a new lap record in 8' 45.1" on lap seven. Next time round Clark brought the Lotus into the pits to retire with engine problems and Surtees was now driving the only healthy car in the first three, as Graham Hill's BRM was misfiring. John set a new lap record of 8' 43.0" and after nine laps had a lead of 16 seconds over Gurney, but then Dan decided to have a go and next time round beat Surtees' time with 8' 42.9", only to have Surtees settle things once and for all with a stunning 8' 39.0" on lap 11, to beat his own 1963 record by 8 sees.

Now Gurney's race was run, for he stopped at the pits to see what could be done about the Brabham's water problem. The answer was nothing, so he rejoined the race and, after yet another stop, managed to finish 10th, a poor reward for such a fine drive and all too typical of the American's luck at the Nurburgring.

So, to the great joy of the Ferrari team, John Surtees romped home to his second consecutive victory in the German GP at the record average speed of 96.57 mph. As Gregor Grant noted in *Autosport*, 'it is sobering to realise that the modern 1.5-litre unsupercharged Grand Prix car is over 14 mph quicker than the almost mythical blown cars of the 1930s, when the fastest winning speed was Caracciola's 82.15 mph in 1937 with the 6-litre Mercedes-Benz.'

Grant also remarked that, 'John Surtees was definitely in the groove, the Ferrari sounding magnificent and the ex-motor cyclist driving with the skill that makes World Champions.' He was absolutely right, although with six races down and four to go, John's Championship prospects were not looking too bright. His victory in Germany brought his points total to 19, whereas Graham Hill had 32 and Jim Clark 30. However, he went on to win the Italian GP and finished second in America and Mexico, becoming World Champion by just one point from Hill. That gave him the unique distinction of being the first - and still the only - man to win the World Championship on two wheels and four.

For the 1965 sportscar events Ferrari produced the 330P2, a V12, 4-litre Prototype, one of which gave Surtees his second victory in the 1000 Kms. It wasn't much of a race for there was no real opposition, but once again John dominated the Nurburgring. He made fastest lap in practice with a time of 8 mins 53.1 secs, demolishing his own record of 9' 9.1".

John was first into the South Turn had a lead of 10 seconds by the time he reached the Karus-



1967 Germany GP, Nurburgring. John Surtees

sell. At the end of the lap he was 18 seconds ahead of Phil Hill's 5.3-litre, Cobra-engined Ford GT40. He set a new record on lap two with a time of 8' 50.5", which put him 23 seconds ahead of the Ford. Hill was driving superbly, but even with a 1.3 litre advantage over the Ferrari, he could do nothing about it and after seven laps the V8's driveshaft broke and Phil was out of the race.

Seven laps later John handed over the Ferrari to Ludovico Scarfiotti, who did the next 14 laps. Surtees did another 12, leaving a delighted Scarfiotti to do the final four and bring home the bacon. It really was just about as simple, and boring, as that.

'As a race the ADAC 1000 Kms at Nurburgring was a bit of a farce,' wrote Denis Jenkinson, crossly, 'but as a demonstration of the power and force of Ferrari in motor racing it was most impressive. The only driver among the 126 taking part who was capable of challenging John Surtees, given an equal car, was Graham Hill, but as he was driving a 3.3-litre Ferrari against the 4-litre of Surtees, the outcome was inevitable... From the start of the race to the finish Surtees gave a magnificent demonstration of his prowess on the difficult Nurburgring and he was ably supported by Ludovico Scarfiotti.'

If only Surtees could have earned such praise for winning the German Grand Prix that year! If only that race had been such a simple matter as the 1000 Kms! But whereas John had enjoyed a trouble-free run to the chequered flag in that race, in the Grand Prix his troubles began as he left the starting grid.

Ferrari had now produced a flat 12 engine for Formula One and sent two 1512s to the Nurburgring for Surtees in the hope that with one of them he could complete a hat-trick of victories in the German GP, a feat only achieved by Alberto Ascari (1950, 1951 and 1952) and Juan Manuel Fangio (1954, 1956 and 1957, there being no race in 1955). There was also a 158 for Lorenzo Bandini.

Since the previous year's GP much of the circuit had been smoothed out and re-surfaced, so Surtees' lap record of 8' 39.0" was not expected to survive for long. And it didn't. By the time the GP teams arrived at the Nurburgring, Jim Clark was well on his way to his second World Championship, having won the previous four GPs with the Lotus 33. He electrified one and all in practice by gaining pole position with a time of 8' 22.7". John Surtees tried all three Ferraris and was fourth fastest in a 1512 with 8' 27.8", behind Jackie Stewart and Graham Hill (BRMs).

The story of John's race is soon told. He was accelerating away from the start when the gear-selector mechanism failed and the Ferrari almost came to a halt. He did a very slow lap and then stopped at the pits in 16th place. He was there for almost two laps while the mechanics tried to solve the problem, eventually sending him back into the race with a lightened fuel load.

'To immense applause,' noted *The Autocar*, 'at 2-30pm as the leaders were on their fourth lap, Surtees put on his helmet again and went off in search of a lap record or two.' But that was in the hands of the unstoppable Jim Clark, who completed lap 10 in 8 mins 24.1 secs to set a new record at 101.23 mph, the first ever in three figures. The Ferrari pit informed Surtees of this and he made a valliant attempt to do something about it, but could only manage 8' 27.0" before coming in to retire, as the gearbox was playing up again.

By the time Surtees returned to the Nurburgring for the 1966 1000 Kms race, his relationship with Ferrari was falling apart. From the start, his arrival at the Scuderia was resented by Team Manager Eugenio Dragoni, whose main qualification for the job seemed to be that he was a close friend of Enzo Ferrari. Dragoni was a great admirer of Lorenzo Bandini, regarded him as his protege and felt certain that he would be the first Italian World Champion since Alberto Ascari. To this end he constantly sang Bandini's praises to Ferrari, while bad-mouthing Surtees at every given opportunity.

In addition to these woes, John had had a very bad crash in his Lola T70 at Mosport Park, Canada, at the end of September, 1965. His injuries were considerable, but he made a remarkable recovery and won his comeback race at Syracuse on May 1, driving the new Ferrari 312, built to the new 3-litre Formula which was now in force. He then finished second in the International Trophy race at Silverstone and retired at Monaco, the first round of the World Championship.

That race was almost (but not quite) the last nail in the coffin of Surtees' Ferrari career because despite the fact that the V6 Ferrari was obviously quicker than the new V12, John was forced to drive the latter at Monaco. He led for a dozen laps and then the differential packed up, handing victory to Jackie Stewart's BRM. Bandini was second in the V6 and Surtees was convinced he could have won the race in that car.

So it was on to the Nurburgring, where he was to drive the 330P3. Two of these cars appeared, one an open roadster, the other a coupe. John and his co-driver Mike Parkes, chose the open car. Once again, John was fastest in practice with a time of 8

mins 31.9 secs, a speed of 99.61 mph!. The big surprise was the speed of the Chaparral in the hands of Phil Hill, which was a mere 3.5 seconds slower.

Nonetheless, John was determined to add a fifth win to his list of Nurburgring victories and, as *Motor Sport* noted, 'when Surtees appeared at the end of the standing-start lap in 8 mins 48 secs; two and a half seconds quicker than the existing Prototype lap record, it was clear that this was not going to be a race for the slow or enfeebled.'

On his next tour John recorded 8' 37.0", a new lap record, and after five laps was 90 secs ahead of the second place car, which was the Chapparral, with Jo Bonnier up. It looked like a repeat of last year's race - a runaway win for Surtees in the Ferrari, but at the end of the sixth lap John stopped at the pits with a rear wheel fouling the bodywork. A shock absorber had broken and by the time Mike Parkes rejoined the race, the P3 was in P22!

After 17 laps, Surtees took over again, but was back after just one lap with the same problem. Another shock absorber was fitted and John shot back into the race, now more than a lap behind the Chapparral. Nine laps later the P3 was in the pits again, this time with a slipping clutch. The mechanics did what they could and Mike Parkes, starting the engine in gear, went jerking back into the race. After 36 laps the clutch finally cried enough and the Ferrari was retired.

The following weekend John had a reversal of fortune, winning the Belgian GP with the Ferrari 312 after a superb drive. But that was not how Team Manager Dragoni saw it. It was a very wet race and John, running on lightly grooved Firestone tyres, elected to stay for some time just behind leader Jochen Rindt's Cooper-Maserati, which was on Dunlop rain tyres. This way John could run in Jochen's wheel tracks, giving his tyres a better grip. When the rain eased, Surtees passed the Cooper-Maserati and won by 42 seconds. Dragoni told Enzo Ferrari that Surtees had been 'behind a Maserati for most of the race.'

The final parting of the ways came at Le Mans the following weekend. Dragoni told the French Press that Ferrari had no chance against the might of Ford because Surtees was still not fully recovered from his crash in Canada and might not be able to last the 24 hours. The crunch came when Dragoni insisted that

John's co-driver, Ludovico Scarfiotti, should start the race "because Mr Agnelli of Fiat will be here and Scarfiotti is part of the family - a distant cousin."

Now thoroughly convinced that the lunatics were running the asylum, Surtees packed his bags

and drove to Maranello, where he had a 'full and frank discussion' with Enzo Ferrari - and resigned from the Scuderia. He was quickly snapped up by Roy Salvadori, now retired from racing and running the Cooper team.

The Coopers were powered by a 3-litre V12 Maserati unit, a bored-out version of the 2.5-litre F1 engine of 1957. The V12 never gave the power that Maserati claimed for it (360 bhp), but John managed to put his car on the front row for the French GP, slap bang in between the Ferraris of Bandini and Parkes, which must have given him some pleasure. It was only fleeting, however, for moments after the start the fuel pump drive failed. A new one was fitted but John retired on lap 6. He had to retire in the British and Dutch GPs, too, but then it was back to the Nurburgring for the German GP.

Despite the fact that the new, 3-litre Formula was halfway through its first season, 10 of the 19 F1 cars which arrived at the Ring still did not have 3-litre engines. Lotus and BRM were awaiting the BRM H16 and Ferrari were employing their 2.4-litre V6 as well as the 3-litre V12s. The latter sent three cars, two V12s for Bandini and Parkes and a V6 for Ludovico Scarfiotti. Again, it must have pleased Surtees when Ludo put the V6 - the car he had wanted to drive at Monaco - on the front row, ahead of both the V12s. Even more pleasing was the fact that John was quicker than all of them, but his rather cumbersome Cooper-Maserati was sandwiched between two 2-litre cars, the very nimble Lotus of Jim Clark - on pole position - and the BRM of the remarkable Jackie Stewart.

It was raining as the cars set off at 2 pm and initially Surtees led Jack Brabham (3-litre Brabham-Repcos), Bandini and Jochen Rindt (Cooper-Maserati), but as they swept past the pits it was the Brabham in the lead. At the end of lap two both were given the time of 9 mins 16.1 secs, but then Brabham did 9' 03", only for Surtees to demolish that with 8' 49.0", which would remain the fastest lap of the day. He and Brabham were seldom more than two seconds apart, and after 10 laps they were almost a minute ahead of third man Rindt. The 2-litre cars of Clark and Stewart, which had been so fast in practice, were never in contention and the red cars were right out of it. Surtees could be forgiven a quiet smile of satisfaction at this, for he was beating the brand new Ferraris hands down, and in a Cooper powered by a ten year-old Maserati engine. One in the eye for Dragon!

For 12 laps the Brabham and the Cooper had been virtually tied together with string and the

soaked spectators were hoping for a Surtees victory, as he had a huge following in Germany. It was not to be, though, for the Cooper's clutch began to fail and John dropped further and further back as he had to change gear without it. So Jack Brabham won his fourth successive Grand Prix - and his first at the Nurburgring - to give him an almost unsailable lead in the World Championship. Surtees was second, 44 secs in arrears and his team-mate Rindt was third, almost two minutes behind. The only Ferrari to finish was that of Bandini - the V6!

John went on to win the final GP of the year in Mexico, for which the Ferraris did not even enter. Brabham duly won the Championship, with Surtees second. The Ferrari drivers Bandini and Parkes were equal eighth and Scarfiotti was 10th. John remains convinced that he and Ferrari could have won the title in '66, and probably '67, too.

But 1966 was the last time he enjoyed any success at the Nurburgring. He joined Honda for the next two years, finishing fourth in the 1967 GP and retiring in '68. For 1969 he joined BRM which was now being run, allegedly, by Louis Stanley and when they got to the Ring John had trouble breaking nine minutes in the first practice, whereas Jackie Stewart (Matra) and Jochen Rindt (Lotus) were well under eight! Surtees eventually managed 8' 12.1", but as the fastest F2 car had recorded 8' 11.1" he realised he was wasting his time and withdrew from the race.

He rejoined Scuderia Ferrari in 1970, but only for three sportscar races, the last being the 1000 Kms at the Ring. Driving the 512S, John was the fastest Ferrari driver in practice with a time of 7 mins 57.1 secs, but then co-driver Peter Schetty wrecked the car when he was caught out by a rain shower on the very fast section between Bergwerk and the Karussell. He was unhurt, but Surtees was paired with Nino Vaccarella for the race. Despite a broken steering wheel, of all things (which cost them a pit stop of 4 mins 45 secs), they managed to finish third overall, behind the two works Porsches. But Surtees was not impressed with the Ferrari. "I was very disappointed in the 512S, which simply didn't handle. The Porsche 917 made it look silly."

That year he also decided to go it alone in F1 and formed Team Surtees. In 1971, driving his own Surtees TS9-Cosworth, he finished seventh in the German GP and that, sadly, was his final race at the circuit he had dominated a few years earlier. However, there was one more success to come for Il Grande at the Ring, for in 1973 Carlos Pace drove a Surtees TS14A to fourth place in the Grand Prix and set a new lap record in 7 mins 11.4 secs, a speed of 118.43 mph.

John has many happy memories of the Nurburgring and, most of all, he loved the sportscars he drove there. "The Ferrari prototypes were the best cars to drive around the Ring, they were very special. I lost a wheel one year, but generally you could drive them hard, secure in the knowledge that when you came down from a flight, they wouldn't fall apart!

"The Ring was challenging all the way round. In the old days it was less than smooth, too, and you had to make up your mind as to how much time you spent in the air, rather than on the track. It was a case of finding out the best places to leave the road and making sure you were pointing in the right direction so that you landed at the right place, which was not that easily done. The best-known place for that was Flugplatz and you could do very spectacular things there - and go nowhere! The question was: how quickly could you get off the ground and how quickly could you get the power back on the road. You also had to make certain - on bike or car - that you took off in the right position, so you didn't leave the ground with the front down and the back coming up.

"One of the most important sections was after the Karussell, through Wippermann and on to Pflanzgarten. That always required a fair degree of precision and you needed to know where you could treat the car or bike quite softly and where you had to be pretty physical just to hang onto the thing!

"The Ring was one of my favourite circuits, but I preferred it as the old Ring, when we had hedges instead of guardrails. In those days, with the bikes, I would be rubbing my helmet on the hedges here and there!"

That brings a remarkable picture to the mind's eye and is a reminder that John Surtees was the first man to move successfully from two wheels to four since Bernd Rosemeyer, 25 years earlier. Their careers bear comparison for their differences, rather than their similarities, for apart from the fact that both stepped off bikes and into mid-engined racing cars and both shone at the Nurburgring they have little in common.

For Bernd, the transition from bikes to cars was smooth and uncomplicated, an in-house move from DKW to Auto Union. For John, the move was fraught with near-impossible choices, as Aston Martin and Vanwall sought his services even before he had appeared on a starting grid, and with only a handful of races to his name he was then courted by both Lotus and Ferrari. He had no-one to guide him through these heady advances and, on his own, he managed pretty well, but he was

never the easiest man to please and made heavy weather of his career from time to time, as he is the first to admit.

And the success of the two men on two wheels and four was quite different: where Rosemeyer was merely remarkable on bikes, winning 12 events in two seasons, Surtees was a phenomenon, winning 249 races in 10. They included 38 Championship races, which produced seven World Championships.

On four wheels, however, each was a phenomenon. Bernd took to the Auto Union as an eagle takes to the air, soaring above the V16's idiosyncracies and mastering racing, mountainclimbs and record breaking with breathtaking speed. He came within an ace of winning his second Grand Prix (which was only his second motor race) and came good in his ninth. In all he won 10 Grands Prix, the European Drivers' Championship and Mountain Championship in just three seasons, an astonishing achievement which remains unique in the annals of motor sport.

John, too, took to four wheels with consummate ease, though it must be said that the 2.5-litre Lotus 18 was probably not quite the handful that the Auto Union was. And unlike Rosemeyer, John had 10 years' experience of motor cycle racing to draw on. In his four-wheeled career, Surtees won six Championship GPs, four Championship sportscar races, one Drivers' World Championship and one CanAm Championship in 12 seasons. Success didn't come as quickly as it had to Rosemeyer, his first Championship GP victory coming at his 27th attempt in his fourth season. This in no way diminishes his achievement, but it makes Rosemeyer's all the more remarkable.

But one achievement of John's that not even Rosemeyer can match is that in a four-year period at the Nurburgring, from 1963 to 1966, he won pole position for the 1000 Kms and made fastest lap, every year! He also made fastest lap in the German GPs of 1963, '64 and '66 and won pole position in 1964. He started eight races in those four years and won four of them, two 1000 Kms and two Grands Prix. In the mid-1960s John Surtees was indeed, King of the Nurburgring.

SURTEES AT THE RING					
YEAR	EVENT	LAPS	MOTOR BIKE	NUMBER	RESULT
1955	Grand Prix				
	250cc		NSU		DNF
	350cc		Norton		3rd
	500cc		BMW		DNF
1958	Grand Prix				
	350cc	7	MV Agusta	50	RL 1
	500cc	9	MV Agusta	6	RL 1
YEAR	EVENT	LAPS	CAR	NUMBER	RESULT
1961	Grand Prix	15	Cooper-Climax	18	5th
1962	Grand prix	15	Lola-Climax V8	14	2nd
1963	1000 Kms		Ferrari 250P	110	RL 1
			(with Willy Mairesse)		
	Grand Prix	15	Ferrari 156	7	LR 1
1964	1000 Kms		Ferrari 275P	143	RL DNF
			(with Lorenzo Bandini)		
	Grand Prix	15	Ferrari 158	7	PP & FL 1
1965	1000 Kms		Ferrari 330P2	1	RL 1
			(with Ludovico Scarfiotti)		
	Grand Prix	15	Ferrari 512	7	DNF
1966	1000 Kms		Ferrari P3	1	DNF
			(with Mike Parkes)		
	Grand Prix	15	Cooper-Maserati	7	RL 2nd
1967	Grand Prix	15	Honda RA 273	7	4th
1968	Grand Prix	14	Honda RA 301	7	DNF
1969	Grand Prix	14	BRM P139		DNS
1971	Grand Prix	12	Surtees-Cosworth TS9	7	7th



RINGMEISTER

11

JIM CLARK



1960 - 1967

'When a famous works team like Aston Martin gives a young man with only three years' club racing experience a trial in a Grand Prix car, it must mean that the young man in question is possessed of the latent qualities that many, many people would like to possess themselves, but very, very few, in fact, do - ie, those of a brilliant racing driver.

'Recently Aston Martin invited Jimmy Clark down to Goodwood for testing and Jimmy, who had only sat in a single-seater twice before in his life, covered about 50 tours, lapping between 1 min 30 secs and 1 min 31 secs, his fastest lap being 1 min 29.8 secs, and all this on a damp track.

'From this you will appreciate that Jim obviously has what it takes to become a GP driver. All he lacks is experience with really fast machinery.'

So there you are - I discovered Jim Clark, for those were the opening paragraphs in my Profile of the lad (barely a couple of years older than I), which Autosport published in February, 1960. Of course, I did no such thing, for his potential had already been spotted, first by his great friend Ian Scott Watson, then Jock McBain of Border Reivers, Colin Chapman of Lotus and Reg Parnell of Aston Martin.

At that time, the Goodwood lap record stood to Stirling Moss (Cooper-Climax) and Mike Hawthorn (Ferrari), who had both recorded 1 min 28.8 secs during the F1 race in the 1958 Easter Monday Meeting, so Jim's best lap of just one second more than that in the Grand Prix Aston Martin (by no means the fastest GP car in the world) was pretty impressive.

In due course, the 24 year-old signed to drive for Aston Martin in F1 and Lotus in F2 and Formula Junior. As things turned out he never did race an Aston in a Grand Prix (for which he must have been deeply grateful) but he drove for Lotus on several occasions early in 1960 and knocked up four FJ wins before travelling to Germany in May

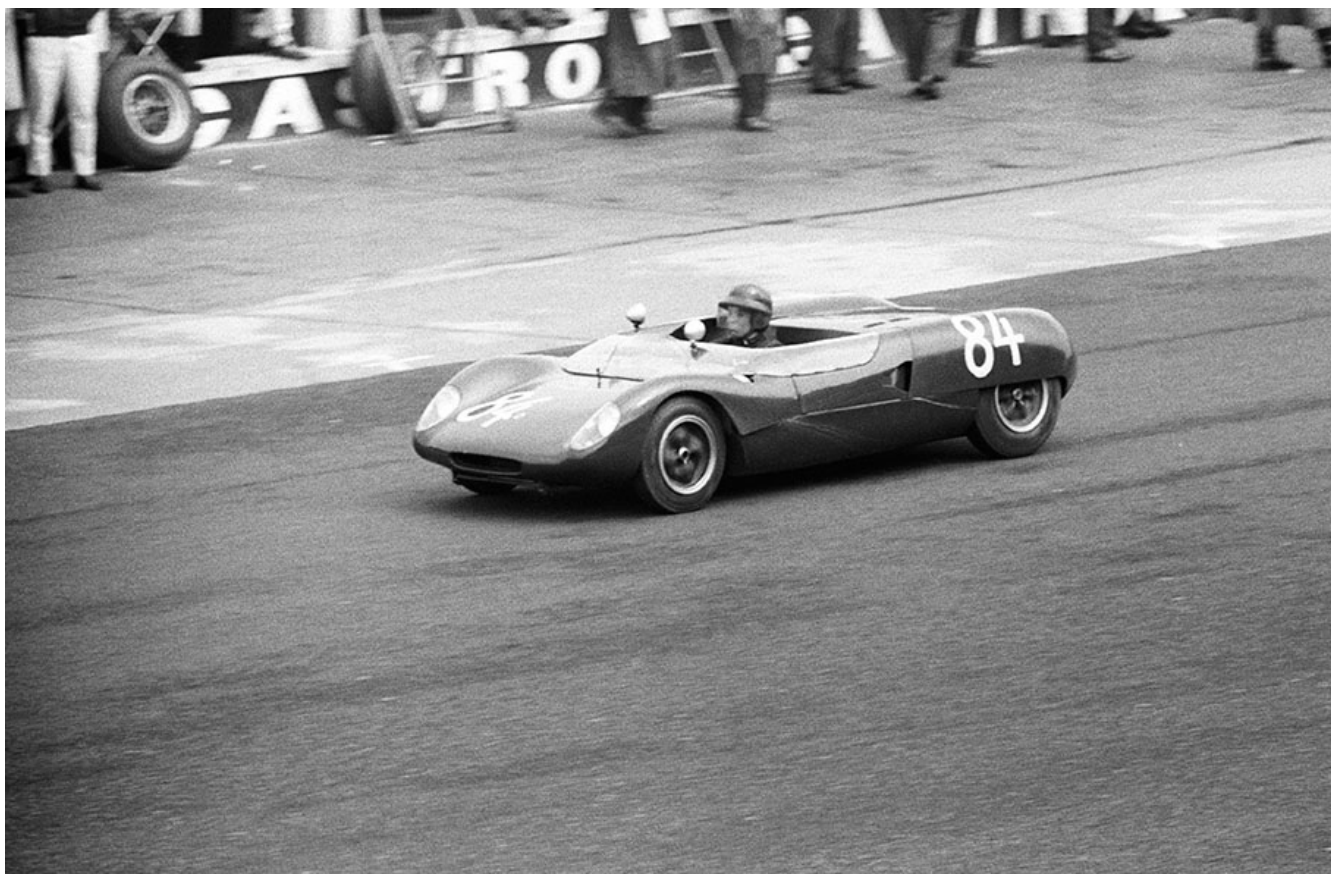
for his first race at the Nurburgring, where he was to drive an Aston Martin in the 1000 Kms.

In view of Reg Parnell's interest in him, it was appropriate that he should race an Aston Martin, and not just any old Aston, but the very car - DBR1/3 - which Stirling Moss and Jack Brabham had driven to victory in the 1958 event. This same car had caught fire in spectacular fashion whilst being refuelled in the 1959 Tourist Trophy at Goodwood. Although the smoke and flames were considerable, the damage to the car was slight and it was quickly repaired and later sold to Border Reivers for the 1960 season.

Jim did two minor races with the R1 in April, first at Oulton Park, where he finished third in a 10-lap sportscar race and then at Goodwood a couple of weeks later, where he retired. This was hardly good preparation for the Nurburgring, where his Border Reivers co-driver was to be the very Scottish Roy Salvadori! Roy's 'Highland ancestry' had stood him in good stead in the very first 1000 Kms race in 1953, when he had finished second in a C-type Jaguar, owned by Ecurie Ecosse. He had been back with Aston Martin in 1956, 1957 and 1958, but had only managed to finish once - sixth in '57. The next year, however, he was a superb second in the German GP, driving a works Cooper-Climax, so he certainly knew his way around the circuit.

As did Jimmy, in a manner of speaking, for it was not his first visit to the Ring, as Ian Scott Watson recalls: "In 1957 Jimmy and I and another friend went on our first holiday abroad. While we were in Germany we went to the Nurburgring, paid our Deutschmarks and did a few laps - in my two-stroke DKW Sonderklasse. It was so heavily laden with the three of us and our luggage that we had to come down to second gear for some of the hills!"

Armed with this knowledge of the most demanding circuit in the world Jimmy immediately showed his potential as a Ringmeister by setting



1962 Nurburgring

fourth fastest practice time with a splendid 9 mins 55.8 sees. Aston Martin had won this race for the previous three years, thanks to Tony Brooks and Stirling Moss, but the chances of a fourth win were slim, indeed. The ageing DBR1 was up against the Birdcage Maserati of Moss and Dan Gurney and the very fast Porsches of Jo Bonnier/Olivier Gendebien and Hans Herrmann/Maurice Trintignant.

Clark took the first stint and actually had the Aston on the move before Stirling had the Maserati stirring. 'I was into the Aston and sliding out onto the road before anyone else,' wrote

Jim in his autobiography, *Jim Clark at the Wheel*. 'This gave me a great start and I led Stirling round the first corner and up behind the pits. Stirling passed me on that opening lap but I managed to hold on to second place ahead of Masten Gregory (Maserati) and Ricardo Rodriguez (Ferrari). Ian Scott Watson was jumping with joy in the pits when I came past in second place, about fifteen seconds down on Stirling, but quite a bit ahead of Masten.'

Unfortunately, that was as good as it got, for the Aston slipped down the field and was in fifth place when the engine dropped a valve and Jim came to a halt at Quiddelbacher Hohe during the sixth lap.

'That was my first taste of the Nurburgring,' he wrote, 'I had heard a lot about it, with its innumerable corners, its dips and dives through the forest and I took to the circuit right away.'

A year later he was back for the same race and in an Aston again, but this was DBR1/1 (the 1959 winner), which had been bought by John Ogier's Essex Racing Team. This time his co-driver was Bruce McLaren and they were up against the works V6 Ferrari 246s of Phil Hill/Taffy von Trips and Richie Ginther/Olivier Gendebien and the 3-litre V12 entered by NART (North American Racing Team) for Pedro and

Ricardo Rodriguez; the Camoradi Maserati Birdcage of Masten Gregory/Lucky Casner and the works RS Porsches of Stirling Moss/Graham Hill, Jo Bonnier/Dan Gurney and Hans Herrmann/Edgar Barth.

After a frustrating first day's practice, when the Aston only had third and fifth gears, Jim recorded 9' 56.5" on the Saturday, which was way off the fastest Ferrari's time of 9' 33.7". However, once again he took the Le Mans start and once again he beat Moss to the draw and it was the Aston which led as they came past the back of the pits and headed out into the countryside.

By the time they had completed the lap, Jimmy was down to fourth. Considering that this was the very first DBR1 - built for the 1956 Le Mans - it was going very well, but at the end of the seventh, lap Clark was down in eighth place and called in at the pits to have a stone removed from under the clutch pedal. He rejoined without losing his place.

During lap 16 it began to snow, which played havoc with the Ferraris in particular and after 22 laps - half-distance - Bruce McLaren found himself in fourth spot. It was too good to last, though and on lap 26 the Aston came to a halt at Flugplatz with a broken oil pipe.

Aston Martin's Grand Prix cars failed to appear at Monaco and when it was announced that they would not be going to Zandvoort, either, for the Dutch GP, Colin Chapman invited Jimmy to fill in for John Surtees, who had motorcycling commitments. He made a classy debut, battling with Graham Hill's BRM until he was sidelined with a broken gearbox when in fifth place.

He remained with Team Lotus for the rest of the season (and, indeed, the rest of his life) and Colin Chapman knew he had an exceptional talent on his hands. He signed him for 1961 and Jim made his Nurburgring Grand Prix debut in a Lotus 21. That was the year of Stirling Moss's sensational victory over the Ferraris with his Rob Walker Lotus, but it was Phil Hill who dominated the first practice day with his extraordinary lap in 8 mins 55.2 sees, the first-ever under nine minutes. In the morning session Clark could only do 9' 20.9", which was 2 sees quicker than team-mate Innes Ireland. In the afternoon Jimmy got down to a very respectable 9'

08.1", with Ireland 10 secs slower. Then on the Saturday he had a big accident on his first lap when the steering broke and the Lotus was badly damaged.

It was repaired in time for the race and Clark made a superb start from the third row of the 4-3-4 grid to be seventh at the end of the opening lap. Three laps later he was in fourth place, where he stayed until the end, finishing 1 min 17 secs behind Moss. His was a fine drive, but it went virtually un-noticed by everyone, as all eyes were on Moss, Taffy von Trips and Phil Hill throughout the 15 laps. But it was Jimmy who was the cynosure of all eyes during his next appearance at the Ring, in the 1962 1000 Kms, and this is how it came about, as he recounted in his autobiography:

'Back in the winter of 1961 I had been in London seeing Colin at the factory and I found myself without a car. At this Colin turned round and said, "How about taking this Anglia back to Scotland with you?" I'm no motoring snob, but the idea of driving up to Scotland in an Anglia didn't sound too good. But Colin was insistent, and so off I went. This, however, was no ordinary Anglia. This car really had poke and I started to enjoy myself with it. I remember catching up with a Jaguar and giving him the fright of his life by passing him at well over 100 mph.

'Obviously, Colin had been doing something radical in the engine compartment and at the first opportunity I lifted the bonnet to see not the familiar Ford engine, but the flat tops of two camshaft covers stamped with the name Lotus. This was my first meeting with the very hush-hush ex-

1962 Germany GP, Nurburgring



perimental twin-cam Lotus cylinder head for the Ford engine. As time went on I heard that Colin was considering using this engine in a Lotus 23 and the idea of about 100 bhp in the back of a lightweight like the 23 became intriguing.

'I didn't have long to wait, for in May, just after the Dutch Grand Prix I found myself back at the Nurburgring, this time with a mobile shoe rather than a big, husky Aston. My partner here was Trevor Taylor, and although entered privately by John Ogier's Essex Racing Team it was of course, Colin's works car.'

To be precise, it was Colin's works engine, for the 23 had been purchased by John Ogier and his mechanics looked after the car, leaving the preparation of the engine to Team Lotus. Both Chapman and Ogier were present at the Ring and must have enjoyed the sight of John's entries, which were truly ancient and modern, for he had also brought along his trusty DBR1/1 (now in its seventh season and, as wicked rumour had it, on loan from the Montagu Motor Museum!) to be driven by Bruce McLaren and Tony Maggs.

On paper neither car had a cat in Hell's chance of victory, for they were up against the Ferrari entry of two V6s, a 246SP for Phil Hill/Olivier Gendebien and a 196SP for Giancarlo Baghetti/Lorenzo Bandini and a 4-litre GTO for Mike Parkes /Willy Mairesse, not to mention the two Flat 8 Porsches of Graham Hill/Hans Herrmann and Dan Gurney/Jo Bonnier.

By a nice co-incidence the two Essex Racing Team cars lined up side-by-side for the Le Mans start, the enormous Aston looming over the diminutive Lotus. They were sixth and seventh fastest overall, McLaren having lapped in 9 mins 43.1 sees and Clark in 9' 48.9". Considering the great age of the former and the size of the latter, these were pretty remarkable times, and just as remarkably, it was the old banger that would outlast the young upstart in the race.

And it was the former in the hands of Bruce McLaren that got the jump on the latter in the hands of Jim Clark at the start. According to Philip Turner in *The Motor*, 'Clark had contemplated running up the nose of the Lotus to enter its small cockpit, but had been deterred by the fear that he might slip and put a foot through the glass fibre body.' In the event, Jimmy entered the Lotus in the conventional fashion and John Ogier and Colin Chapman had the great pleasure of seeing their cars lead the field into the South Turn.

'With everyone worrying about the rain which seemed about to fall, Bruce McLaren and I had a wonderful start,' wrote Jimmy. 'Bruce was

using the "world's oldest Aston Martin", one of the familiar DBR1 3-litre cars and he led into the first curve, but on the exit the Lotus breezed past the Aston and into the lead. I was determined to really have a go with this car, which looked so ridiculously small compared with the opposition. I concentrated on clipping the verges as close as possible and managed to build up a 17-second lead at the Karussell, and then 25 seconds at the end of the first lap. In the wet conditions and with the handling just right the Lotus just kept on building its lead. On the main straight I was only getting about 125 mph and kept glancing in my mirrors, but couldn't see anyone.'

Of course he couldn't, because his team-mate Bruce McLaren in the big old Aston held up the faster Ferraris and Porsches all the way down to Adenau, and although by the end of the first lap Gurney, Parkes, Graham Hill and Phil Hill had got past, Clark was out of sight, revelling in his skills and the ability of the Lotus to handle the wet conditions.

"It was unbelievable!" recalls Ian Scott Watson, "It was pissing with rain and after about 10 minutes there was still no sign of any cars until, all of a sudden, we heard just one. It was Jimmy in the Lotus and he shot past the pits and had disappeared round the South Turn before anyone else came in sight."

The little Lotus was able to put all of its 100 bhp onto the wet track and that, combined with Jimmy's remarkable skills, meant that it simply romped away from the rest of the field. He completed lap six in 9 mins 48.0 secs and had a lead of 1 min 41 secs over Dan Gurney. Two laps later and the lead was 2 minutes, but now the sun was shining, the road was drying rapidly and the power of the big bangers came into play. Mike Parkes took over from Willy Mairesse in the 4-litre GTO and began rapidly to gain on the Lotus.

Clark's lead at the end of the first hour had been 1 min 40 sees, but at the end of the 11th lap, after almost two hours of racing, it was down to only 42 secs - and Jimmy was in trouble. 'The exhaust manifold started to leak,' he recalled, 'I didn't notice it at first, then I began to feel drowsy. At the same time the brakes were not so good and a combination of all this led to my downfall. Coming into the Hocheichen I changed down, but the car jumped out of gear and went into a slide. My reactions were too slow and I just couldn't correct it and the car went off into the bushes.'

Happily, Clark was not hurt, but he was almost unconscious from the fumes and lay down on the banking beside the track for some time, until his head cleared. Then he made his way back to the pits.



1965 Germany GP, Nurburgring Fan Wilfried Stummer appreciates an autograph from Jim Clark



Jim Clark with the Lotus 33 at 'Karussell' on the Nuerburgring during the German Grand Prix 1965



Colin Chapman and chief mechanic Jim Endruweit congratulate Jim Clark on his first and only German GP victory

"After the race, the mechanics went to retrieve the car, but couldn't find it," says Ian Scott Watson. "It had gone through the bushes, which had closed behind it and although Jimmy had told them where it was, more or less, it took them almost an hour to locate it. In fact I think he had to go back and show them where it was in the end."

While it had lasted the tiny Lotus had given the opposition a severe fright in the very damp conditions and Jim Clark had given notice once again that a new Ringmeister was in the making.

That was Jimmy's last appearance in the 1000 Kms, but he was back at the Ring in '62 for the Grand Prix, driving Chapman's new Lotus 25 monocoque, powered by the Coventry-Climax V8 engine. Eight cylinders were all the rage now, in the second year of the 1.5-litre F1. BRM had built their own, Porsche had produced their Flat 8, air-cooled unit and the Coventry-Climax V8 was now in the back of the Lotuses, Coopers and Bowmaker Lolas.

On the Friday morning Jimmy got down to 9 mins 17.2 secs, which was way off the pace, but he was bothered by steering problems. These solved, he recorded an excellent 8' 51.2" in the afternoon, but was beaten by Dan Gurney (Porsche) who won pole with 8' 47.2" and Graham Hill (BRM) on 8' 50.2". Fourth fastest was John Surtees, who got his Lola round in 8' 57.5" and these remained the fastest times, as Saturday was wet. This upset an interesting plan hatched by Jimmy and Colin Chapman, as Denis Jenkinson revealed in *Motor Sport*:

'Practice usually begins with everyone lined up at the pits ready to go; then they dash off in a bunch round the South Turn, back through the gate (to the start-finish area) and set off on a timed lap, so that the first few laps are pretty crowded until the field spreads out, by which time corners can get marked with rubber or oil. While everyone was going round the "starting circuit" Jim Clark shot off round the full circuit, which meant that his first lap would not be timed by the official timekeepers, but Chapman was timing him from behind the pits.

'The point of this was that the whole circuit was entirely clear and Clark could have a real go knowing that he would not have to lap anyone, or find any oil spilt anywhere. In theory, this was to be the lap to end all laps, the one I've been waiting to see for a long while. Unfortunately, the organisation held up the start of practice and by the time Clark set off the rain had begun to fall, but even so he carried out his plan and got round in 9 mins 13 secs by Lotus timing on the wet track. This more than satisfied them as it meant they knew that the

combination of Clark and the Lotus 25 could cope adequately with a wet track, but what a pity practice did not start at 11-30 am as scheduled, for then Clark would have had it dry and cool all the way round.'

With a front row comprising Gurney, Hill, Clark and Surtees - unquestionably the four finest drivers of the time - the spectators had every expectation of a four-way battle in the Grand Prix. Unfortunately, this prospect was ruined at the start - by Jim Clark.

'I did a very silly thing,' he admitted in *Jim Clark at the Wheel*. 'The start of the race had been delayed as there was a freak thunderstorm. After it had eased off the organisers decided to allow each car to do one exploratory lap so that each driver could check the track for flooding. Finally, we took up our positions on the start line and having started the engine I found that my goggles were steaming up as they had got excessively wet during the warming-up lap. I had switched off the fuel pumps, as had been my custom since a fouled plug had given me trouble in the first few laps at Monaco earlier in the season. In the last seconds before the start I was so concerned with these confounded goggles that I forgot to switch the petrol pumps back on.

'At precisely the moment the flag fell the engine, which had been running on the petrol lying in the carburettors, expired. I felt so annoyed sitting there in a silent car as the rest of the field roared away in a great cloud of spray! I realised my mistake immediately, and having corrected it, I set off in hot pursuit determined to make amends for my unforgivable blunder.'

And make amends he did. There were now 25 cars in front of him and although he started some 13 seconds after they had departed he disposed of 15 of them in the opening lap, crossing the line in 10th position. On lap 2 he overtook Jack Brabham (Brabham-Climax) and Richie Ginther (BRM). On lap four he passed Bonnier (Porsche) and then Phil Hill (Ferrari) to take sixth place. His was a meteoric drive, to be sure, but it was being overshadowed by the battle for the lead between Graham Hill, Dan Gurney and John Surtees, who were seemingly tied together with string in a battle which had the 350,000-strong crowd enthralled from start to finish.

On lap eight Jim snatched fourth spot from Bruce McLaren (Cooper) and was now just 25 seconds behind the leaders. 'On some corners the leading trio would be almost touching each other,' wrote Denis Jenkinson in *Motor Sport*, 'and in

1965 Germany GP, Nurburgring





1966 Germany GP, Nurburgring

other places they would spread out, but never by much and after 10 laps they were as close as they had been on the fourth lap, but Clark was now down to 14 secs from them, his driving in the wet being almost unbearable to watch. Time and again he was in almost uncontrollable slides on the wet and slippery surface, but always he was the master of the situation, until on his 11th lap he got into two really big slides while in 5th gear, and he was lucky to get away with them. Until this point he had been driving in one of those inspired trances that are brought on by being niggly with oneself, but after nearly losing the car completely at very high speed he came to a more reasonable sense of proportion and decided to ease off and settle for a very firm and well-won fourth place. When trying absurdly hard there often comes a point when a driver knows he has chanced his luck far enough, and this point had come to Jimmy Clark, so it was no disgrace to ease off and let the leaders go.'

Graham Hill won a famous victory, with John Surtees and Dan Gurney each a couple of seconds in arrears. Graham's superb drive under so much pressure for 15 laps confirmed him as a Ringmeister and Surtees, Gurney and Clark had proved that they were Ringmeisters in waiting. All they had to do now was to win a race at the Ring in the

manner in which Graham had just won the German Grand Prix. John Surtees would see to it that Jimmy would have to wait a couple of years to do that.

He got off to a flying start in 1963, winning four FI races before going to Monaco for the first Grande Epreuve of the season. He failed to finish and then went to Indianapolis, where he was narrowly beaten into second place by Parnelli Jones. Back in Europe he won the next four Grandes Epreuves on the trot and arrived at the Nurburgring looking for a fifth.

Jimmy put the Lotus 25 on pole with 8 mins 45.8 secs, which was comfortably under Phil Hill's existing lap record of 8' 57.8", set with the Ferrari in 1961. But it was the Ferrari of John Surtees that proved to be Clark's nemesis in this race, for although Richie Ginther's BRM unexpectedly led the field at the end of the first lap, Surtees took the lead on lap two, with Clark on his heels. But the Lotus was in trouble, as one of its eight cylinders kept cutting out.

'This was later traced to a dud plug,' Jimmy recalled in his autobiography. 'Luckily, I managed to keep John, who had taken the lead, in sight for part of the time and keep ahead of everyone else, but my progress was erratic, to say the least. I de-

veloped a whole new system for going round the Nurburgring on seven cylinders. This was completely spoiled on occasion because I would arrive at a corner I knew was flat out on seven cylinders and set the car up. Then the eighth cylinder would come in with a bang and there would follow an exciting second or two as I sorted the car out. What a difference that one cylinder makes when you have committed yourself to a line with what you thought was a seven-cylinder motor car!

'The Nurburgring was a very enjoyable race, and I have no regrets about finishing second. John Surtees deserved his victory, for he had tried hard for a number of seasons. All the same, I think that if I had consistently been running on eight cylinders I could have beaten John, for I felt in the mood for the Nurburgring that day.'

Jimmy went on to win the Italian, Mexican and South African GPs, becoming World Champion for 1963 with a massive 54 points to the 29 of Graham Hill (BRM). In 1964 he retired at Monaco yet again (he would never win there) and at Indianapolis, but then won the Dutch, Belgian and British GPs, before going to the Nurburgring.

To be thwarted yet again in his attempt to win the German GP. He had a brand new Lotus 33 for this race and spent the first Friday practice session getting it to his liking, so his best time in that session of 9 mins 04.1 secs was way off Graham Hill's best of 8' 44.4". In the afternoon Jim got down to 8' 47.9" but Bandini in the Ferrari was at the head of the list with 8' 42.6". The next day Clark recorded 8' 38.8", only to be pipped for pole position by Surtees (Ferrari) who was just 0.4 secs quicker.

Clark made a great start and led for the first lap, but his gearbox was playing up already, giving him fifth when he went from second to third, which was hardly ideal. That was to be the least of his problems, however, for on lap three his Climax V8 went off song and he retired at the end of lap eight. An exhaust valve had stuck open, with disastrous consequences. John Surtees went on to score his second successive victory in the German GP, but Clark was not about to win his second successive World Championship. He never won another Grand Epreuve that season and the title went to Surtees.

However, everything came good for Jimmy in 1965. He began by winning the South African GP on January 1st, then went to Australia and New Zealand for the Tasman Series, where he racked up a string of 10 wins before returning to Europe.

He and Colin Chapman were determined to win the Indianapolis 500 and were distinctly miffed that they had missed out in 1963 and '64.



1967 Germany GP, Nurburgring

This year the 500 was scheduled for the same weekend as Monaco, and Chapman caused some controversy when he and Clark decided to forego the chance of some Championship points by giving Monaco a miss and going instead to Indy. Their decision paid off handsomely, for Jimmy won the 500 at his third attempt and then proceeded to win the next five Grandes Epreuves on the trot, the last being the German GP at the Nurburgring.

It would be nice to record his thoughts on that victory but they are nowhere to be found in Jim Clark at the Wheel. Pan Books were so keen to cash in on his success at Indianapolis that they rushed out a new edition containing a brief, two-page account of the race and then four paragraphs describing his victory in the Belgian GP at Spa. And that was it - the book ends in mid-season, with no account of Jim's successive wins in the French, British, Dutch and German GPs and his second World Championship. Instead, a Publisher's Note tells us that, 'As this new edition goes to press Jim Clark has become World Champion for 1965, having won the British, Dutch and German Grand Prix (sic) since the beginning of July. These successes bring his record to six Grand Prix wins in a row: a feat never before achieved by anyone.' Not only did the Publisher omit Jim's victory in the French GP, he conveniently forgot that Alberto Ascari had won nine Grandes Epreuves in a row during the 1952-'53 seasons. Ah, well!

In practice for the German GP it was young Jackie Stewart who was the sensation of the Friday morning session, recording a shattering 8 mins 30.6 secs in his BRM, beating John Surtees' lap record by almost nine seconds. In the afternoon Clark, however, showed who was boss and won pole position in the Lotus 33 with 9' 22.7". His main opposition for the race came from the BRMs of Graham Hill and Jackie Stewart, the three Brabhams of Jack Brabham, Denny Hulme and Dan Gurney, the Ferraris of John Surtees and Lorenzo Bandini and the Coopers of Bruce McLaren and Jochen Rindt.

Jim led them all a merry dance from start to finish. He set a new lap record from a standing start with 8 mins 36.1 secs, but he was lucky to complete the lap, as Gregor Grant noted in Autosport: 'After hitting a bump, the Lotus aviated and, with Clark's foot hard down, the tachometer needle shot up to 11,600 rpm. Theoretically the engine should have burst, but thereafter it ran like a sewing machine.'

Lap two took Jim just 8 mins 27.7 secs, an average speed of 100.5 mph, making him the first man to lap the Nurburgring at 100 mph in a race. Next time round he reduced that to 8' 27.4", as did

Graham Hill, who kept up with him initially, but after five laps Clark's lead was nine seconds and ever-increasing. On lap 10 he secured the lap record for himself with 8 mins 24.1 secs (101.22 mph) and was now 24 seconds ahead of Hill, with Dan Gurney (Brabham) a further 14 seconds back in third place.

For the first time the German Grand Prix was being covered by TV, and there were 17 cameras around the circuit. In The Motor, Philip Turner reported that, 'As Clark set off on his final lap, Colin Chapman leapt off the pit counter and abandoned his lap chart to watch with intense eagerness his man's progress round the circuit on the television set, until there on the screen was Clark's Lotus sweeping through Brunnchen only three miles from the finish and everyone turned their backs on the TV and peered down the road. Up came the chequered flag and the triumphant Clark swept past the great grandstand to a roar of cheers from a highly enthusiastic crowd after a drive that he said had been completely lacking in drama.'

Maybe so, but that comprehensive victory established Jim Clark once and for all as a Ringmeister. He had always been very keen to win the German GP and was well aware that the 1965 race provided his last chance in the current, 1.5-litre Formula, so that victory must have been most satisfying.

It certainly made Denis Jenkinson happy and he was positively effusive in his praise: 'In the July Motor Sport I I said that there were only two achievements of note that Jim Clark had not yet accomplished, and one of these was a resounding win at the Nurburgring. He has now rectified that omission without any "ifs" or "buts", his performances in practice and the race proving without question that he is a true World Champion and the best Grand Prix driver we have ever seen.' Ian Scott Watson recalls, "Jim always enjoyed himself at the Nurburgring; he enjoyed the challenge of it." That said, it comes as something of a surprise to find that in Jim Clark at the Wheel he never tells us what he thought of the circuit, merely commenting that, 'At Nurburgring, you have a long straight where you can relax and every time I go round Nurburgring I come to the straight which is three miles before the pits (three kilometres, CN) and think: "Well, that's the end of the lap." Then I come to the end of the straight and the bridge which follows and I realise I still have quite a way to go. With that bit of straight, however, you can sit back and think about the whole circuit, where you went wrong, where everyone else is, or how you can improve your line through a certain point.

Earlier I said that I had learned the Nurburgring quickly, which is true, but I would say that you can always improve on Nurburgring. There are so many corners that though you may know which way they all go, you can still improve your line. It's funny that at Nurburgring I got to know the first half of the circuit long before I had memorized the second half.' Juan Manuel Fangio made exactly the same comment.

The new 3-litre Formula got off to a poor start in 1966 as neither Cosworth nor BRM had their new engines ready in time.

At the Nurburgring Lotus and BRM were still using 2-litre versions of their 1965 V8s, but this did not prevent Clark from gaining pole position with a remarkable 8 mins 16.5 secs. This was just 1.5 secs faster than John Surtees, whose Cooper was powered by a vast, 3-litre Maserati V12. Jackie Stewart (BRM) was third, with 8' 18.8" and completing the front row was a surprise - Ludovico Scarfiotti in a 2.4-litre V6 Ferrari.

Jim's race was over before it had begun, really, as shortly before the start Colin Chapman decided to change from wet-weather Dunlop tyres to Firestones. The race began in heavy rain and Jimmy was never happy on the new rubber, being way down in sixth position after five laps. He was still there after 10 and on the next lap the Lotus flew off the road at Aremberg, ending up in a field, where Jim was able to commiserate with Bob Anderson, whose Brabham had expired at the same spot earlier.

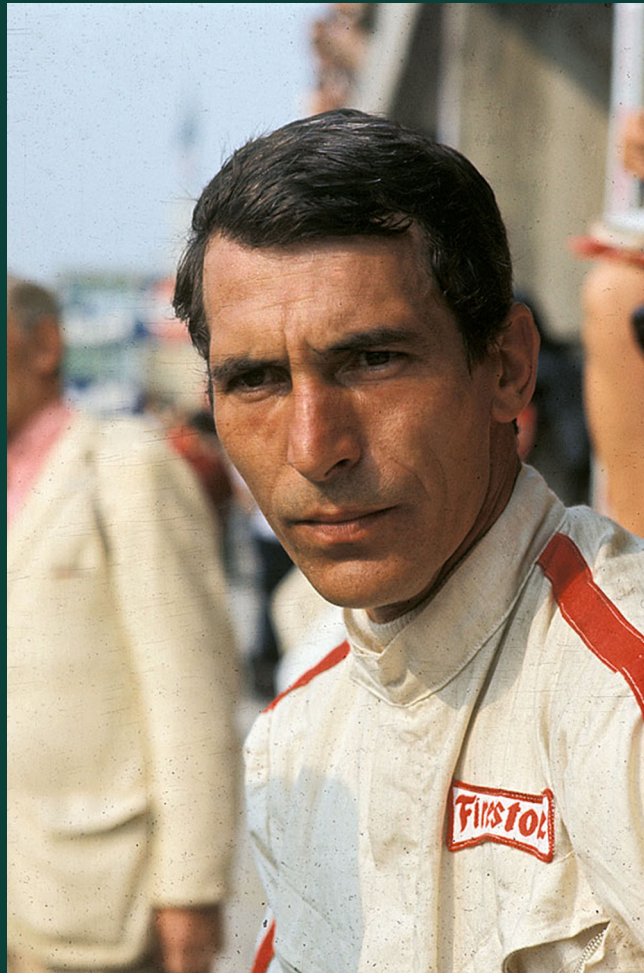
Clark won pole position yet again in 1967. This time his Lotus was powered by the new Cosworth V8 and Jimmy went round in 8 mins 04.1 secs, (105.5 mph), despite the addition of a chicane at the end of the straight designed to slow the cars as they passed the pits. This time reportedly won 10,000 lire for Mauro Forghieri, Ferrari's Chief Engineer, who had bet a friend that Jim would lap in under 8 mins 05 secs.

Clark was almost 10 seconds faster than the next man, Denny Hulme in the Repco Brabham and looked set for a second victory at the Ring, but it was not to be. He set a new record on his opening lap with 8' 22.5", but on lap four he dropped to 13th place and came into the pits to retire. The Lotus had suffered a punctured left rear tyre early on and then, possibly due to the fact that this had lowered the car onto the road, a front suspension arm was severely bent.

That was Jimmy Clark's last visit to the Nurburgring, for in April the next year he crashed fatally in a Formula Two race at Hockenheim. The damage to the Lotus was so comprehensive as to make the cause of the accident impossible to ascertain, but a punctured rear tyre was thought to be the most likely culprit. Whatever the reason, in common with Alberto Ascari and Stirling Moss, the career of a truly great driver was ended in unexplained circumstances.

CLARK AT THE RING

YEAR	EVENT	LAPS	CAR	NUMBER	RESULT
1960	1000 Kms		Aston Martin DBR1 (with Roy Salvadori)	8	DNF
1961	1000 Kms		Aston Martin DBR1 (with Bruce McLaren)	11	DNF
	Grand Prix	15	Lotus 21	14	4th
1962	1000 Kms		Lotus 23 (with Trevor Taylor)	84	DNF
	Grand Prix	15	Lotus 25	5	4th
1963	Grand Prix	15	Lotus 25	3	PP 2nd
1964	Grand prix	15	Lotus 33	1	DNF
1965	Grand Prix	15	Lotus 33	1	PP FL 1
1966	Grand Prix	15	Lotus 33	1	PP DNF
1967	Grand Prix	15	Lotus 49	3	PP DNF



RINGMEISTER

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VIC ELFORD



1966 - 1971

Vic Elford's record at the Nurburgring is quite remarkable, for he was a blinding success in sportscar races and a dismal failure in Grands Prix. Happily, his successes far outweigh the failures, making him a true Ringmeister, for between 1967 and 1971 he won the Marathon de la Route once; the 1000 Kms three times (and was third twice) and the 500 Kms twice. Only Rudolf Caracciola won more races at the Ring.

The Marathon is an anomaly here, for strictly speaking it was a rally, rather than a race, having started life in the 1930s as the Liege-Rome-Liege. However, by the mid-sixties the average speeds were becoming too high for public roads, even in Europe, so in 1965 the event was switched to the Nurburgring where contestants were obliged to drive round the ganze Strecke - the full, 17.6-mile/28.2 km circuit comprising both the Nord und Sudschleife - for 84 hours!

Elford took part in this for the first time in 1966, when he was driving for Ford. Earlier in the year he had his first look at the Ring during a recce for the German Rally, which included a lap of the circuit.

"My co-driver was John Davenport," recalls Vic, "and our practice car died on us during the recce, so we rented a VW Beetle and drove to the Ring. We did one lap in the pouring rain and it was love at first sight for me and that fabulous track. I then left John in the comfort of the Sporthotel and set off, going round non-stop. If I remember rightly it cost six Deutschmarks a lap, but you got a discount for 10 at a time. I did 25 in the torrential rain, thinking, 'How in the world can anyone remember their way around this place?'"

A few months later Vic entered the Marathon de la Route, sharing an Alan Mann Ford Cortina with Jochen Neerpasch. Peter Browning explained the race within a rally in Autosport: "The event is a scratch race of 84 hours duration round the longer 17.5-mile Nurburgring circuit, one of the very rare

occasions that the full circuit is used for motor racing. A maximum time limit is specified for each car and for each lap, this time being related to the car's engine size and its seating capacity. An additional two minutes is allowed for a night-time lap, a further three minutes is allowed every 12 laps for refuelling, while on every 75th lap a further 10 minutes is allowed for servicing. The penalty for being late on any one lap is very severe - being one minute late brings a penalty of one lap.'

"We were only allowed two drivers," says Vic, "and as the Ford would run for two-and-a-half hours on one tank of fuel it was clear that, over 84 hours, this was not long enough for the other driver to have a meal and get some sleep. Jochen and I eventually agreed to do seven-and-a-half hours at a time, which allowed us to have a shower, a meal and a good kip before the next stint."

The Marathon began at one o'clock on a Wednesday morning and it was the Equipe Nationale Beige Ferrari GTB of Bianchi/de Keyn which led right through until the Friday evening, when de Keyn crashed heavily during a thunderstorm. Behind the Ferrari there was a prolonged battle between the Cortinas of Vic Elford and Jacky Ickx and the MGBs of Hedges /Vernaevae and Poole/ Enever. With the demise of the GTB the latter took the lead, but it, too, crashed soon afterwards, which put Elford into the lead. Vic's 25 Beetle laps of the Ring were paying dividends, but sadly it all came to nought when the Ford's head gasket blew after 72 hours.

Vic joined Porsche for 1967. Fed up with a number of failures with Ford in 1966, he persuaded Team Manager Huschke von Hanstein to lend him a 911 for the Corsica Rally. He finished third. Porsche suddenly became interested in rallying and Elford became their driver for 1967. He and David Stone won their class in the Monte Carlo Rally and went on to win the Geneva, Stuttgart, Lyon Charbonnieres and Tulip rallies, all of which

made Elford European GT Rally Champion for that year.

But Vic had always wanted to be a racing driver and he made this clear to von Hanstein, who immediately obliged, despite the fact that Vic was making a late start at the age of 32. "Huschke was without doubt the most important person in my career," says Vic, "and he really got me started in racing. He had the bright idea that I should begin with the Targa Florio, because it was run over a 44.7-mile/72 km lap, which made it close to being a rally."

Partnered by Jochen Neerpasch once more he finished third in both the Targa Florio and the Nurburgring 1000 kms, driving the 2-litre, 6-cylinder Porsche 910. They were lucky to finish the latter event, being slowed dramatically in the last few laps by a broken valve, which initially let their team-mates Paul Hawkins/Gerhard Koch into third spot. But then the leading 8-cylinder Porsche of Gerhard Mitter/Lucien Bianchi came to a halt on the last lap, so Vic and Jochen regained their third place.

In August it was back to the Ring for the Marathon de la Route. This time Vic was driving a Porsche 911. The three works entries had lightweight bodies and used the Sportmatic automatic transmission for the first time.

"That year we were allowed three drivers per car," recalls Vic, "so Jochen and I were joined by Hans Herrmann. "We stuck to our seven-and-a-half-hour stints, but the other two said, 'OK, Vic - you are the rally driver, you can drive at night when it's foggy and wet and we'll do the rest.' The race started at midnight and I did four consecutive seven-and-a-half-hour nights around the whole of the Nurburgring. On the Saturday morning I had to leave before the race was over and fly back to England for the Brands Hatch International Meeting."

Elford led the Marathon from the start at midnight on the Tuesday and after six hours the Porsche had a lead of a complete lap over its two team-mates. By Thursday morning the 911s of Elford/Neerpasch /Herrmann and Koch/Schuller/Hunter were 10 laps ahead of the two works Mini-Coopers of Baker/Enever/Poole and Hedges/Fall/Vernaev, the third works Porsche having crashed earlier on. 'As the sun went down on Thursday evening it looked as though it could be a foggy night,' wrote Peter Browning in Autosport, 'and sure enough, by midnight visibility was down to 10 yards in places. Conditions were so bad that on one occasion the course car left the pits to investigate an accident, lost its way, collided with the wall

in front of the grandstand and finally disappeared up one of the service roads!'

Jochen Neerpasch and Hans Herrmann knew what they were doing when they delegated the night driving to Elford. "My rally experience really paid dividends on long and difficult circuits. I had learned the Targa Florio by practicing as if I were on a Special Stage in a rally, recording pace notes in my head as I went along. Then in the race I recalled the pace notes. I did the same thing at the Ring."

Thanks to all his seven-and-a-half-hour stints in this and the previous Marathon, Vic now knew the Ring rather well, but that couldn't prevent him from losing the lead at around 9 am on the Friday, when a cracked front disc had to be changed, dropping the Porsche to third. However, the other Porsche which moved into first place was soon in the pits itself, undergoing a complete engine change (!) and the Elford /Neerpasch /Herrmann 911 went back into the lead later in the day. Despite having to make frequent stops for oil, due to a fractured pipe in the pressurised oil system, Jochen Neerpasch took the chequered flag at mid-day on the Saturday, the car having covered 323 laps, a total of 5652 miles in the 84 hours at an average speed of just over 67 mph.

The year 1968 turned out to be a pretty good one for Vic, too. He began by winning the Monte Carlo Rally (the last Englishman to do so) in a Porsche 911. A week later he joined forces with Jochen Neerpasch, Rolf Stommelen, Jo Siffert and Hans Herrmann to win the Daytona 24 Hours in a 907/8, Porsche's first victory in a 24-hour race. He and Neerpasch were then second at Sebring, behind team-mates Hans Herrmann and Jo Siffert; he was third in the BOAC Six Hours, again with Neerpasch and then scored a sensational victory in the Targa Florio, sharing a 907 with Umberto Maglioli.

However, sharing is hardly the right word, as Vic drove for seven of the 10 laps of the 44.7-mile/72 km circuit. On the opening lap a rear wheel came loose twice and Vic lost valuable time tightening it up so he could get back to the pits. There the problem was rectified but when he rejoined the race he was no fewer than 18 minutes behind the leader. Nothing daunted and relishing the challenge of the Targa circuit, he took almost a minute off the lap record with a sensational third lap in 36 mins 02.3 secs. By the time he handed over to Maglioli the Porsche was back up to seventh place. Maglioli did his stuff, the leaders faltered and when Elford took over for the final three laps he was in fourth place, behind two works Alfa



1969 Nurburgring

Romeos and the Herrmann/Neerpasch Porsche. Vic banged in two laps within two seconds of each other (over 44 miles!) and took the lead on lap 9, winning the race by almost two minutes. Porsche were so grateful and impressed that they included his photo in their victory advertisements, the only time a driver was ever accorded this honour.

As a result of this truly sensational drive Vic was paired with Jo Siffert for the Nurburgring 1000 Kms. They made a formidable partnership, but it must be said that they did not face formidable opposition, as Patrick McNally noted in Autosport: 'No doubt nervous that their entry would be as disappointing as that at the Monza 1000 Kms, Herr Grossman of the ADAC accepted over 120 cars for the Nurburgring race, round six of the FIA Championship. Unfortunately the quality wasn't up to the quantity and the most charitable observers said that the 1968 edition of this famous German classic was little more than an overgrown British club meeting. As one driver commented, he knew there was a chicane at the end of the straight, but no one mentioned the mobile ones all the way round the circuit.'

Porsche entered four cars, two new 3-litre 908s and a couple of 2.2-litre 907s, with Elford and Siffert paired in one of the former. The main op-

position came from the intriguing Alan Mann entry of two sleek Ford F3Ls, (powered by the 3-litre Ford-Cosworth engine) and two of John Wyr's Ford GT40s. Sadly, Chris Irwin crashed one of the F3Ls during practice, suffering serious head injuries as a result.

Hans Herrmann put his 907 on pole, but the 908 of Elford and Siffert spent so much time in the pits with fuel injection problems that they could only make 27th position in the Le Mans start. However, Jo made up for this with a scintillating opening lap which saw him in third place as they went past the pits. He covered his second lap in 8 mins 35.2 secs and took the lead.

After 11 laps he handed over to Vic and the Porsche dropped to fourth place for a few tours, until the other cars had made their pit stops and Elford regained the lead. Driving superbly, he was 17.6 secs ahead of team-mate Rolf Stommelen in the 907 after 16 laps and at half-distance he had extended this to just under 50 seconds. He and Siffert now had the race in the bag and completed the 44 laps in 6 hrs 34 mins 06.3 secs, a new record.

A couple of weeks later, Elford went to Silverstone to try a BRM for Tim Parnell, who was running the team. That done, he bumped into John Cooper, who invited him to have a go in one

of his Cooper-BRMs. Vic did about 20 laps and was promptly offered a drive in the forthcoming French GP at Rouen.

Due to a variety of problems in practice he was last on the grid, but by the end of a very wet race he was in fourth place, which was not a bad start to a Grand Prix career. John Cooper signed him up for the rest of the season and after retiring in the British GP he went to his beloved Nurburgring for the German.

The organisers distinguished themselves by giving entries to the German drivers Kurt Ahrens and Hubert Hahne, which meant that Elford, Jack Oliver, Piers Courage and Silvio Moser all had to compete for the three remaining places on the grid, despite the fact that they had already won points in the Championship.

The weather was foul all weekend. On the Friday morning Vic's Cooper team-mate, Lucien Bianchi, tried his car with an aerofoil mounted on the chassis. After spinning his foil-less car in the South Turn, Elford had one fitted and found an immediate improvement. He put in a lap of 9 mins 53.0 secs, which surprised many people, although by now Vic was thoroughly at home on the Ring, wet or dry. Bianchi was not so happy, his best time being 10' 46.6", which put him on the last row of the grid.

It was Jacky Ickx who put his knowledge of the Ring to the best use, finding a slight hole in the weather and recording a stunning 9' 04.0" to gain pole position in his Ferrari. At the end of the session Elford came into the pits with his wheels locked up and a fire in the engine compartment, caused by the mount for the aerofoil having knocked off a breather pipe for the fuel tank, allowing fuel to spray onto the exhausts.

When the wet and foggy practice sessions were all done, Vic was in fifth place on the grid, although the appalling weather meant that the drivers might as well have drawn lots for positions, as in the early days of the Ring. The weather was just as appalling on race day and Vic, who actually enjoyed the rain, had high hopes of repeating his Rouen success.

However, "I made a lousy start and on the very first lap I was trying to get past Jack Brabham. He was being his nice, polite self and slamming the door in my face and I crashed at Schwalbenschwanz. I spent the rest of the afternoon being entertained in the rain by a large German family, watching the race and eating like a madman!" All fine and dandy, but Vic was good in the rain and he knew and excelled at the Ring: an opportunity to shine in a Grand Prix car on that most demanding of circuits had been lost.



1970 Nurburgring



1970 Nurburgring. Winning Porsche Salzburg team Vic Elford (GB) and Kurt Ahrens, Jr. (D) surrounded by cheering officials, team members and fans

He was retained by Porsche for sportscar racing in 1969 and, partnered by Kurt Ahrens, finished third in a Porsche 1,2,3,4,5 at the Nurburgring. During practice first Jo Siffert and then Vic flew off the road just before the Karussell, writing off a 908 each. Team Manager Rico Steinemann 'looked a trifle upset,' reported Patrick McNally, 'but the supply of reserve machinery seemed virtually inexhaustible.'

For reasons best known to itself, Porsche management insisted on using both Firestone and Dunlop tyres, most of the team drivers preferring the former. The cars of Jo Siffert/Brian Redman and Hans Herrmann/Rolf Stommelen were fitted with Firestone and the other four with Dunlop. The race was run in the dry and Vic found himself at a distinct disadvantage on the British rubber and could do nothing about team-mate Stommelen. Until it began to rain, and then he was able to close up and eventually pass Rolf into fourth place.

There was a tremendous battle for the lead between Jo Siffert in the 908 and Chris Amon in the sole Ferrari 312P and although they swapped lap records in the first session, it was still the Porsche in the lead when Siffert handed over to Redman and Amon gave the Ferrari to Pedro Rodriguez. To everyone's surprise, Brian drove away from

Pedro and although Amon later made up some of the deficit, he was eventually forced out with no electrics. Siffert and Redman won in record time, with Herrmann /Stommelen second and Elford/Ahrens third.

Unable to obtain sufficient sponsorship, Cooper Cars had retired from Grand Prix racing at the end of the 1968 season, so Vic was without an F1 drive for '69. However, Cooper held a 'fire sale' early in the year and Colin Crabbe of Antique Automobiles bought a Cooper-Maserati which he invited Vic to drive at Monaco, where he finished seventh. Impressed with Vic's performance, but not with that of the car, Crabbe bought a McLaren M7B from the works and Elford raced that throughout the season.

After finishing fifth in the French GP and sixth in the British, Vic went to the Nurburgring with high hopes. They were even higher after practice for, as Patrick McNally reported in Autosport: "The real surprise came from Vic Elford, who took the Crabbe McLaren round in 7 mins 54.8 secs, a stupendous performance which would have had him on the second row but for Denny Hulme's last-minute success. Colin Crabbe was absolutely delighted; apparently Vic was getting 300 rpm more on the straight with the 4-into-1 exhaust they had just fitted and Vic was feeling on top form.'

Sadly, as in 1968, Vic's German Grand Prix was to end on lap 1, but this time he was the victim of someone else's accident. That someone was Mario Andretti who, on his first visit to the Ring, had stunned everyone by recording 8 mins 15.4 secs on only his second flying lap in the Lotus 63. And that was in the final practice session, as the engine had broken before he could do any laps earlier. This lack of practice was to be Mario's undoing in the race, as Patrick McNally recorded:

'Andretti made a terrific start in the 4wd Lotus, tearing up behind the McLaren, with Elford hard on his heels... Then Andretti, who was driving with enormous verve for one who has never raced at the Ring before and was still holding Elford at bay, went wide coming out of the sweep after Wippermann and hit a bump; the Lotus bottomed and he left the road, ripping off both left-hand wheels and suspension on a stout wooden post but coming to rest completely unharmed. However, the front wheel flew back onto the circuit with a lot of debris and poor Vic Elford, who was of course right behind, struck the errant wheel. This launched the Antique Automobiles McLaren into the air, off the circuit and down the embankment on the right-hand side of the road. The car turned over, trapping Vic inside with his arm twisted behind him. The marshals took their time to come to his aid and Mario had to supervise the rescue operation. Vic's injuries were fortunately not severe, but he had broken his arm in three places and severely torn his shoulder; the McLaren was completely wrecked, with the radiator up into the cockpit and the whole car crushed terribly.' And that was Vic's racing over for the rest of the season.

He was fully mended in time for 1970 and finished second with Denny Hulme in the BOAC 1000 Kms at Brands Hatch and third in the Spa 1000 Kms with Kurt Ahrens, each time in a Porsche 917. Come the Nurburgring 1000 Kms, however, and these big bangers were abandoned, as Denis Jenkinson explained in *Motor Sport*:

'Porsche did the sort of technical manoeuvre that Mercedes-Benz used to do, which completely demoralised any opposition. They had a private test-day and ran the normal 5-litre 917 coupes and the Targa Florio 3-litre 908/3 "spyders" and were soon satisfied that the Targa Florio cars were the best bet. While the 917 could be driven adequately fast round the circuit, it required a lot of physical effort and the general opinion was that two really fast laps would be enough, whereas the 908/3 "spyders" could be driven hard indefinitely. In addition there was the bonus of better fuel consumption from the 3-litre engine, which would cut out

one pitstop compared with the 917. The Zuffenhausen racing department being in top gear for "horses for courses" produced four Targa Florio models, two for the JW Gulf team and two for Porsche Salzburg, and before practice they made it known to everyone that the improved fuel consumption was going to be a vital factor, apart from the lower fatigue factor for the drivers.'

The Salzburg cars were in the hands of Elford/Ahrens and Herrmann/Attwood, but it was the two JW Porsches which were fastest in practice. Jo Siffert broke Jacky Ickx's F1 lap record of the previous year by half a second, with 7 mins 43.3 secs and Pedro Rodriguez recorded 7' 44.2". Vic was next with 7' 48.2" despite the fact that his 908 was only getting 8,000 rpm in fourth gear on the straight. The engine was changed overnight, but the weather was worse on Saturday and Vic was unable to improve on his time.

From the start the two JW Porsches leapt into the lead and Rodriguez and Siffert headed the two 512S Ferraris of Ignazio Giunti and John Surtees, who were followed by the Salzburg Porsche of Elford and the works Alfa Romeo T33/3 of Rolf Stommelen/Piers Courage. Giunti's Ferrari was the first car to fall out, coming to a halt with fuel metering problems. Then Surtees stopped at his pit with a broken steering wheel and Elford's third place was secure.

Siffert was having a fine old time in pursuit of his team-mate Rodriguez and finally got by on lap eight. Three laps later both the JW cars came in to refuel, with Siffert 11 seconds ahead of Rodriguez. Elford also stopped 45 seconds later and, knowing that their second car was still a couple of minutes away, the Salzburg team used both their hoses to refuel Vic's car, whereas the JW boys could only use one per car. This allowed Kurt Ahrens to depart at the same time as Kinnunen in the Rodriguez Porsche, while Brian Redman's departure in the Siffert 908 was delayed by a reluctant starter motor.

So Ahrens now led the race from Kinnunen, who was very close behind, but the Porsche became airborne just after Kesselschen and crashed heavily. He was unhurt, but the JW 908 was out. Meanwhile, Brian Redman set about catching Ahrens, which he did quickly, completing the 13th lap in the lead.

By half-distance he was more than a minute ahead, but disaster struck the JW team for the second time when he handed the car back to Siffert. After taking on fuel and a large quantity of oil the 908 refused to start. It was more than 10 minutes before Seppi got under way, by which time Ah-



1971 Nurburgring.

Above Prime minister of Rhineland-Palatinate and later German chancellor Helmut Kohl towers above podium ceremony for victorious Porsche 908-3 drivers Gerard Larrousse (F) and Vic Elford (GB)

rens had swapped with Elford, who was now well in the lead by over a lap. Siffert only got as far as Hocheichen before the Porsche's engine seized and the JW team's hopes were dashed. So the Salzburg cars came home first and second, Elford and Ahrens setting a new race record at 165.0 kph/102.5 mph. Third was the John Surtees/Nino Vaccarella Ferrari 512S, a lap behind.

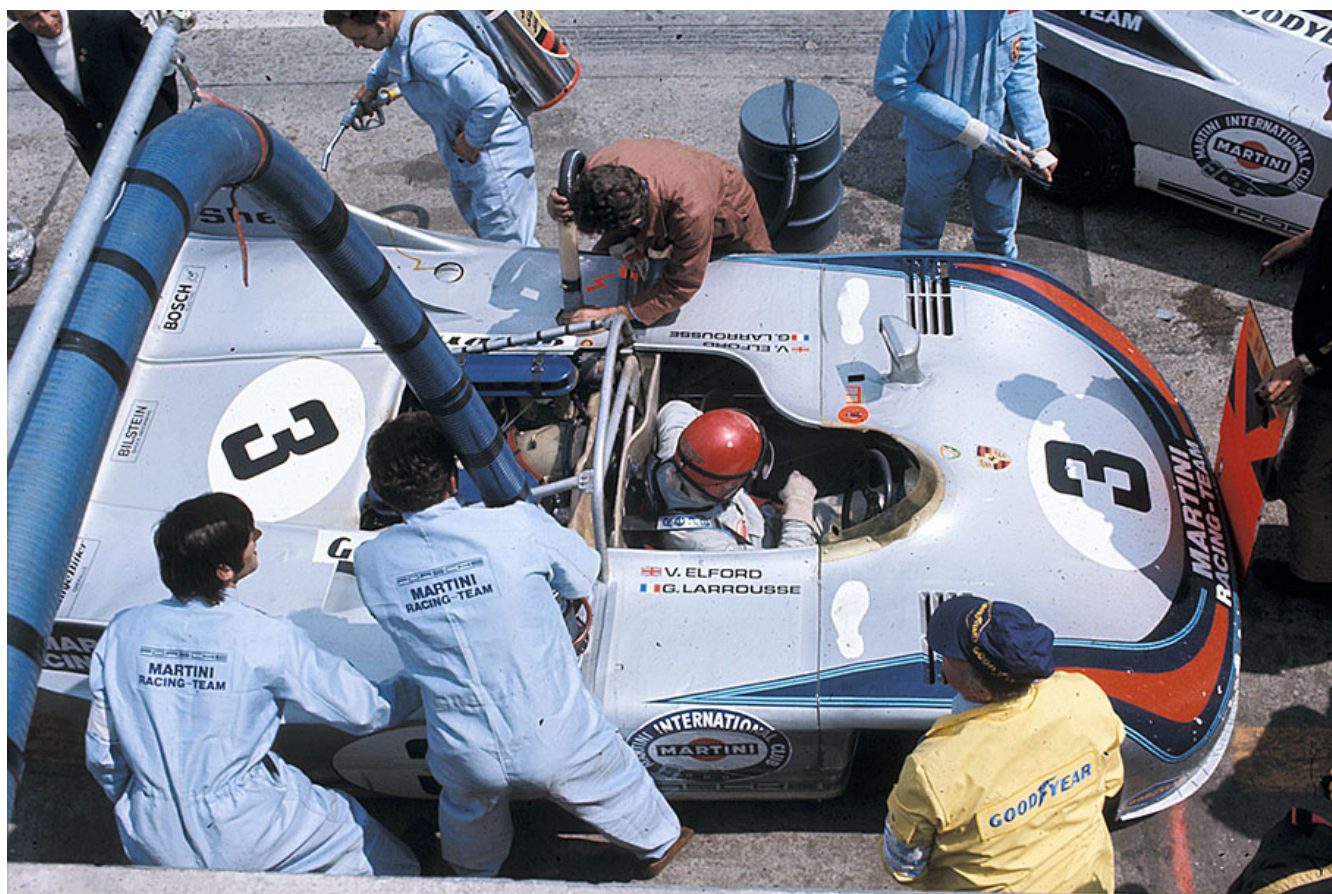
As the Nurburgring management failed to meet the safety demands of the Grand Prix Drivers' Association the German GP was moved to Hockenheim, but Vic was back at the Ring early in September for the 500 Kms sportscar race, which was the penultimate round of the FIA 2-litre Championship.

The distance of 500 kms meant 22 laps of the Nordschleife, or a proper Grand Prix of pre-war days. All the participants seemed to revel in this and few, if any, had a co-driver. Vic Elford was having his second outing in a works Chevron and hoping for better luck than in his first, which resulted in a crash at Enna. The 1.8-litre B16 was completely rebuilt for the Ring and Vic was fifth fastest in the first practice with 8 mins 40.1 secs, reducing this by 0.05 secs the next day. Fastest by far was Brian Redman in the brand new 2-litre Chevron Spyder, who shattered everyone with a time of 8 mins 14.1 secs, which would have put him on the front row of the grid for the 1968 German Grand Prix.

Redman's main rivals in the Prototype class were the Lola T210 of Chris Craft and the works Abarths of Arturo Merzario, Kurt Ahrens and Leo Kinnunen, while Elford's principal opposition in the Group 5 entry came from the two Fiat Abarth 2000S cars of Ed Swart and Sergio Morando.

Redman led from the start and proceeded to build up a handy lead over Craft, Ahrens, Merzario and Elford, the last three battling all round the circuit. However, by lap seven Vic had overtaken Merzario and he moved briefly into third when Ahrens made an early stop for fuel. Most of the leaders left their refuelling to the half-way stage and Vic made a very quick stop then, which enabled him to rejoin the race ahead of Craft, but only briefly.

After 13 laps Brian Redman was cruising home with a lead of 2 mins 19 secs, only to have his Chevron catch fire when a fuel line fell off in the Karussell. The car burst into flames and fortunately marshals were on hand to extinguish the blaze quickly. Redman was unhurt, but his race was over. Craft, Merzario and Elford were now nose to tail with eight laps still to go. Craft managed to get away from the other two and after 17 laps was some 30 seconds ahead of Elford, who,



1971 Nurburgring. Vic Elford receives a full service on his winning Porsche 908-03 008

not for the first time, had passed Merzario in the twisty bits. Then in a short space of time both Ahrens and Craft suffered blown engines, leaving Vic in command of the race. The Ringmeister pulled away from Merzario and completed the 22 laps some 63 seconds ahead of the Abarth to win at an average speed of 159.5 kph/99.11 mph.

"That was my best drive at the Ring," he says. "I had a tremendous battle with those two Abarths. They could get past me down the straight, but I was faster on the rest of the circuit. The Ring was my favourite track and I used to love the descent to Adenau Bridge, when I literally had the nose of the car in the hedge. You had to know every inch of what was coming for 100 yards up the road. If not, you either went slowly, or you crashed, because you couldn't see round the corners. The other place where that applied was Schwalbenschwanz, where we were going flat out over the many tiny, tiny brows going left and right, so every time you came over a crest the car had to be properly positioned for the next little bend. All that changed in 1971, after they cut down so many trees and hedges and made it easier to see where you were going."

Indeed, but when the teams began practice for the 1971 1000 Kms, many drivers complained that so many landmarks had been removed that they were having to learn the circuit all over again. Porsche were represented by the Martini team of Vic Elford/Gerard Larrousse and Helmut Marko/Gijs van Lennep and the two JW cars of Jo Siffert / Derek Bell and Pedro Rodriguez/Jackie Oliver, the former's 908s running on Goodyear tyres, the latter's on Firestones.

That the race was going to be no cake-walk for the Porsches became evident very early on in practice when Jacky Ickx got going in the new Ferrari 312P. Ickx claimed pole position with a time of 7 mins 36.1 secs, a full nine seconds faster than any other car. And second fastest was not a Porsche, but the works Alfa Romeo driven by Rolf Stommelen, who beat all the 908s with 7' 45.1".

Elford was third with 7' 46.9", but had an alarming moment in Friday's practice when a bolt fell out of the rear suspension and punctured a tyre, bad enough in itself, but not nice at all when it happens on the very fast bit after Flugplatz.

When the race began Jacky Ickx just waved goodbye to the rest and after five laps had a 40 second lead over the Alfa of Rolf Stommelen, who was



1971 Nurburgring

busy fighting off the attentions of the Porsches of Elford and Siffert. However, next time round and the Ferrari made for its pit, where copious amounts of water were poured into it, allowing Stommelen, Elford and Siffert to battle for the lead.

But the Porsches were not problem-free. Jo Siffert was a few lengths ahead of Vic when the JW car suffered a broken sub-frame and for a moment it looked as though both might be in for a visit to the woods. Happily, Jo kept the car on the road and Vic managed to avoid it. The bad news for Porsche was that Siffert retired his car in the pits, but Elford got by Stommelen and when Vic made his first pit stop his 908 was in the lead.

Not for long, however, as Ickx was going great guns in the Ferrari and rapidly making up for lost time, so much so that he was back in the lead by lap 13. It was too good to last, though, as the 312P was still losing water and getting hotter and hotter. Regazzoni took over on lap 15, but just before half-distance the car was out, with serious engine maladies.

Gerard Larrousse was now in the lead, being chased hard by Siffert, whom JW's Team Manager David Yorke had put into the Rodriguez car. Then Vic took over the Martini 908, with a lead of 22

secs over Rodriguez. He held Pedro at bay with no problem, even less so when the Mexican's car began handling very badly, the result of another chassis failure.

Elford gave the Martini 908 to Larrousse for the final stint and the Frenchman brought it home almost two minutes ahead of the Rodriguez/Siffert car, Jackie Oliver not having driven at all. And it was a third 1000 Kms victory for King of the Nurburgring, Vic Elford.

Who made a brief return to Grand Prix racing a couple of months later, but it was in the saddest of circumstances: Pedro Rodriguez had been killed in a no-account sportscar race a few weeks before and BRM's Louis Stanley invited Elford to take his place in the German GP. There was to be no happy revival of Elford's GP fortunes, however. His BRM P160 was troublesome all through practice and he could only qualify on row nine of the two-by-two grid, 3.3 secs slower than team-mate Howden Ganley and almost 18 secs behind the BRM team leader, Jo Siffert. Thanks to numerous retirements Vic got as high as eighth place before the BRM's engine stopped as he was on the return run behind the pits. He obtained a new coil, fitted it and rejoined the race, to finish 11th after a frus-

trating drive. He was by no means unhappy when BRM did not ask him to stay for the remainder of the season and that was the last Grand Prix drive of his career.

But his success at the Nurburgring had not ended. In September he was back for the 500 Kms race, this time driving a Lola T212 for Scuderia Filipinetti. As in the previous year, Brian Redman was there too, with a new Chevron B19 entered by himself; Chris Craft was back with a works B19 and there were Abarths for Arturo Merzario and Dieter Quester.

The changes to the circuit meant that Redman's 1970 fastest lap of 8 mins 12.0 sees would not last long and it was Elford who demolished it on the Friday with 7' 58.6'', no one else getting below 8 minutes. It was different the next day, however, and Redman struck back, beating Vic's time by almost four seconds, as did Merzario. Vic set out to regain pole position, only to hear discouraging noises from the Ford FVC engine, so he pulled into the pits, his practice over.

All was well for the race, however, and from the start Vic was contesting the lead with Merzario, Gijs van Lennep (Lola) and Toine Hezemans

(Chevron), Redman having made a bad start. This went on for six laps, until van Lennep and Elford managed to break away from the next two. On lap eight Vic took the lead and Redman was missing, his engine having blown up on the 3 km straight. Elford made his pitstop on lap 11, allowing Hezemans to take the lead until he, too pitted and Vic went back to the head of the field. On that same lap Arturo Merzario stopped out on the circuit with a broken gearbox on the Abarth and four laps later the sister car of Dieter Quester was also out, and for the same reason.

Which left Elford with a commanding lead over Gijs van Lennep, but then he, too, fell by the wayside with lack of drive to the rear wheels. Vic cruised home to win the 500 Kms for the second year running, more than two minutes ahead of Chris Craft in the Chevron.

And that was Vic Elford's final race at the Nurburgring. In six years he notched up an unprecedented six wins, four of them in two years, establishing himself as a true Ringmeister and second only behind Rudolf Caracciola in the Nurburgring All-time Winners List. And it all began with a mind-blowing lap in a Volkswagen Beetle.

ELFORD AT THE RING					
YEAR	EVENT	LAPS	CAR	NUMBER	RESULT
1966	Marathon de la Route	84 Hrs	Ford (with Jochen Neerpasch)		DNF
1967	1000 Kms		Porsche 910 (with Jochen Neerpasch)		3rd
	Marathon de la Route	84 Hrs	Porsche 911 (with Neerpasch and Hans Herrmann)	14	1
1968	1000 Kms		Porsche 908 (with Jo Siffert)	2	1
	Grand Prix	14	Cooper-BRM	20	DNF
1969	1000 Kms		Porsche 908	3	3rd
	Grand Prix	14	McLaren-Ford M7A	12	DNF
1970	1000 Kms		Porsche 908/3 (with Kurt Ahrens)	22	1
	500 Kms		Chevron B16		1
1971	1000 Kms		Porsche 908/3 (with Gerard Larrousse)	3	1
	Grand Prix	12	BRM P160	22	DNF
	500 Kms		Lola T212	38	1



RINGMEISTER

13

JACKIE STEWART



1965 - 1973

'The Grand Prix world has accepted the fact that this year has seen the introduction of what would appear to be a phenomenon! in its midst. I refer to the advent of 26 year-old Jackie Stewart in the BRM Grand Prix team, and his performances to date.'

That was the introduction to a lengthy dissertation by Denis Jenkinson on Stewart's extraordinary skills, which appeared in *Motor Sport* after the 1965 German GP. At the Nurburgring, Jenks noted, 'His practice times made most people look like amateurs, and it was his first drive on the Nurburgring with a Grand Prix car... There is no doubt about the fact that he is a "natural" high-speed driver, born with all the faculties required of an outstanding driver. Like Fangio, Moss and Clark, he is obviously blessed with good judgement, sharp reflexes, outstanding eyesight and sense of balance, all to a higher degree of perfection than our previous top-line "standard drivers".'

Jackie's practice times at the Ring set the GP circus on its collective ear, as Peter Gamier explained in *Autocar*: 'Highlight of the practicing periods was without doubt Jackie Stewart's performance with his BRM. It must be recalled that he has had no Formula 1 experience whatever on this extremely tricky circuit that most drivers reckon to learn properly after two or three races - and not before. His sole experience had been four practice laps in Col. Ronnie Hoare's Maranello Concessionaires 4.4-litre

Ferrari for the 1000 Kms race in May - since the car had retired when Graham Hill was driving, before Stewart had had a turn.

'In the BRM he first did three flying laps, getting down to 8 mins 35.6 secs. He then went out again for a couple of flying laps, and finished up with 8 mins 30.6 secs - 8.2 secs under the existing lap record. In the afternoon, when Clark was busy putting up his pole position lap time, Stewart's BRM suffered ignition troubles at Brunnchen and

spent from 5.10 to 5.40 pm waiting. On the Saturday, when the circuit was damp after a night's rain, he got down to 8 mins 26.1 secs. As someone said, "When he gets to know the circuit, about halfway through the race, it should get interesting."'

Indeed! Unfortunately, Jackie never got that far. His German Grand Prix began in style and at the end of the opening lap he was in third place, right behind Jimmy Clark (Lotus) and Graham Hill (BRM). But then, "On the second lap I went a tiny bit wide after Brunnchen, where they had cut a drainage ditch at 90 degrees to the circuit. I ran over it, bent a wishbone and that was the end of my race."

As Peter Gamier explained, Jackie never got to drive in the 1000 Kms earlier that year, but he set tongues wagging in practice because, "I qualified the Maranello Concessionaires 3.3-litre P2 Ferrari well and it was my time that was used." And a remarkable time it was, too - 8 mins 58.8 secs - well under Surtees' existing lap record and just 5.7 secs more than his best practice time in the works, 4-litre P2. Unfortunately, Jackie was no great fan of sportscar racing and he never went back to the Ring for the 1000 Kms.

Those four laps were not quite the only ones he had ever done at the Ring, however. Before official practice began Jackie did several tours in a hire car, and even that was not his first look at the circuit. "I did my very first laps in a Jaguar 3.8 saloon in 1961, before I ever began racing. I had been to the shooting World Championship in Oslo and then my friend, Allan Jones, and I drove through Norway, Sweden, Denmark and into Germany on our way to Switzerland for the European Championships in Bern. We stopped off at the Ring and found Taffy von Trips and the Ferrari team there, testing an F1 car. Once the track was opened to the public I paid my Deutschmarks and we did two or three laps in the Jaguar."

Every little helps, but success at the Ring was to be denied Jackie Stewart for a couple of years after his GP debut in 1965. The 3-litre Formula came into force in '66 and BRM had an H-16 engine in the works, but it was still not race-ready by the time of the German GP, so the team was using a 2-litre version of its trusty V8. By contrast, Ferrari were using 3-litre engines, as were Brabham (Repco V8) and Cooper (Maserati) and Dan Gurney had a 2.7-litre Climax unit in his Eagle.

So the BRMs (and the Lotuses) were at a distinct disadvantage with their 2-litre bangers, but you would not have known it from the starting grid. On pole position was Jim Clark in the Lotus, alongside Surtees (3-litre Cooper-Maserati), Stewart (BRM) and Scarfiotti (2.4-litre V6 Ferrari). But the 2-litre cars flattered in practice, only to deceive in the race, which was dominated by the 3-litre machines of Jack Brabham, John Surtees and Jochen Rindt (Cooper). Stewart finished fifth, almost two minutes behind his team-mate, Graham Hill.

Who was no longer his team-mate in 1967, having moved back to Lotus, so Jackie was now team leader at BRM. Not that it did him much good at the Nurburgring, despite the fact that the cars were now powered by the H16 engine. Once again, Jackie was third fastest in practice, behind Jim Clark (Lotus) and Denny Hulme (Brabham) and just ahead of Dan Gurney (Eagle). In the race, he never got higher than third and was forced out on the fifth lap with a broken crown wheel and pinion.

Jackie left BRM to join his friend, Ken Tyrrell, for 1968. After running an F2 team with Matra in 1966 and '67, Ken decided to move up to Formula One in 1968, using the new 3-litre Ford-Cosworth engine. Racing under the banner of Equipe

Matra International, his new team received the backing of Dunlop tyres and Elf fuel and Jackie happily joined forces with the man who had given him his big break in F3 in 1964.

The new venture got off to a promising start when Jackie qualified the Matra-Ford third for the first GP of the year, in South Africa, only to be forced out with a broken con-rod half-way through the race. Then, at the beginning of May, Stewart crashed Tyrrell's F2 Matra at Jarama and suffered a broken scaphoid in his right wrist. As a result, he had to miss the Spanish and Monaco GPs, but he bravely came back at Spa, despite the fact that his wrist was by no means healed.

"I was in plaster for 20 weeks," he recalls, "but I found a man in Geneva who made artificial limbs and he produced a lace-up cast in very firm plastic. So I would remove the plaster on the

Thursday night before practice and drive with the plastic cast."

Despite this painful disadvantage, Jackie drove brilliantly at Spa and led the Belgian GP for some laps until, infuriatingly, the

Matra ran out of fuel. He eventually finished fourth. He then scored his first F1 win for Ken Tyrrell with a superb wet-weather drive in the Dutch GP at Zandvoort. Using Dunlop's demon new rain tyres, which had a deep centre channel cut in them, he romped home some 90 secs ahead of Jean-Pierre Beltoise in the works, V12 Matra.

The demon Dunlops failed to work on the wet surface at Rouen, however, where Jackie finished third in the French GP. In the British, at Brands Hatch, it was his wrist which caused the problem.

'I had more pain in that race than in any other I have ever taken part in... I thought of stopping many times, but I also knew that the World Championship was involved, there were points to be won and that was a colossal incentive. I drove with one hand for certainly half and probably two-thirds of that race and finished sixth - all that effort for one point.'

If the wrist had caused him so much trouble at Brands Hatch, how could it possibly survive the next race - the German GP at the Nurburgring? It was the weather that made all the difference. No one could remember conditions ever being as bad as they were over the weekend of August 2, 3 and 4, 1968 and they played right into the none too certain hands of Jackie Stewart, who produced the drive of his life.

'The 1968 German Grand Prix, run on the demanding Nurburgring in continuous rain and fog, will go down in history as one of the truly great races,' wrote Innes Ireland in Autocar, 'and historians will talk of Stewart's victory in the same terms that they used to describe Rosemeyer's on the same circuit in 1936.'

Had it been a dry race, Ireland would never have been able to write those words, for Stewart's drive at Brands Hatch had taken so much out of him that he was not at all sure that he would be able to take part in the German GP. 'I decided to at least go to the Nurburgring and see what the prospects were. Ken was now getting enthusiastic about the Championship, he felt there was a chance.' (At this point, after seven races, Graham Hill (Lotus) led the title chase with 24 points, followed by Jacky Ickx (Ferrari) with 20 and Stewart (Matra) with 17).

The Friday morning practice session was damp and misty, but Jacky Ickx blasted his V12 Ferrari round in a remarkable 9 mins 04.0 secs,



1965 Germany GP, Nurburgring. Freiherr von Diergardt tries to brief a disinterested bunch of drivers, who are not listening to a word he is saying (Dan Gurney, Jackie Stewart, Chris Amon, Denny Hulme, Mike Spence, Frank Gardner, Jochen Rindt, Paul Hawkins)

which was 10 seconds faster than the next man, his team-mate Chris Amon. Stewart did not do a single full lap, contenting himself with several tours of the pit straight and return loop. After lunch the rain was falling heavily from clouds seemingly at ground level and eventually the afternoon session was cancelled, everyone telling themselves that Saturday could only be better.

It was worse. Practice should have begun at 12-45 pm, but finally got under way in thick fog at 3-40. And it was Stewart who made fastest time of the day, in 10' 04.0", with Jackie Ickx just 4 secs slower. A further practice session was scheduled for Sunday morning at 10 am, but that was delayed for 25 minutes, as the conditions were still appalling.

Stewart was all for staying in the hotel. 'There was torrential rain and fog and I didn't think it was worth going out, as by then I knew the Ring well. But Ken made the decision for me, saying it was important to see where the pools of water were. It was the right decision because there were a hell of a lot of rivers across the track, but they kept changing because the rain was so heavy and the drains were getting blocked.'

Jackie rewarded Tyrrell's forethought with a stunning lap in 9' 54.2", the only driver to get under 10 minutes. Even so, he was on the third row of the grid. Scuderia Ferrari did not appear, as they were already one-two.

'Undeterred by the atrocious weather, the crowds still flocked to the circuit, their enthusiasm apparently undampened,' wrote Patrick McNally in Autosport. 'Because of the morning practice the start was delayed for 45 mins; despite reports that the weather was lifting there was no sign of a break, and the starting area was still covered by a white and very wet blanket of mist and rain. There was hardly a spectator to be seen, for they were all hidden under an undulating mass of multi-coloured umbrellas.'

'When the flag finally dropped and the cars roared towards the South Curve, sending up great white plumes of spray, poleman Jacky Ickx was a trifle heavy on the throttle and provoked too much wheelspin and it was Graham Hill's Lotus, coming through from the second row which took the initiative. Chris Amon's Ferrari and Jackie Stewart's Matra were close behind the Lotus as all three tore into the North Turn, while behind them Dan Gurney, Jochen Rindt and Jacky Ickx were dicing furiously. Stewart was determined to get the lead and as they went into Adenau Crossing he had passed Amon's Ferrari and was right on Hill's tail. By Schwalbenschwanz the young Scot had taken the lead, and as they roared past the pits at the end of



1966 Germany GP, Nurburgring. Jackie Stewart aviates his BRM 261 past the remains of a crashed touring-car at Brunnchen

their first lap the Tyrrell Matra-Ford was already 8 secs ahead.'

Chris Amon later recalled that pass to Alan Henry: 'Stewart disappeared, of course, and everybody hailed it as the driving feat of the century although I don't believe he went any quicker than Graham or I, comparatively, it was just that he had those vastly superior tyres. I remember going down the hill to Adenau on the opening lap with Graham leading and me second - Stewart just drove round the inside of me as though the track was dry. I couldn't believe it... he had so much more grip than our Firestones.'

Maybe so, but Stewart made the most of what the Dunlops gave him and that was the race, really, all done and dusted. The tyres which had served him so well at Zandvoort now did their stuff just as brilliantly at the Ring and helped him drive through the storm to victory. After three laps he was 37 secs ahead of Graham Hill, who had Amon just three seconds behind him. Two laps later and Stewart had increased his lead by another 30 secs and by half-distance (the race had now been reduced from 15 laps to 14) he was 90 seconds in front of Hill and Amon, who were running nose to tail.

On lap eight Jackie set ftd with a time of 9 mins 36.0 secs, 'a time that used to be very respectable in

bright sunshine,' noted Denis Jenkinson, 'and he had done it mostly in rain and cloud!' With 11 laps gone he was more than two minutes ahead of Hill and Amon. But then Amon spun off in the North Turn and Hill came out in sympathy, spinning the Lotus to a halt in the esses after Hohe Acht. Unlike Amon, he managed to get the car going again and, fighting off the attention of Jochen Rindt's Brabham, held his second place to the end. But that spin had dropped him more than four minutes behind Stewart, who was out of his car, chatting with Ken Tyrrell and Dick Jeffrey of Dunlop for a couple of minutes before the sound of Hill's Lotus could be heard approaching through the fog.

It was a truly astounding victory, but it would never have happened in good weather. "Had it been dry I probably would not have been able to do the whole race," says Sir Jackie, "because the g-forces would have been greater with more steering effort required. When it is wet it is an easier drive physically, but more tiring mentally. The Matra had a right-hand gearchange and it was my right wrist that was broken, so I had to use the left arm a lot more than I did usually. That was my finest drive at the Ring and my finest ever, because of the margin of victory - more than four minutes."



1968 Germany GP, Nurburgring

Denis Jenkinson seemed to agree: 'Caracciola may have been the Regenmeister, Rosemeyer the Nebelmeister and Fangio the Ringmeister, but Stewart surely topped the lot.'

He did indeed and he was the new King of the Nurburgring. Somehow he averaged 86.9 mph for the 14 laps in those appalling conditions and a good indication of how bad they were is the fact that the year before, in the dry, Denny Hulme's winning average in the Brabham-Repco was 101.4 mph. That same year, Dan Gurney had set a new lap record with his Eagle Weslake in 8 mins 15.1 secs, a speed of 103.172 mph. In April, 1969, Stewart demolished that, setting a time of 8' 05.3" in the Eifel GP, driving an F2 Matra!

This was the first occasion since World War Two that the Eifel race had been run on the Nordschleife and Jackie made the most of his knowledge of the long circuit. His main opposition came from the Lotuses of Graham Hill and Jochen Rindt, the BMWs of Jo Siffert, Gerhard Mitter and Hubert Hahne, the Matras of Jean-Pierre Beltoise and Johnny Servoz-Gavin and the Dino Ferraris of Derek Bell, Clay Regazzoni and Emilio Brambilla.

Practice was held on the Friday and Saturday, with only the latter to count, and although no official times were given on the Friday, it was clear that Jochen Rindt was the fastest, beating Gurney's record time with just under 8 mins 14 secs. It rained on the Saturday and Jo Siffert won pole position with 9' 03.8", followed by Stewart (9' 07.8") and Hill (9' 16.5"). This pleased the locals, who numbered more than 250,000 and were all hoping to see a BMW victory, but Jackie had other ideas.

In fine weather, Graham Hill made the best start for the 10-lap race, but by the time the cars reached the North Turn Stewart was in the lead and at the end of the lap he was four seconds ahead of Rindt and Hill. After three laps Jackie's lead was 12 secs and he had set a new lap record. Two years earlier he had reckoned that the Matra was good for a time of 8 mins 07.0 secs, or thereabouts and on lap two he began his assault on Gurney's record with 8' 09.6".

By half-distance Hill and Rindt were both out with broken front wishbones and Stewart had set record laps four times in a row. He was now 50 secs ahead of Siffert, who was followed at a distance by Beltoise, Hahne, Servoz-Gavin and Bell. Jackie sailed home to win by 76 secs from Siffert in the BMW and set a new outright lap record with a stunning 8' 05.3" (169.4 kph/105.25 mph). This made Dan Gurney's record with the 3-litre Eagle-Weslake look pretty sick, even more so when you consider that Jackie was driving a three-year-old,

1,600 cc F2 car! To mark this victory he was given a Nurburgring winner's ring, which he never received for winning the German Grand Prix.

Three months later, in practice for the German GP, Stewart became the first to break the eight-minute barrier by recording a time of 7 mins 55.6 sees in the Matra-Cosworth during the Friday morning practice session. The only other driver to get under eight minutes was Jochen Rindt, in the Lotus 49B. He did 7' 58.0" in the morning and knocked four seconds off that in the afternoon. But Jackie went faster, too, recording 7' 51.7", only to be blown away by Jacky Ickx, who stunned everyone by lapping his Brabham-Cosworth in 7' 44.2". The next day, Stewart equalled this time, only for Ickx to knock another tenth off it, gaining pole position at an average speed of 110.562 mph.

Before practice, Jackie found time to introduce Mario Andretti to the Nurburgring when, fresh from his superb victory in the Indianapolis 500, Mario arrived at the circuit to drive one of Colin Chapman's Lotus 63 four-wheel-drive cars. Jackie volunteered to show him the ropes, as Dan Gurney had done for him in 1965, in order to refresh his memory after those four practice laps for the 1000 Kms. "It was pretty scary," recalls Sir Jackie, "and in 1969 it was my turn to take Mario Andretti, pointing out the roadside references, or the advertising signs where you aim the car.

"I used to try and take Ken Tyrrell for a few laps, just to let him see how he was spending his money, but around Adenau Bridge he usually wanted to get out. That circuit really is a different world from the passenger's seat, it can scare the living daylights out of you."

Far from scaring Mario, the ride with Jackie seemed to inspire him, for on his second flying lap in the Lotus he recorded a remarkable 8 mins 15 sees, only to be sidelined with a blown engine before he could go any further. Like his fellow American, Dan Gurney, Andretti clearly had all the hallmarks of a Ringmeister, but was never able to fulfill his promise.

Jackie Ickx, on the other hand, was about to do just that. He was not noted for his good starts, but this time he got it right, only for several others to do it better and at the end of the opening lap it was Stewart in the lead by six seconds, from Jo Siffert in Rob Walker's Lotus 49B, Jochen Rindt in the works Lotus and then Ickx in the Brabham. On the second lap Ickx passed both Lotuses and went after Stewart, finally taking the lead after six electrifying laps of cut and thrust motor racing.

Jackie held station behind the Brabham for the next two laps, but the Tyrrell's gearbox was

now playing tricks. 'At first I thought it was me, I thought I had not been putting the gears into mesh properly and they were jumping out, so I became more deliberate when I changed gear. But once or twice they refused to engage and I had to miss them occasionally.'

Unfortunately for Jackie (not to mention the spectators, who had been relishing the Ickx/Stewart duel) that was the end of his challenge. He had to settle for second place and hope that the gearbox would last until the end. It did, but Ickx won the German GP for Brabham by almost a minute from Stewart after a masterly drive. Nevertheless, Stewart went on to win his first World Championship, scoring 63 points to the 37 of Ickx.

It would be two years before Grand Prix cars would be seen at the Ring again because in 1970 the Grand Prix Drivers' Association, led by Jackie Stewart, boycotted the circuit, claiming that it was no longer safe for the very fast GP cars of the day (See *Der Nurburg Ring - A History*) Over the winter of 1970 an enormous amount of work was carried out and, as a result, the GPDA agreed to return there for the German GP in 1971.

By now Jackie Stewart was not just driving for Tyrrell, he was driving a Tyrrell. This came about after Ken terminated his relationship with Matra at the end of 1969 and raced March-Cosworths in 1970. Meanwhile, in great secrecy, Derek Gardner was beaver away, designing an F1 car for Ken and the Cosworth-powered Tyrrell 001 made its first appearance in the Oulton Park Gold Cup and its Grand Prix debut in Canada. It did not win a race that year, but by the time the team arrived at the Ring in 1971 Jackie and the Tyrrell had virtually wrapped up his second World Championship, with 42 points to the 19 of Jacky Ickx. This was thanks to four wins and a second place in the first half of the season.

Jackie found the new Nurburgring to be "a big improvement. It was wider, with barriers, it was fine." Denis Jenkinson also approved. "There was no doubt in my mind that the return of the German Grand Prix to the Nurburgring after its brief removal to the Hockenheim Motordrom was popular, for the movement and race-fever was already evident when I arrived at the circuit the day before practice began. By the time race day arrived the Eifel mountains were like a human ant-hill, and though no official figures were given for the attendance the scene was reminiscent of the early post-war years and I have not seen crowds like it for ten or more years...

'Everyone who had not taken part in the ADAC 1000 Kms last May was keen to find out



Podium ceremony of German GP 1969 - second placed Jackie Stewart, winner Jackie Ickx and third Bruce McLaren

about the cleaned-up Nurburgring. Although the widening, smoothing-out and resurfacing met with Stewart's approval, it was soon evident that the Nurburgring was still one of the best challenges to Grand Prix car designers and drivers, for speeds were higher everywhere and road-holding and suspension as well as bravery and skill were at a premium...

'For some unaccountable reason that no-one would admit to, this year's race was reduced to 12 laps, a mere 274 kilometres. (We must forget the "bad old days" of Ascari and Fangio when they raced for 22 laps of the Nurburgring to find out who was going to win the German GP, for I am told that is not positive thinking).

'With two years' advance in power and road-holding, to say nothing of the two years' advance in glory, the estimate of laps at 7 mins 20 secs was reasonable enough, especially taking into account the widening, smoothing and resurfacing of the circuit, and in the first session Stewart took his Tyrrell 003 round in 7 mins 21.9 secs, to set a new standard. There was no practical reason why Stewart should be so much faster than everyone else, except that he was working hard for the people who pay him, as he always does, and the Tyrrell team are on such a winning streak at the moment that their air of efficiency and quiet calm is psychologically demoralising everyone into a state of depression that seems to make them stop trying.

'In the late afternoon Stewart went out in the old Tyrrell only to have the engine break. He returned on the pillion of a motorcycle and promptly went out in the 1971 car and set fastest time of the day with 7 mins 19.0 secs, which demoralised everyone even more.'

Not quite everyone, for next day Jackie Ickx, his great adversary of 1969, took his Ferrari 312B round in 7' 19.2", which put him on the front row of the two-by-two grid with Stewart. This, of course, pleased the spectators no end, for there was the very real prospect of another great battle between the two Ringmeisters. Sadly, it was not to be. Ickx took an immediate lead off the line, but Stewart out-braked him into the North Turn and at the end of the first lap it was the Tyrrell which fled past the pits first, with a lead of three seconds over the Ferraris of Ickx and Clay Regazzoni. And on that standing lap Stewart set a new record, with a time of 7' 37.7", reducing that to 7' 29.9" the next time round.

And, to the dismay of the spectators, that is where the race ended, for Jackie Ickx crashed at Wippermann on the second lap and Stewart had an untroubled run to the chequered flag. At one

point he stretched his lead over the second man - team-mate Francois Cevert - to 40 secs, but he eased up as Cevert speeded up in his battle with Clay Regazzoni. Cevert set fastest lap of the race in the process with 7 mins 20.1 secs and Stewart came home the comfortable winner, 30 secs ahead of the Frenchman in the second Tyrrell one-two of the season. It was Jackie's 17th victory in a Grande Epreuve, putting him one ahead of Stirling Moss, but still some way behind Clark and Fangio.

It had been the shortest German GP on record, occupying just 1 hour 29 mins and 15.7 secs of Mr Stewart's time. As Denis Jenkinson noted: 'It had been a short and sweet German Grand Prix run in perfect conditions and everyone seemed well satisfied to see it back on the circuit where it rightfully belongs, for the Nurburgring is still the Nurburgring and one of the finest Grand Prix circuits ever built.'

For 1972 Tyrrell produced a new car, 005, but Jackie bent it during practice for the British GP and so drove 003 in the German. During the Friday morning practice he broke team-mate Francois Cevert's lap record with a time of 7 mins 17.2 secs, only to see Jacky Ickx (Ferrari 312B) knock seven seconds off that in the afternoon, when Stewart himself got down to 7' 16.4". The next day Jackie banged in a flyer at 7' 08.7", only for Ickx to steal pole position with 7' 07.0". The Ringmeisters were at it again and a fine race (over 14 laps once more) was in prospect.

It turned out to be a fine race for Monsieur Ickx, but not for Mr Stewart. The Ferrari driver romped away with it, leading from start to finish. Stewart lay fifth right behind Clay Regazzoni, Ickx's team-mate, for the first 10 laps, moving up to fourth with the retirement of Ronnie Peterson (March) and then third when Fittipaldi's JPS-Lotus blew up. His race-long battle with Regazzoni ended in tears on the last lap, as Patrick McNally recounted in Autosport:

'Only two laps from the end it was clear that Ickx had this race in the bag, the question was could Stewart manage to oust Regazzoni from second place and thus earn those so valuable championship points? The Scotsman was 1 sec behind at this stage, but as they went into their last lap the cars were running virtually nose to tail. Regazzoni arrived a fraction too fast at Hatzenbach and slid wide, Stewart seized the opportunity and tried to slip through, the two cars arriving side by side at the next corner according to an eye-witness, with Stewart trying to go round on the outside. Regazzoni's left rear wheel touched Stewart's right rear and Stewart found himself spinning right round

and smashing into the Armco on the outside of the corner, damaging the front suspension. Stewart is sufficiently experienced to know Regazzoni would be difficult to pass and this was far from the ideal place. No doubt the story you read in the Daily Express on Monday sounded like a different incident altogether. Stewart escaped unhurt and the car was not badly damaged, but gone was the chance of earning the championship points he so desperately needs if he is to catch up with Emerson Fittipaldi. Afterwards Stewart also complained that Regazzoni was weaving down the straight not letting him by - but the Swiss's reply was simply that he was trying to break the Tyrrell's tow. Jack Brabham was an ace at this manoeuvre for it does make passing difficult!

And so to Jackie's grand finale at the Nurburgring, the German Grand Prix of 1973. By this time he had won four GPs for Tyrrell and was leading Emerson Fittipaldi (Lotus) in the World Championship by 51 points to 41. He was also thinking seriously about retiring from the sport at the end of the season.

Surprisingly, no one managed to better Jacky Ickx's 1972 pole position time in practice, Stewart being the closest to it with 7 mins 07.8 secs, which was just that 0.8 secs slower. Ronnie Peterson (Lotus) was half-a-second behind Jackie, with Francois Cevert (Tyrrell) and Ickx (McLaren) making up the second row with 7' 09.3" and 7' 09.7" respectively. Ickx had come to a parting of the ways with Scuderia Ferrari, which was having a terrible GP season, and joined McLaren for just this one race.

'Sixth Rhapsody in Blue - another Tyrrell 1-2' was the headline in Autosport's report by Pete Lyons, who summed up the race in one sentence: 'Elf Team Tyrrell quite simply ran away with this 11th round of the season, Ken's twin Elves making the 199-mile motor race round the swoops and plunges of the fearsome Eifel circuit look like a relaxed ramble in the woods.'

Ronnie Peterson made the best start, but Stewart overtook him before the South Turn and boxed him in, allowing Cevert to take the lead until Flugplatz, when Jackie assumed his rightful place and held it until the end. Peterson's race lasted only until Breidscheid, where electrical problems brought the Lotus to a halt.

After the first lap the two Tyrrells were six seconds ahead of Ickx and the first three positions remained unchanged throughout the race. Cevert made fastest lap in 7' 19.1" on the third tour and was now some seven seconds behind his team leader and more than 11 seconds ahead of Ickx, who had Carlos Reutemann (Brabham-Ford) right



1970 Germany GP, Nurburgring

on his tail. On the eighth lap Reutemann's engine gave up and Carlos Pace (Surtees-Ford) now moved into a splendid fourth spot.

'In the last couple of laps Stewart's clockwork progress picked up a little speed,' wrote Pete Lyons, 'as if just to keep Cevert on his toes and show him a thing or two (and inevitably one wonders if Jackie isn't thinking this'll be his last race at the Ring and he wanted to enjoy it).'

It was and he did, allowing Cevert to get within 1.6 secs of him at the flag and winning his third German Grand Prix to consolidate his position as King of the Nurburgring. It was his 26th victory in a Grande Epreuve, putting him ahead of Jim Clark (25) and Juan Manuel Fangio (24). It was also his last, and although he went on to win his third World Championship that was completely overshadowed by the death of his friend and team-mate, Francois Cevert, at Watkins Glen in October.

With four victories, two pole positions and two fastest laps in the years 1965-1973 Jackie Stewart established himself as a Ringmeister supreme, but he cheerfully admits that his supremacy took a knock on the odd occasion. One such was the European Touring Car Championship race in July, 1973. "I shared a Ford Capri with Emerson Fittipaldi

and we were in the team with Jochen Mass/Dieter Glemser and John Fitzpatrick/G rard Larrousse. I found the Capri was very difficult to drive and I was only fourth fastest in practice with 8 mins 27.5 secs. That was 9 secs quicker than Emerson - and 3 secs slower than Mass! We were on Goodyears and he was on Dunlops and I thought the difference must be due to the tyres because, after all, I knew the Ring pretty well etc, etc. So I insisted on trying our car on Dunlops and I was still 3 secs slower than Mass! He was quicker than me in the Capri and I couldn't do anything about it!"

STEWART AT THE RING

YEAR	EVENT	LAPS	CAR		NUMBER	RESULT
1965	1000 Kms		Ferrari 275P2 (with Graham Hill)		4	DNF
	Grand Prix	15	BRM V8		10	DNF
1966	Grand Prix	15	BRM V8 2-litre		6	5th
1967	Grand Prix	15	BRM H16		11	DNF
1968	Grand Prix	1	Matra-Ford		6	FL 1
1969	Eifel GP	10	Matra-Ford F2		3	LR 1
1969	Grand Prix	14	Matra-Ford		7	2nd
1971	Grand Prix	12	Tyrrell-Ford		2	PP 1
1972	Grand Prix	14	Tyrrell-Ford		1	DNF
1973	Grand Prix	14	Tyrrell-Ford		3	PP 1



RINGMEISTER

14

JACKY ICKX



1965 - 1983

"My first drive at the Nurburgring was in 1965 when I drove a Mustang for Ford Belgium in the Marathon de la Route. I probably had a look at the circuit before the event, but maybe not, because you must remember that the Marathon was originally the Liege-Rome-Liege Rally and you did not practice for that. It then became the Liege-Sofia-Liege, but it was so complicated to organise on the roads that it was decided to replace it with the Marathon, which involved 86 hours around the Ring. It was a regularity trial, really and at the end there was a two-hour race, which I did.

"My co-driver was Gilbert Staepelaere, a rally driver for Ford Belgium and he drove through each night for 10 hours and then I did 14 hours during the day. After this extraordinary experience I knew every single bit of the Nurburgring, although it was at a very reasonable speed, in slow-motion, maybe, first in the Mustang then in 1966 with the Alan Mann Lotus Cortina. That is why when I came into F2 and then F1 I was practically unbeatable! And, of course, I knew all the short cuts."

Jacky's memory of his first visit to the Ring goes some way to explain how he became a Ringmeister, emerging victorious twice in both the German Grand Prix and the 1000 Kms.

Contrary to some reports, it was not Ken Tyrrell who first noticed the young Belgian's raw talent, but Alan Mann, who recalls: "I saw him at Zolder in 1964. John Whitmore was driving for me and he took me to the back of the circuit to show me a lot of rubber on the outside of what was a very quick corner. John pointed to it saying, 'That is from the Mustang of a guy called Ickx. I have followed him in practice and he is completely sideways through here. He has unbelievable car control but, of course, he is not very quick.'

"Jacky's family was with him and his father and mother both wrote for the newspapers. Next day there was a headline saying 'Ickx breaks Whit-

more's lap record'. That was true, but what the paper did not say was that he was still two seconds slower than John had been the day before. I had a word with his brother, Pascal, and said, 'I don't think that is at all helpful for such a young lad. He is trying too hard and he is not even going quickly with all this sideways stuff.'

"After the meeting I talked with Jacky and suggested that he drive a Cortina for me in Budapest, follow John Whitmore at a sensible distance and get some valuable experience. I then talked to his parents and said, 'If Jacky is going to progress he needs to get away from easy-to-drive touring cars which he can chuck sideways all the time; he needs the discipline of being much tidier in single-seaters.'

"He did the three-hour race in Budapest for me, following John around carefully and neatly. Ken Tyrrell was there and

I talked to him about Jacky, saying "This kid has great talent, but he is going down the wrong avenue - he needs to be in single-seaters."

Tyrrell watched Ickx drive the Cortina and was so impressed by what he saw that he invited him to test an F3 car in England, but as Jacky was about to join the Belgian Army for 15 months he was unable to take up the offer.

Before that, however, he did the Marathon in the Mustang and, as Alan Mann recalls, he was lucky to finish at all. "Jacky was in the next pit to us. On the second day the rain was so heavy that I had our cars fitted with Dunlop SP rally tyres. Jacky was on racing tyres and so was losing time, yet his mother prepared a pit board showing his time in order to speed him up. He was coming down the pit straight in torrential rain on racing tyres and he was more sideways than straight, so I grabbed the sign before she could show it to him. His mother got all upset, but I had to say 'Come on! he's on the wrong tyres and there are still three days to go.' I just could not believe the pressure they put on him."



The JWA Mirage-Ford M1 (M.10001) of Jacky Ickx-Richard Attwood might have won the 1967 Nurburgring 1000 Kms but for two punctures. Ickx navigates the Karussell during practice

Nonetheless, Ickx and Staepelaere finished second in the Marathon and then Jacky went off to join the Army. No sooner was he back in civvy street than he got a call from Ken Tyrrell. "So I went to Goodwood - where I crashed - and then to Oulton Park - where I crashed again! But Ken said, 'Don't worry - we'll fix that'. I was very fast, but too fast for my own good, obviously. Still, he saw the potential in me."

He certainly did, so much so that he invited 21 year-old Jacky to join the Tyrrell team for F3 and F2 in 1966. That was the first year of the new, 3-litre Formula One and as several 3-litre engines were still not ready by the time of the German GP, the organisers added an F2 race to be run with it. Nine 1-litre, F2 cars made it to the starting grid including four Matras, two works cars for Jo Schlesser and Jean-Pierre Beltoise and two Ken Tyrrell cars for Hubert Hahne and Jacky Ickx. After the final practice session the times were as follows: Hahne - 9 Mins 17.0 secs; Schlesser - 9' 12.5"; Beltoise - 9' 04.4" and Ickx a remarkable 8' 52.0". The 21 year-old Belgian was the only F2 driver to get under nine minutes and had already raised eyebrows on the first day of practice by recording 9' 04.4" after just two flying laps. Those 14-hour stints in the Marathon were paying off.

Unfortunately, on the very first lap of the race Jacky was unable to avoid John Taylor's crashing

Brabham and went off the road. He helped extricate the unfortunate Taylor from his burning car and then drove the Matra slowly back to the pits to retire with damaged suspension. It was hardly an auspicious debut but clearly, his practice times had shown that here was a Ringmeister in the making. A few weeks later Ickx and Staepelaere did the Marathon again, this time in an Alan Mann Cortina and again they finished second.

John Wyer was another team owner who was very impressed with Jacky Ickx. In his 13 years as Manager of David Brown's Aston Martin team he had signed a slew of top flight drivers, including Stirling Moss, Peter Collins, Tony Brooks and Roy Salvadori and recognised driving talent when he saw it. By 1967 John was his own boss at JW Automotive, which he had set up with his friend John Willment. They brought in the former Vanwall Team Manager, David Yorke and, with the backing of Gulf Oil, went racing with the Ford GT40-based Gulf Mirages. And they signed Jacky Ickx, as John noted in his autobiography, *The Certain Sound*:

'It is not easy now to remember the impression which Ickx, then not twenty-one, had created in Europe. His performances, particularly at the Nurburgring... had stamped him as a driver of the greatest potential.'



1967 Germany GP, Nurburgring

As did his performance with the Gulf-Mirage in the Spa 1000 Kms, as Wyer recalled: 'When we woke on May 1 it was typical Ardennes weather - heavy low cloud with squalls of rain sweeping over the hills. Visibility was less than a mile. We drove up from Stavelot to the circuit with sinking hearts. Only Jacky Ickx, who loves Spa and driving in the rain, was elated.

'The conditions were horrible for everyone else but ideally suited to Jacky Ickx. He swept into the lead at the start and at the end of the first lap, a little over four minutes later, he came down past the pits, over the Eau Rouge, up the hill towards Les Combes and out of sight before the next car could be heard on the back straight behind the pits. It was sublime but almost ridiculous and the spectators, 100 per cent Ickx supporters, actually started to laugh before the second car came round.'

Ickx won the race (with Dick Thompson) but he was never to have any real luck at the Nurburgring with the Gulf-Mirages. A month after Spa, Jacky shared a car with Dickie Attwood in the 1000 Kms but in practice he could not get near Phil Hill, who got the winged Chaparral round in 8 mins 31.9 secs, whereas Jacky could only do 9' 00.4". Ickx had trouble getting going at the Le Mans start and after four laps was in ninth place. By the time he handed over to Attwood he was third and Dickie

was running in second spot and about to hand back to Jacky after 29 laps when he ran over some debris at Breidscheid and punctured two tyres. The 12-km drive back to the pits was out of the question, so he had to park the car and retire.

As in 1966, the German GP included a race for F2 cars (now with 1.5-litre engines) and Ken Tyrrell took two Matras to the Ring, an MS5 for Ickx and Stewart's MS7, which was not used. Jacky was the sensation of practice, his time of 8 mins 14.0 secs being a remarkable 21 seconds quicker than the next F2 car, which was the Lotus of Jackie Oliver. It was also 10 secs quicker than the lap record, set in '65 by Jim Clark (1.5-litre Lotus-Climax) with a time of 8' 24.1"; this despite the fact that a new bend, the Bremskurve, had been built just before the start-finish area to slow the cars as they passed the pits.

Jacky's time was good enough for third spot on the grid, too, after Jim Clark's Lotus (8' 04.1") and Denny Hulme's Brabham (8' 13.5"). Jacky was also 1.2 secs faster than his Tyrrell F2 team-mate Jackie Stewart (who was driving for BRM in this race) and reckoned that he would have been a good 8 seconds faster in the MS7!

As the F2 cars were in a separate race the organisers made them start from their own grid behind the F1 machines. Ickx had no fewer than 17 of



1967 Germany GP, Nurburgring

those ahead of him, but once the flag had dropped he set about disposing of them one by one. On the third lap he set a new lap record with 8' 21.8" (to be beaten later by Dan Gurney (Eagle) with 8' 15.1") and was up to ninth place. One lap later Gurney led from the Brabhams of Hulme and Brabham and the BRM of Stewart - and Ickx was now fifth! On lap six Stewart retired and, according to *Motoring News*, 'he went along to the Tyrrell pit and advised them that Papa Ickx would lose one of his sons unless they slowed Jacky down, for the attitude of the Matra on the twisty, downhill sections had worried him considerably.' Clearly, young Jacky was still enjoying his sideways motoring!

Stewart's concern proved academic, as Jacky pulled into the pits at the end of lap 11, to retire with a fractured ball joint on the Matra's front suspension. Denny Hulme won the Grand Prix for Brabham, but it was Ickx who was the talk of the town afterwards. Jacky himself was in no way surprised by his sensational performance.

"I knew the circuit so well by then," he says, "and the F2 Matra was light and tiny and much easier to use than an F1 car on a circuit like the Ring. It was unfortunate that I wasn't driving Jackie Stewart's MS7, which had an updated monocoque and was sitting in the garage. There was a hell of a difference between his car and mine and I knew this

because I drove Jackie's car in some races for the European F2 Championship. I did not drive it at the Ring because, naturally, he did not want to risk it being damaged, but if I had driven it I would have been sensationally faster. On a normal race course there was easily one second between them, so at the Ring the MS7 would have been a match for the best F1 car."

Ken Tyrrell was now in the enviable position of having the two most promising Grand Prix drivers, Jacky and Jackie, on his books and he was eagerly anticipating taking them into F1 in 1968 with Matra. But talent such as theirs shines a light so bright that it attracts a great deal of attention and before you could say Enzo, Ferrari had approached both drivers for the coming season. Stewart was interested, but found himself dumped by the Old Man without even signing anything and Ickx eventually joined the Scuderia, but only because Stewart went with Tyrrell and Matra insisted that their second driver be French.

He was sorry to leave: "Without Ken I would not have become a professional racing driver; he was the man who really gave me the push. Without him - nothing!"

Ferrari naturally wanted Jacky for sportscars as well as F1, but he stayed faithful to JWA and, despite the fact that the Mirage was not the ideal



1968 Germany GP, Nurburgring



car for the Nurburgring, he came close to winning the 1000 Kms in 1968. Rolf Stommelen won pole position in practice, taking his flat-eight, 2.2-litre Porsche round in 8 mins 32.8 sees, well below John Surtees' record of 8' 37.0" with the Ferrari. Ickx was a splendid second with the Gulf-Mirage, recording 8' 37.4".

Unfortunately, before the race Jacky fell victim to a rare mistake by John Wyer, as John admitted in *The Certain Sound*: 'It was here that David Yorke and I made a serious tactical error. We decided, for some rather obscure reason, to change our driver pairings and put Paul Hawkins with Ickx, leaving Brian Redman to drive with David Hobbs. We probably thought that Paul had more experience at the Nurburgring than Brian and we may have been influenced by Brian's mistakes at Sebring and Monza. It was a bad decision.

'In the race Ickx was, as usual, brilliant, but Paul Hawkins was disappointing. To quote Paul Frere writing in *The Racing Porsches*: "The GT40 proved to be a real menace for the Porsches as long as Ickx drove, but Hawkins could not keep up the pace". The race was won by Siffert and Elford in a Porsche 908, with Herrmann and Stommelen second in a 907 and Ickx/Hawkins 50 seconds back in third place. Hawkins had driven for a total of

12 laps and to make matters worse from our point of view, Redman had been an average of 5 seconds per lap faster than Paul. We might thus very easily have been second, although we could hardly have won. It was not a bad result but we had paid heavily for our mistake. Siffert had made the fastest lap during the race in 8' 33.0" while Ickx had done a barely credible 8' 34.0".

In Grand Prix racing Jacky's stay with Ferrari lasted just one season and it was not a happy one. His 312 failed to finish the first three Grandes Epreuves, he was third in Belgium, fourth in Holland and then won the French GP at Rouen with a superb drive in very wet conditions. He really excelled in the rain, so the

German GP should have seen him shine through the downpour that drenched the Eifel region all weekend, but it didn't.

He began well enough, recording 9 mins 04.0 secs in Friday morning's practice, faster by 10 seconds than the next man, his Ferrari team-mate Chris Amon. Conditions were so bad for the remaining sessions that Jacky's time put him on pole, but he made a bad start and was sixth at the end of the opening lap. By lap six his visor had become spattered with mud and then, as Innes Ireland reported in *Autocar*, 'Ickx, who had been just about to pass Rindt, had his first spin of the day, and suddenly dropped back over one minute, leaving him only 46 secs ahead of Brabham. Then at the end of lap seven he rushed into the pit lane, slowed up a bit, threw his goggles at his team manager and rushed on, skating his way past some very startled officials and mechanics as he left the pit road with wheels spinning and spray flying.'

On lap 11, Ickx actually stopped at his pit and collected a new visor provided by fellow-countryman Lucien Bianchi, who had retired his Cooper-BRM. He finally finished fourth behind Jackie Stewart (Matra), Graham Hill (Lotus) and Jochen Rindt (Brabham). It was 'the other Jackie', not Jacky, who had shone through the gloom like a beacon and driven like a true Ringmeister to win the race.

Jacky's year with Ferrari ended on an unhappy note when a sticking throttle caused him to crash during practice for the Canadian GP and he suffered a broken leg. Ferrari wanted him to sign exclusively with the Scuderia for 1969, but he was very happy with JWA and determined to stay there for endurance racing. Also, Ferrari was with Shell and Firestone, whereas JWA was with Gulf and Goodyear. As he had not enjoyed any real success with Ferrari he signed with the Brabham F1 team, which was also backed by Gulf and Goodyear.

For the 1000 Kms Ickx was paired with Jackie Oliver in the new Gulf-Mirage M2, powered by a 3-litre Ford Cosworth engine.

However, as John Wyer noted, 'The road-holding of the Mirage was a disaster at the Nurburgring. Even Ickx in the Cosworth car could do no better than a lap in 8' 27.2", which compared very unfavourably with the fastest lap of 8' 03.3" by Chris Amon in the Ferrari 312P while Oliver, in the same car, could do no better than 8' 43.4" which was equalled by Hailwood in our second car with the BRM engine. None of this had any effect on the result because the Ickx/Oliver car broke a pivot bolt in the rear suspension and the Hobbs/Hailwood car ran out of fuel.'

However, JWA's next race was Le Mans where, reverting to the trusty GT40s, they scored a famous victory, the Ickx/Oliver car winning by a few feet from the Hans Herrmann/Gerard Larrousse Porsche after Ickx and Herrmann had fought wheel-to-wheel for the final three hours.

Another famous victory followed at the Nurburgring, where Jacky drove out of his skin to win the Grand Prix for Brabham. His was the team's lone entry, for Jack had broken a leg while testing at Silverstone a few weeks earlier. By this time 'the other Jackie' was running away with the World Championship, having won five of the first six races with the Tyrrell Matra-Ford. Ickx had finished fifth in the Dutch GP, third in the French and second in the British so maybe it was to be his turn to be Number One in Germany.

In the first practice session on the Friday morning Stewart was fastest with 7 mins 55.6 secs. Ickx could only manage 8' 33.8", but that was his one flying lap, as a piece of metal became stuck under the fuel relief valve. He may have been earth-bound in the morning, but that afternoon, he flew! Out in the country, Motor Sport's Denis Jenkinson watched in awe:

'The Nurburgring offers unlimited opportunities for spectators to see Grand Prix driving at its best. It is an easy matter to position yourself at a point where cars come into view long before they are recognisable and having come out of a fast bend or a series of bends the driver's knowledge of the circuit and his ability can easily be seen by the speed at which he comes into view. Ickx. Stewart and Siffert (Lotus) were outstanding on Friday afternoon...

'Moving to a point where the cars went out of sight round a blind right-hand bend, and being high above the track on a bank, it was possible to look down into the cockpits as they disappeared behind the trees. Siffert and Ickx were going out



1969 Germany GP, Nurburgring. Qualifying resulted in Jacky Ickx (No. 6) taking Pole Position, with Jackie Stewart (No. 7) 2nd and Jochen Rindt (No 2) 3rd

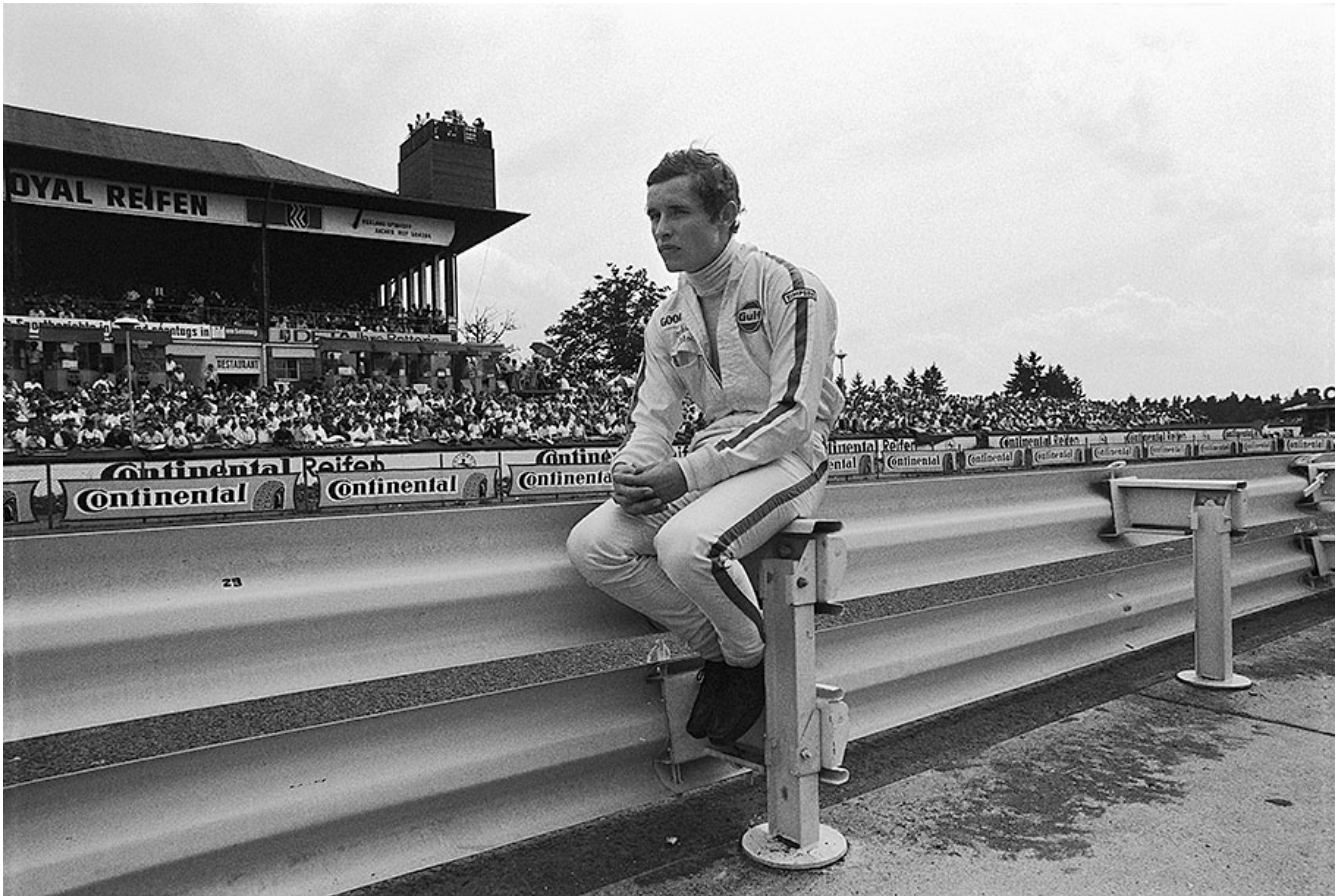


of sight with the power still on and a lot of opposite lock, demonstrating that they knew not only where they were going, but were complete masters of their cars. Stewart was only applying correction to the power steering when the need called for it, rather than deliberately provoking the situation like the other two... Ickx, Siffert, Stewart, Rindt (Lotus) and McLaren (McLaren) had all broken the eight-minute barrier in that order, the young Belgian Brabham driver having recorded an unbelievable 7 mins 44.2 secs. It would have been unbelievable had not three or four rival teams in the pits agreed with the official time.

'Bearing in mind that Ickx and Siffert have already been to the Nurburgring once this season, with a lot of experience of fast laps, to say nothing of the hundreds of laps they have completed over the past four years, the pattern that was taking shape was to be expected. Both drivers love the circuit and treat it as a friend, rather than a challenge and were obviously as happy as the proverbial pigs in the proverbial fertilizer. Stewart was viewing the circuit as a challenge to his ability and was proving that ability beyond question...

'The third and final practice session was on Saturday and further spectating from the excellent public enclosures merely confirmed which drivers had ability, which were enjoying themselves and





which were wasting time. Ickx improved his best time to 7 mins 42.1 secs, proving that his performance the day before was not a fluke, while Stewart responded to the challenge of the little Belgian with 7 mins 42.4 secs, a remarkable equality bearing in mind all the variables in a lap of 22.8 kilometres.'

On race day the weather was perfect and some 350,000 spectators had positioned themselves around the fabulous Ring in keen anticipation of a battle between Jackie and Jacky. The former had had it all his own way thus far in the season - would the latter be able to put a stop to the run of Stewart/Tyrrell/Matra successes?

He would indeed. He made a good start from pole position, but several drivers, led by Stewart, made a better one and by the time the dust had settled on the grid he was in seventh place as the field hurtled down towards the Adenau crossing. 'At the end of the opening lap Stewart had a six-second lead over Siffert and Rindt,' wrote Jenks, 'but Ickx was right behind them and going like the wind. He had come up behind McLaren, Hill (Lotus) and Hulme (McLaren), who were together, so fast that they had moved smartly out of the way.'

Stewart completed his second lap in 7 mins 50.9 secs, a new record, but on lap three Ickx passed Rindt and then Siffert to claim second place, setting a new record in the process with 7' 45.9". Next

time round he took 1.4 secs off that and was now right on Stewart's tail. Down the three-kilometre straight the Matra and the Brabham were side-by-side, but Stewart had the line for the Bremskurve before the pits and held his first position.

'All round the fifth lap the battle continued,' wrote Jenkinson, 'with Ickx trying desperately to get by the Matra, but to no avail and they finished the lap nose-to-tail... As they came up the back straight behind the pits and into the North Curve Ickx made a desperate do-or-die attempt and went by on the inside under braking. In a cloud of dust and locked wheels he went across the apex of the corner, slid out wide and Stewart dived through behind him and retook the lead; it was truly heroic motor racing. Undaunted, Ickx continued to harry the Scot all round the sixth lap, the two of them averaging nearly 108 mph in a breathtaking battle of sheer driving skill. As they crested the rise of Tiergarten Ickx was a few feet closer and alongside as they passed the pits. He sat it out with Stewart, wheel-to-wheel as they raced towards the South Turn and this time he was into the corner first and leading as they came back up behind the pits. With a clear road ahead Ickx used everything the Brabham could give and set yet another lap record with a time of 7 mins 43.8 secs, which gave him a narrow two second lead on Stewart.'



1971, Nurburgring

Jackie managed to stay with Jacky for the next two laps, but then the Matra's gearbox began to play up and he dropped back. Ickx eased up, lapping at around 7 mins 52 secs and still going away from Stewart, who was well ahead of Bruce McLaren. And that is how they finished, Ickx completing the 14 laps at an average speed of 108.43 mph/174.498 kph and demolishing the lap record of 8 mins 05.3 secs (set by 'the other Jackie') with a time of 7 mins 43.8 secs (110.13 mph/177.244 kph). That drive established Jacky Ickx as King of the Nurburgring.

"At that time Jackie Stewart was the man to beat and I beat him there," he recalls. "Also, because Jack Brabham had broken his leg I had the whole team behind me, which gave me the extra confidence I needed to take off. That was really the start of things for me in F1."

Ickx went on to win the Canadian GP for Brabham (ahead of his boss, Jack) and was second in Mexico, which made him second in the World Championship behind Stewart. However, in October, 1969 he tested a Ferrari 312B at Vallelunga and was immediately impressed with the power and torque of Mauro Forghieri's superb flat-12 engine. He decided to rejoin Ferrari and drive their F1 and sportscars in 1970.

John Surtees had also rejoined the Scuderia (although only for four endurance races) and, driving a 512, he and Ickx finished second to the Porsche 917K of Jo Siffert/Brian Redman in the Spa 1000 kms. As the Nurburgring is just 'up the road' from Spa, Ferrari went straight there to test a 512 Spyder prior to the German 1000 kms race two weeks later. Unfortunately, Jacky spun the car and bent it somewhat, which curtailed the testing but the Scuderia still entered three cars for the race, to be driven by Ickx/Ignazio Giunti; Surtees/Peter Schetty and Arturo Merzario/Nino Vaccarella.

However, as Patrick McNally reported in *Autosport*: 'Ferrari were having their usual share of aggravations. The cars are a bit big and heavy for this tight circuit and no match for the scuttling Porsche 908s. Added to this, Ickx had hurt his wrist when he slipped on some stairs. He arrived late and did a single lap before deciding that his damaged wrist wasn't up to the task. As he said afterwards: "To drive a Ferrari round the Ring you need three hands, and I've only got one!"'

Fair enough, but it was a shame, nonetheless, as it would have been interesting to compare the lap times of the new Ringmeister and the old in the big Ferrari.



1971, Nurburgring

Jacky did not get to drive at the Ring again that year, and nor did anyone else, as the German GP moved to Hockenheim, while the bulldozers moved in to make the Nürburgring acceptable to the GPDA. However, the GPDA itself was not acceptable to Jacky Ickx and in October, 1970, he resigned (See *Der Nürburg-Ring - A History*).

Much of the work was completed in time for the 1000 Kms race on May 30, 1971. This looked as though it would be a straight fight between the four Alfa Romeo Tipo 33-3s, fresh from their superb 1-2 victory in the Targa Florio two weeks earlier, and the four Porsche 908s, of which there were two each entered by JWA-Gulf and Martini International.

But lurking menacingly in the garage square was a lone Ferrari wolf, eager to devour the Alfa and Porsche sheep in the race. This was the 312P, as near as dammit Ferrari's F1 car in disguise. The FIA had announced a 3-litre limit for Prototypes to begin in 1972, so Ferrari simply adjusted their GP car to carry an all-enveloping 'two-seater' body and hey, presto - a sportsracer! Porsche had already discovered that their nimble, 3-litre 908 could run rings around the awesome, 5-litre 917 at the Ring, and Ferrari was about to learn the same regarding their 312P and 512. The three-litre car took to

the Eifel like a duck to water. It had, as Denis Jenkinson noted in *Motor Sport*, 'a Grand Prix-type 3-litre flat-12 cylinder engine, Grand Prix brakes, gearbox and suspension and Grand Prix drivers Ickx and Regazzoni to drive it.'

This was the first race on the 'new' Nürburgring and, as Patrick McNally revealed in *Autosport*, 'Since the GPDA turned down this circuit last year the famous Nürburgring has had a complete facelift. Most of the places where the cars used to become airborne have been levelled off, including the notorious 13.2-km post going up towards the Karussell, while the difficult section through Wippermann and Brunnchen has been substantially altered, although the track still goes the same way. There are run-off areas around most of the track, which is also bordered with curbs; however the dangerous run down to Adenau remains little altered, and the straight is still lined with hedge rather than guard-rail. Before the Grand Prix in August more changes will no doubt be made, but drivers were already complaining that the work had removed many of their markers and they were having to learn the course all over again!

'Jacky Ickx lost little time in familiarising himself with the changes and soon had the little Ferrari whistling round; the Belgian's uncanny



1972 Germany GP, Nurburgring. 1st Jacky Ickx, 2nd Clay Regazzoni, giving Ferrari a 1-2 finish and 3rd Ronnie Peterson of March



1972, Nurburgring Ferrari 312PB 0882 driven by Jacky Ickx (B) and Clay Regazzoni (CH)

skill was confirmed with a lap in 7 mins 36.1 secs, a full 9 seconds faster than any other car. Clay Regazzoni managed 7' 42.4" although it was only his second time here, so the Ferrari started as super-favourite.'

It looked a sure-fire winner from the start of the race, too, for Ickx simply drove away from the opposition and after five laps he was 40 seconds ahead of the Alfa Romeo of Rolf Stommelen, having broken his own sportscar lap record with a time of 7 mins 40.8 secs. Stommelen was being harried by the Porsches of Vic Elford and Jo Siffert, but they could do nothing about the Ferrari.

Until one lap later, when Ickx made for the pits having noticed that the water temperature in the flat-12 was rising rapidly. There was no apparent reason for this, so more water -and fuel - was added and Jacky was sent on his way, but not before Stommelen, Elford and Siffert had all gone by. Mauro Forghieri then went searching among the British pits for some Radweld, but to no avail, so when Ickx stopped again next time round nothing could be done except to tell him to drive on the water temperature guage, which he did, and to great effect.

Jacky was now back in sixth place, but going like the wind and when, on lap 11, the Alfas and the Porsches all seemed to stop at once for fuel, he moved up to third. On the very next lap he passed the Stommelen/Galli Alfa and then the Elford/Larrousse Porsche to take the lead and, remarkably, was almost a minute ahead by the end of that lap. Things got even better for Ferrari when the Alfa pulled in to retire with a broken con-rod next time round.

Ickx finally handed over to Regazzoni after 15 electrifying laps and Clay went back into the race without losing the lead. He proved to be an excellent foil for Ickx and kept the pursuing Porsche of Elford/Larrousse some 20 seconds behind the Ferrari, until the inevitable happened, as Patrick McNally reported: 'The Ferrari challenge disappeared on lap 21 when Regazzoni came into the pits and Larrousse swept by into the lead. The 312P was completely out of coolant and when they added water it poured straight out of the exhaust pipes, indicating cracked heads. The mechanics wheeled the red car away; they hadn't won, but they had certainly proved a point.'

And Jacky Ickx had proved once again (as if proof were needed) that he was a true Ringmeister. Unfortunately, he blotted his copybook a couple of months later when he went off the road in the German GP. He was brilliant in practice, vying for pole position with 'the other Jackie' in the Tyr-

rell, who was fastest on the Friday morning with a time of 7 mins 21.9 secs. Ickx could only do 7' 35.8", but the engine in his Ferrari 312B2 was running hot and refusing to pull maximum revs. In the afternoon Stewart recorded a stunning 7' 19.0" and Jacky got down to 7' 22.9", reducing that to 7' 19.2" on the Saturday. Sunday, it seemed, would see true 'Battle of the Ringmeisters'.

Sadly, it was not to be, for although Ickx took an immediate lead in the race, Stewart passed him as they went into the North Turn and was never again headed. At the end of lap one he had a lead of three seconds over Ickx and team-mate Regazzoni, but on the second tour Ickx made a rare mistake in the climbing right-hand turn at Wippermann and clouted the new Armco barrier hard. He was unhurt, but the Ferrari was hors de combat. However, Jacky would make amends for this faux pas in fine style in the next two years, winning the German GP and then the 1000Kms.

'Of all the circuits in the Grand Prix series it is the Nurburgring which provides the greatest test of driver skill,' wrote Autocar's Ray Hutton in 1972. '14.2 miles of twisting tarmac, over 170 corners, call for experience and familiarity. Naturally the car needs to be fast - average speeds at the Ring are around 115 mph these days - and must be well set up for the continuous curves and changes of camber. When all these factors come together the combination is irresistible. They come together with Jacky Ickx. Ever since he shocked the Establishment by setting third fastest time overall in a Formula 2 Matra in practice for the 1967 German Grand Prix, the young Belgian has been acknowledged as the "man to beat" at the Ring.'

Jackie Stewart would no doubt have something to say about the last sentiment, but not even he could beat 'the other Jacky' to pole position for the German GP. As in the previous year, the two Ringmeisters were locked in battle throughout practice but, as Patrick McNally noted in Autosport: 'There was absolutely no doubt about who was the star of practice; Ickx was fastest on Friday with 7 mins 10.0 secs, over 9 secs under Cevert's existing lap record, the Ferrari going superbly. On Saturday Ickx, as if to endorse the point, put in four fantastic laps: 7' 07", followed by 7' 07.6" and a couple around the 7' 10.0" mark - a simply incredible performance. Jacky was going down the tricky section towards the Adenau Bridge using every bit of road, visibly closer to the limit than anybody else. At the end of practice he said that he wouldn't have liked to have been watching his own performance as it would be too frightening. Needless to say the Ferrari was on pole position, having made

mincemeat of the lap record.'

In Motor Sport, Denis Jenkinson was equally impressed: 'Ickx was consistently below 7 mins 10 secs and ended up with a shattering 7' 07.0", a speed of 192.5 kph (approx 119.5 mph). It was Grand Prix driving at its best and a complete justification of the "face-lift" given to the Eifel circuits, making it the sort of challenge to man and machine that is sadly lacking on the flat Autodromes. A lap at nearly 120 mph round the Nurburgring is the sort of performance that makes the most blase follower of the sport reel back and exclaim "Kee-rist" or "Mon Dieu". Ickx was not alone in these last-minute heroics, for Stewart was well under 7 mins 10 secs and right at the end of practice got one in at 7 mins 08.7 secs, a mere 1.7 secs slower in more than seven minutes of 100 per-cent concentrated high-speed driving. These were the undisputed "Ringmeisters".'

Other fine performances came from Emerson Fittipaldi (Lotus-Cosworth), making only his second appearance at the Ring and Ronnie Peterson (March-Cosworth). Emerson was third fastest in practice with a remarkable 7 mins 09.9 secs, ahead of Peterson, who recorded 7' 12.4".

Happily, the length of the Grand Prix had been restored to 14 laps (200 miles) this year, which was a distinct boon for spectators, who saw little enough of the cars, due to the 14.2-mile lap. From the start it was Jacky Ickx's race and after a standing lap in 7 mins 29.1 secs he began to annihilate the lap record, emulating Juan Fangio's astonishing attack in the 1957 Grand Prix and Phil Hill's similar assault on the sportscar record in 1961. His first flying lap took 7 mins 20.7 secs, then it was: lap three - 7' 18.8"; lap four - 7' 16.7"; lap five - 7' 16.8"; lap six - 7' 16.2"; lap seven - 7' 15.1"; lap eight - 7' 14.7"; lap nine - 7' 14.5"; lap ten - 7' 13.6"; lap eleven - 7' 14.9"; lap twelve - 7' 15.7"; lap thirteen (easing up, now) - 7' 20.4" and lap fourteen 7' 25.1".

"That wasn't difficult," says Jacky. "When you warm up the muscles you get efficient lap after lap and that year the Ferrari was an excellent car. We should have won the Championship, but there were too many small failures with the 312."

After five laps Jacky was 13.6 secs ahead of the second man,

Emerson Fittipaldi, who was going like gangbusters in the Lotus. Third was Ronnie Peterson in the March, closely followed by Clay Regazzoni in the second Ferrari and Jackie Stewart in the Tyrrell. At half-distance Ickx had increased his lead to 17 seconds and on lap ten he recorded his fastest lap of the day in 7' 13.6", now having, as Ray Hutton pointed out: 'that clear indicator of Nurburgring



1973, Nurburgring

dominance - the whole of the start area loop, from the chicane through to the North Curve - in hand over Fittipaldi.'

He slowed slightly on the next tour as an exhaust manifold had split and the Ferrari flat-12 was lacking some 400 rpm on the straight, but as he now had a lead of some 45 seconds over teammate Clay Regazzoni, he was in no trouble. Jacky took the chequered flag to win his second Grand Prix at the Nurburgring after a truly sensational drive. As Jenks wrote: 'To say that the Ferrari victory was popular would be an understatement, while Ickx was smiling happily because any driver knows when he has done a superb job of driving, and he knew.'

He did indeed. "That win with the Ferrari was my most satisfying drive at the Nurburgring," says Jacky. "I was at the peak of my ability then and very few people could match me there."

On July 30, 1972, for "very few", read "nobody" and that drive marked him truly as a King of the Nurburgring. He was, indeed, at the very peak of his ability, so it is ironic that his superb performance should bring him what was to be his last Grand Prix win of all. He had every reason to believe that he would add many more to the eight he had already accumulated but, despite his undoubted skills, from that point on his Grand Prix career went nowhere.

However, whereas Scuderia Ferrari's F1 programme was in disarray at this time, their sports-cars were virtually unbeatable and in marked contrast to his F1 season, in 1972 Jacky won no fewer than six of the eleven Championship endurance races. Unfortunately, the Nurburgring 1000 Kms was not one of them. Ferrari entered three 312Ps for Ickx/Regazzoni, Brian Redman/ Arturo Merzario and Ronnie Peterson/Tim Schenken. The race started on a wet track and so the Ferraris were on Firestone tyres with a medium wet compound. Jacky took the lead on lap three and handed over to Regazzoni on lap 10. Clay retained the lead, but the track was now drying rapidly and the tyres were losing their grip, so much so that on lap 17 he clobbered the Armco at Wippermann and that was that. The other two Ferraris managed to stay on the road and finished first and second.

Jacky put things right the following year, but with no thanks to his team-mate, Arturo Merzario. Ferrari entered two 312Ps for Ickx/Brian Redman and Merzario/Carlos Pace. They were up against the Alfa Romeos of Rolf Stommelen/Andrea de Adamich and Clay Regazzoni/Carlo Facetti and the Matras of Henri Pescarolo/Gerard Larrousse and Francois Cevert/ Jean-Pierre Beltoise.

It was Cevert in the Matra who was the sensation of practice, beating Ickx's F1 lap record of 7 mins 13.6 secs by 0.08 secs to take pole position. He didn't bother to practice any more after that! Rolf Stommelen was second fastest in the Alfa, with 7' 19.5", but the Ferraris were in trouble, as Jeff Hutchinson noted in Autosport: 'Ferrari were obviously way off the mark and just not quick enough, which was rubbed in when Ickx spent several laps trying to keep up with Beltoise (Matra) on Friday and came back in after losing a lot of ground, with a best time of 7' 23.5". The second Ferrari did not better 7' 28.2" on the first day.

'Timekeeping was very suspect and one could not help thinking that the organisers were doctoring the times to suit the pre-race publicity. It became a bit naughty when, after Saturday's practice, Ickx was credited with 7 mins 15.5 secs, much to the surprise of Ferrari. General opinion was that the timekeepers had timed the wrong car, for all the pits got Ickx at a best of 7' 21.7", which was the time they ended up giving to Merzario in the second Ferrari.'

Francois Cevert ran away with the race to begin with, setting a new lap record of 7 mins 20.3 secs on lap eight and being some 15 seconds ahead of Jacky Ickx in the Ferrari. This increased by a further 10 seconds at their respective pit stops, as a fuse had to be replaced on the Ferrari before the fuel pumps would work. The Merzario/Pace Ferrari was in third place, ahead of the

Stommelemn/de Adamich Alfa, but the latter retired with various engine troubles on lap 11.

This was good news for Ferrari, and things got even better two laps later when the Cevert/Beltoise Matra threw a rod and handed the race to Jacky and Brian Redman. But not quite, for Arturo Merzario decided to upset the Ferrari apple cart. His co-driver, Carlos Pace, had made his first pit stop a lap early by mistake and Merzario, who had not yet climbed into his driving suit, had to take over without even putting on his gloves. He shook his fist in fury at Pace as he rejoined the race and, just to make his point he, too, stopped a lap early after seven laps, but at least Pace was ready.

Meanwhile, Brian Redman had done two stints on the trot after taking over from Ickx and now Jacky did likewise, so when Merzario went back into the second Ferrari Ickx was some 20 seconds ahead of him. Both drivers were signalled to take it easy, as a Ferrari one-two was virtually in the bag but Arturo, still fuming, decided to Hell with that! He drove faster and faster, ignoring the 'slow' signals from his pit and was lapping at around 7 mins 30 secs, a good 20 secs faster than

was necessary.

On lap 36 he took the lead! He and Ickx went past the pits with Jacky's flat-12 mis-firing on the rev-limiter, which was cutting in early and preventing him from keeping Merzario at bay. 'Three times they hung out "in" signs to the Italian but he took no notice,' wrote Jeff Hutchinson, 'finally letting Ickx ahead again on lap 38 and then stopping a lap later. Sig Caliri (the Ferrari Team Manager) had to order Merzario out of the car as he did not want to get out. Pace finished the race to orders, but no doubt made Caliri feel he had a mutiny on his hands when he closed right up on Ickx again for the finish, although he did not attempt to pass. Merzario took off his helmet and stormed off, which was probably the best thing he could do.'

So Jacky Ickx won the 1000 Kms at his sixth attempt. It was hardly a classic drive in the mould of his Grand Prix victory the year before, but any victory at the Nurburgring is worth more than most and it further enhanced his status as a Ringmeister, now with three wins to his name. However, it would be ten years before he would win again at the Ring.

By the time of the German Grand Prix Scuderia Ferrari was in complete disarray once more. Throughout the season Ickx had been slipping further and further back on the starting grid until, at Silverstone for the British GP, he found himself in 20th position with his Ferrari 312B3. He finished a lowly eighth and decided that it was time to leave the Scuderia, as he explained to Mike Doodson in Autosport:

'I had a long discussion with Ferrari last week. They have decided to withdraw for a period of time, which may be for one week, but might be three months. Mr Ferrari agrees that since he himself does not know how long this period will be - and since I might not be driving for him in 1974 - there would be no point in my trying to develop a car that I was not going to use next year.

'So we finally reached the decision to bring our existing agreements and contracts to an end now, instead of letting them run to the end of the year. My Ferrari contract is now finished and I am free to go where I want, when I want and with who I want.'

Jacky went to McLaren. 'I was in Zandvoort as a spectator (for the Dutch GP) and discussed the matter with McLaren there. It was a car I very much wanted to drive because the previous races - particularly Paul Ricard and Silverstone - proved that it was the most competitive. I asked if there could be a spare car for me at Nurburgring, provided I could be released by Ferrari, and that is exactly what happened.



1973, Nuerburgring Jacky Ickx in his Ferrari 312PB on the way to formation lap

'It was very nice of McLaren to let me have the third car in the middle of the championship season. As far as I am concerned, the first practice day with the McLaren was very important, because in a very few laps I proved that I was still quick and that I still had the incentive to drive fast.

'It is good for Ferrari, too. He will not have to ask any more "Is it the driver or is it the car?" Now he will be able to say to the engineer, "I regret, Jacky Ickx has done a good time at the Nurburgring with another car. Your job is now to make the Ferrari work properly."

All this was very important to Ickx, for the Italian press had been quick to blame him for Ferrari's lack of success, claiming that he had lost the will to win. McLaren sent three M23s to the Nurburgring, the first two for Denny Hulme and Pete Revson. As Pete Lyons noted in Autosport: 'The Yardley-Mclarens were as before, with one alteration - big red letters on the airbox of the "spare" car reading JACKY ICKX... Obviously the intelligent Belgian is now looking for work and it was a good chance to display his value to the world after the questioning statements issued in Italy; in return the Kiwis got the services of one of the undisputed Eifel specialists - and incidentally the race organisers got the entry of last year's winner!

Jacky settled into his large new cockpit with grace and wit, and within minutes had charmed the lads preparing his car firmly into his camp.'

In the first practice session Ickx wasted no time in showing his stuff. Although he was sitting in a Cosworth-powered car for the first time in four years, in five laps he got down to 7 mins 09.7 secs, only to have the engine blow up on the next tour. He was unable to practice again that day, but reckoned that he might well be able to break the seven-minute barrier in the McLaren. He never got the chance, as Saturday's practice was run in pretty damp conditions and although Jacky was fastest of the lot with 7'10.3" he was still fourth on the grid, behind Jackie Stewart (Tyrrell-Ford - 7' 07.8"); Ronnie Peterson (JPS Lotus-Ford - 7' 08.3") and Francois Cevert (Tyrrell-Ford - 7' 09.3"), who had set their times the day before. Still, he had the satisfaction of knowing that his pole position time of the previous year - 7' 07.0" - was unbeaten. And he was embarrassingly quicker than his team-mates Revson and Hulme, who could only do 7'15.9" and 7' 16.5" respectively, in cars they had been driving all season.

The race was dominated by the Tyrrells, which romped home less than two seconds apart after Peterson's Lotus came to a halt on the open-

ing lap with a failed distributor. Ickx finished a lonely third, 40 seconds behind the Tyrrells. He may well have given them a fight had not Denny Hulme decided to race the McLarens on the same Goodyear tyre compounds that the Tyrrells were using. Unfortunately, there was no time to practice with them in the dry, so the team started the GP with an unknown quantity. All they did know was that the new tyres were of a harder compound than the G70s they had used in practice and Ickx discovered that the new rubber didn't get up to racing temperature until he had completed two laps, by which time the Tyrrells were long gone. He put in a fine drive, nonetheless, and finished more than a minute and a half ahead of Revson and almost three minutes ahead of Hulme.

Jacky had proved his point, and a fat lot of good it did him! "I was quick immediately in a car I did not know," he recalls, "which gave me some hope for the future, but that didn't happen because in 1974 I joined Lotus and they were just another type of problem from Ferrari. And that was the end of my Grand Prix career!"

But not his racing career, for Jacky went on to become the most successful sportscar driver of all time, an achievement acknowledged by Motor Sport in January, 2004. Between 1967 and 1985 he accumulated an astonishing 37 World Championship victories, which included three at Le Mans, and three more there when the 24-hour race did not count towards the Championship. In 1976 he joined Porsche and over the next ten years he would win 24 endurance races for the Stuttgart concern, 19 of them with Jochen Mass. Remarkably, only one of those victories came at the Nurburgring.

In 1978 he finished third with Manfred Schurti. The race was a somewhat curious affair, being run in two, 22-lap halves for GT cars, with posses of Porsche 935s doing battle with bags of BMW 320s. Finally, Jacky won the event for the second time in 1983 and that was the very last 1000 Kms race to be held on the Nordschleife.

On a personal note, despite the fact that I had been on the staff of Autosport from 1957-1962 I had never managed to get to the Nurburgring so, fully aware that this was my last chance to see a race on the great Nordschleife, I determined not to miss it. Before I left for Germany I spoke with the editor of Motor to ask if he was sending anyone to cover the event. He had not made plans to do so and was happy to take up my offer of supplying words and pictures. This means that having consulted numerous other reporters' accounts of races from the very first in 1927, I can close this book by quoting from my own report of Jacky Ickx's win with the

Porsche 956 in the very last, in 1983. Here are my opening paragraphs, beginning with a quote from the winner:

"Not to sound immodest, but I have been racing here for nearly twenty years and sometime ago I was called The Ringmeister, so it was very special for me to win here today." It was also right and proper that Jacky Ickx should win the last 1000 Kms race to be held on the Nurburgring, arguably the greatest and most demanding racing circuit of all time.

'Ickx was indeed called The Ringmeister, a title he lived up to admirably on May 29, when he stamped his class on a race that was not, sadly, one to remember, apart from the fact that re-marked the end of an era.'

It must be said that Jacky and his co-driver Jochen Mass did not appear to be the likely winners after practice. That was dominated by the stunning performance of their Rothmans-Porsche team-mate, the young wunderkind, Stefan Bellof. At the time the new, modern GP circuit was in the process of being built, which meant that the old pits straight and return road via the

South and North Turns had been by-passed and the length of the real Ring was reduced to 12.9 miles. As I noted in Motor-

'The only benchmark for this "shortened" circuit was Christian Danner's F2 pole position time of 6 mins 29.0 secs, set in April. In one sensational flying lap, young master Bellof was out and back again in an unbelievable 6 mins 11.1 secs - the first-ever 200 kph lap at the Ring and, by a nice co-incidence, almost exactly double Caracciola's winning speed on the full circuit in the very first race back in 1927 - 202.053 kph against 101.1 kph! Without question, here was a Ringmeister in the making.' (I was wrong about Caracciola's winning speed, which was 96.5 kph. He set fastest lap at 101.1 kph.)

At the time, work on the new Nurburgring was well under way and the old pits had been demolished, but the main grandstand incorporating the Sport-Hotel was still in use. Unfortunately, constant heavy rain over several months had turned the building site into a quagmire and most of the workforce had been laid off until conditions improved.

Happily, the weather was fine over the race weekend. With a number of other scribes I made my way down to the Tiergarten Bridge to see the cars start the race behind the pace car on the three-kilometre straight. 'Standing on tables kindly laid out for the Press all along the bridge,' I wrote, 'we saw the pace car pull off in the distance and the

field of 34 starters launch itself towards us. As they flashed under the bridge at close to 200 mph, Bellof led by a whisker from Patrese (Lancia), Wollek, Mass, Fitzpatrick, Rosberg (Porsches) and Hans Stuck (Sehcar-BMW).

'Seven minutes later Bellof flew under the bridge all on his own and way down the straight we could just see one other car -Mass's Porsche - which took a full eight seconds to reach us, and that was after just one lap! Clearly Herr Bellof was a young man in a hurry!'

After seven laps Bellof and Mass were replaced by Derek Bell and Jacky Ickx, the gap between the two leading Porsches being around 25 seconds. Jacky set a new lap record with a time of 6mins 34.3 secs before the drivers changed over again at the end of lap 15. Then, as I wrote in Motor: 'The two works cars now had a huge lead over the opposition, but once behind the wheel again Stefan Bellof proceeded to go very fast indeed, setting a new lap record at 6' 25.9" and then, three laps later, having a monumental accident at Pflanzgarten. The Porsche took off at around 160 mph and Bellof was a passenger until it finally ground to a halt on the grass, having clobbered the Armco on both sides of the track with a vengeance. The car was written off at all four corners and it speaks volumes for the design of the modern racing car that the cockpit and the footwell were undamaged and Bellof walked away with nothing worse than a bruised hand.'

As Jacky Ickx recalls, "That was the race that Stefan Bellof should have won. He was doing very well with Derek Bell, and that car was very heavy, with no power steering or power brakes." (Sadly, Bellof's brilliant career was to come to a tragic end two years later, at Spa, when he made an impossible move on Ickx at Eau Rouge in the 1000 Kms race. Ickx survived the resulting accident; Bellof did not.)

As a first-timer at this fabulous circuit I noted in Motor that, 'One of the great things about the Ring is that you can get to see almost all of it with the aid of a car and a pair of wellies. Having seen the start from the Tiergarten Bridge I then drove round the old South circuit to Mullenbach and followed the very twisty road to Potsdammer Platz and then on to where the road goes under the circuit at the delightfully named Quiddelbacher-Höhe. Later I drove through the village of Quiddelbach to Breidscheid and on to Adenau Bridge. This road, and the one leading back up from Adenau, through Breidscheid to Nürburg castle, is like a miniature Nurburgring, with some lovely plunging twists and turns that you can enjoy while on your way to watch the aces on the real thing.'

I was at Bergwerk when the circuit suddenly fell silent and no cars appeared. This was because Walter Brun in his Sehcar-BMW had had an even bigger shunt than Bellof, crashing into the Armco at Kesselchen at high speed, destroying the car and breaking his arm. The Armco was so battered that the race was halted for 90 minutes while it was repaired.

By this time the leaders had completed 25 laps, so the organisers decided to send the cars off for another 19, making 44 in all, rather than the 48 that had originally been scheduled for the shortened circuit. On the sixth lap Jochen Mass suffered a broken rear wishbone on the 956 at Flugplatz. He hobbled round to the pits where the Porsche mechanics did a fantastic job, getting him back in the race in just under six minutes. He and Jacky had lost the lead on the road, but when the times of the two parts of the race were added up on the ADAC's computers, there was no doubt about the winners - Jacky Ickx and Jochen Mass in the works Rothmans Porsche.

I concluded my race report by noting that despite the fact that this was the last 1000 Kms race on the great Nurburgring, 'Happily, you and I will still be able to pay our 10 Marks and drive round this fabulous circuit (as 100,000 people do every year) and wallow in the sheer excitement it brings and the breathtaking effort it requires. And those of us who care about such things can take comfort from the fact that the last great race on the Ring was won by the last of the great Ringmeisters - Jacky Ickx.'

Looking back on the race in 2004 I have three abiding memories of that historic weekend, 1) the look of sheer disbelief on the faces of everyone in the pits when we learned of Stefan Bellof's stunning 6 mins 11 secs lap in practice; 2) having lunch in the restaurant of the Sport Hotel while Brun's accident was cleared up and looking out over that depressing sea of mud that had replaced the historic start/finish area and 3) a charming incident in the Rothmans marquee after the race. I was there to get the winner's quote from Jacky Ickx, who happily obliged, while watching his daughters Larissa and Vanina (then aged ten and eight, respectively) enjoying ice-creams.

"May I have some, please?" he asked. One of the girls dutifully offered hers for her father to lick - and then pushed it right into his face. Shrieks of laughter from the girls - and a crème surprise for the last of the Kings of the Nurburgring!

ICKS AT THE RING

YEAR	EVENT	LAPS	CAR	NUMBER	RESULT
1965	Marathon de la Route		Ford Mustang (with Gilbert Staepelaere)	31	2nd
1966	Grand Prix	15	Matra F2	27	DNF
	Marathon de la Route		Lotus Cortina (with Gilbert Staepelaere)		2nd
1967	1000 Kms		Gulf-Mirage (with Richard Attwood)	6	DNF
	Grand Prix	15	Matra F2	29	DNF
1968	1000 Kms		Gulf-Mirage (with Paul Hawkins)	65	3rd
	Grand Prix	14	Ferrari 312 (with Jackie Oliver)	9	PP 4th
1969	1000 Kms		Gulf-Mirage (with Jackie Oliver)	8	DNF
	Grand Prix	14	Brabham-Ford)	6	PP & RL 1
1971	1000 Kms		Ferrari 312P (with Clay Regazzoni)	15	PP & LR DNF
	Grand prix	12	Ferrari 312		DNF
1972	1000 Kms		Ferrari 312P		DNF
	Grand Prix	14	Ferrari 312B2	4	PP & FL 1
1973	1000 Kms		Ferrari 312P(with Brian Redman)	1	PP 1
	Grand Prix	14	McLaren M23	30	3rd
1974	Grand Prix	14	Lotus 72 E		5th
1978	1000 Kms		Porsche 935 (with Manfred Schurti)	8	2nd
1983	1000 Kms		Porsche 956 (with Jochen Mass)	1	1

RESULTS

THE EIFEL GRAND PRIX	THE GERMAN GRAND PRIX
1927	
<p>JUNE 19 FULL CIRCUIT (28.27 KM/17.56 M)</p> <p>SPORTSCARS 12 laps: 340.8 km/211 miles</p> <p>1. Rudolf Caracciola (Mercedes-Benz S) 3 hr 33 min 21.0 sec, 96.5 kph/59.96 mph; 2. Adolf Rosenberger (Mercedes-Benz S) 3 hr 50 min 24.2 sec; 3. J von Mosch (Mercedes-Benz S) 4 hr 09 min 04.0 sec. Fastest lap: Rudolf Caracciola - 17 mins 11.1 secs.</p> <p>RACING CARS 14 laps: 397.6 kms/247 miles</p> <p>1. August Momberger (Bugatti) 4 hr 39 min 00.1 sec, 84.5 kph/52.5 mph</p>	<p>JULY 17 THE FULL CIRCUIT (28.27 KM/17.56 MILES)</p> <p>18 laps 509.4 km/316.54 miles</p> <p>1. Otto Merz (Mercedes-Benz S) 4 hr 59 min 35.6 sec, 102 kph/63.38 mph; 2. Christian Werner (Mercedes-Benz S) 5 hr 02 min/54.6 sec; 3. Willy Walb (Mercedes-Benz S) 5 hr 10 min 49.0 sec; 4. Mme Elizabeth Junek (Bugatti); 5. Hugo Urban-Emmerich (Talbot); 6. Willy Cleer (Bugatti)</p> <p>Fastest lap: Christian Werner - 15 min 51.6 sec, 107.0 kph/66.49 mph.</p>
1928	
<p>1928-1931 held on the Südschleife</p>	<p>JULY 15 18 laps 509.4 km/316.54 miles</p> <p>1. Rudolf Caracciola/Christian Werner (Mercedes-Benz SS) 4 hr 54 min 24.0 sec, 103.9 kph/64.6 kph; 2. Otto Merz (Mercedes-Benz SS) 4 hr 56 min 02.0 sec; 3. Christian Werner/Willy Walb (Mercedes-Benz SS) 5 hr 04 min 23.0 sec; 4. Count Gaston Brilli-Peri (Bugatti) 5 hr 5 min 16.0 sec; 5. George Kimpel/Adolf Rosenberger (Mercedes-Benz SS) 5 hr 06 min 29.0 sec; 6. Louis Chiron (Bugatti) 5 hr 17 min 26.0 sec;</p> <p>Fastest lap: Rudolf Caracciola - 15 min 13.2 sec, 111.6 kph/69.34 mph.</p>
1929	
	<p>JULY 14 18 laps 509.4 km/316.54 miles</p> <p>1. Louis Chiron (Bugatti T35C) 4 hr 46 min 06.4 sec, 106.9 kph/66.42 mph; 2. 'Georges Philippe' (Bugatti T35C) 4 hr 57min 52.2 sec; 3. August Momberger/Count Max Arco-Zinnenberg (Mercedes-Benz SSK) 5 hr 00 min 37.8 sec; 4. Guy Bouriat (Bugatti T35C) 5 hr 03 min 28.4 sec; 5. Mario Lepori (Bugatti); 6. W.Rosenstein/Adolf Rosenberger (Mercedes-Benz SSK);</p> <p>Fastest lap: Louis Chiron - 15 min 06.0 sec, 112.58 kph/69.97 mph.</p>
1931	
	<p>JULY 19 Nordschleife (22.8 km/14.17 miles) 22 laps 501.82 km/311.8 miles</p> <p>1. Rudolf Caracciola (Mercedes-Benz SSKL) 4 hr 38 min 10.0 sec 108.3 kph/67.29 mph; 2. Louis Chiron (Bugatti T51) 4 hr 39 min 28.0 sec; 3. Achille Varzi (Bugatti T51) 4 hr 42 min 10.0 sec; 4. Tazio Nuvolari (Alfa Romeo 8C Monza) 4 hr 43 min 16.0 sec; 5. Otto Merz (Mercedes-Benz SSKL) 4 hr 43 min 54.0 sec; 6. Hans Stuck (Mercedes-Benz SSKL) 4 hr 47 min 34.0 sec;</p> <p>Fastest Lap: Achille Varzi - 11 min 48.0 sec, 115.98 kph/72.07 mph.</p>
1932	
<p>1932 onwards held for Racing Cars on the Nordschleife (22.8 km/14.17 m)</p> <p>MAY 31 14 laps 319.2 km/198.38 miles</p> <p>1. Rudolf Caracciola (Alfa Romeo 8C Monza) 2hr 48 min 22.0 sec, 113.7 kph/70.65 mph; 2. René Dreyfus (Bugatti) 2 hr 48 min 44 sec; 3. Manfred von Brauchitsch (Mercedes-Benz SSKL); 4. Hans Stuck (Mercedes-Benz SSKL); 5. Louis Chiron (Bugatti);</p> <p>Fastest lap: Rudolf Caracciola - 11 mins 42.8 secs.</p>	<p>JULY 17 Nordschleife: 25 laps 570.25 km/354.35 miles</p> <p>1. Rudolf Caracciola (Alfa Romeo P3) 4 hr 47 min 22.08 sec, 119.3 kph/74.24 mph; 2. Tazio Nuvolari (Alfa Romeo P3) 4hr 47 min 53.0 sec; 3. Baconin Borzacchini (Alfa Romeo P3) 4 hr 54 min 33.0 sec; 4. René Dreyfus (Bugatti T51) 5 hr 01 min 05.4 sec;</p> <p>Fastest lap: Tazio Nuvolari - 10 min 49.4 sec, 126.6 kph/78.66 mph.</p>
1933	
<p>MAY 28 15 laps 347.15 km/215.7 miles</p> <p>1. Tazio Nuvolari (Alfa Romeo 8C Monza) 3 hr 00 min 59 sec, 113.5 kph/70.52 mph; 2. Manfred von Brauchitsch (Mercedes-Benz) 3 hr 06 min 54 sec; 3. Piero Taruffi (Alfa Romeo 8C Monza) 3 hr 09 min 09 sec; 4. Louis Chiron (Alfa Romeo 8C Monza) 3 hr 11 min 48 sec;</p> <p>Fastest lap: not known.</p>	<p>No race</p>

1934

<p>JUNE 3 15 laps 347.15 km/215.7 miles</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Manfred von Brauchitsch (Mercedes-Benz W25) 2 hr 47 min 36.0 sec, 122.47 kph/76.12 mph; 2. Hans Stuck (Auto Union A-type); 3. Louis Chiron (Alfa Romeo P3); 4. Paul Pietsch (Alfa Romeo P3); <p>Fastest lap: not known.</p>	<p>JULY 15 25 laps 570.25 km/354.35 miles</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hans Stuck (Auto Union A-type) 4 hr 38 min 19.2 sec, 122.88 kph/76.37 mph; 2. Luigi Fagioli (Mercedes-Benz W25) 4 hr 40 min 26.1 sec; 3. Louis Chiron (Alfa Romeo P3) 4 hr 46 min 32.4 sec; 4. Tazio Nuvolari (Maserati 8CM); 5. Hanns Geier (Mercedes-Benz W25); 6. Goffredo Zehender (Maserati 8CM); <p>Fastest lap: Hans Stuck - 10 min 43.77 sec, 127.6 kph/79.29 mph.</p>
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1935

<p>JUNE 16 11 laps 250.8 km/155.84 miles</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rudolf Caracciola (Mercedes-Benz W25) 2 hr 08 min 02.3 sec, 117.45 kph/73.0 mph; 2. Bernd Rosemeyer (Auto Union B-type) 2 hr 08 min 04.2 sec; 3. Louis Chiron (Alfa Romeo P3) 2 hr 09 min 34.4 sec; 4. Luigi Fagioli (Mercedes-Benz W25) 2 hr 12 min 44.2 sec; 5. Hermann Lang (Mercedes-Benz W25) 2 hr 13 min 48.3 sec; 6. Paul Pietsch (Auto Union B-type) 2 hr 14 min 49.0 sec; <p>Fastest lap: Bernd Rosemeyer - 11 min 05.0 sec, 126.5 kph/78.6 mph.</p>	<p>JULY 28 22 laps 501.82 km/311.83 miles</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tazio Nuvolari (Alfa Romeo P3) 4 hr 08 min 39.0 sec, 121.2 kph/75.16 mph; 2. Hans Stuck (Auto Union B-type) 4 hr 10 min 18.3 sec; 3. Rudolf Caracciola (Mercedes-Benz W25) 4 hr 11 min 03.0 sec; 4. Bernd Rosemeyer (Auto Union B-type) 4 hr 12 min 51.0 sec; 5. Manfred von Brauchitsch (Mercedes-Benz W25) 4 hr 14 min 17.0 sec; 6. Luigi Fagioli (Mercedes-Benz W25) 4 hr 15 min 58.0 sec; <p>Fastest lap: Manfred von Brauchitsch - 10 min 32.0 sec, 129.93 kph/80.73 mph.</p>
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1936

<p>JUNE 14 10 laps 228.1 km/141 miles</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bernd Rosemeyer (Auto Union C-type) 1 hr 56 min 41.2 sec, 117.1 kph/72.76 mph; 2. Tazio Nuvolari (Alfa Romeo 12C) 1 hr 58 min 54.0 sec; 3. Antonio Brivio (Alfa Romeo 12C) 1 hr 59 min 30.4 sec; 4. Giuseppe Farina (Alfa Romeo 8C) 1 hr 59 min 58.6 sec; 5. Hermann Lang (Mercedes-Benz W25) 2 hr 02 min 28.4 sec; 6. Louis Chiron (Mercedes-Benz W25) 2 hr 03 min 33.0 sec; <p>Fastest lap: Bernd Rosemeyer - 11 min 25.0 sec, 120.3 kph/74.76 mph.</p>	<p>JULY 26 22 laps 501.82 km/311.83 miles</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bernd Rosemeyer (Auto Union C-type) 3 hr 48 min 39.6 sec, 131.65 kph/81.80 mph; 2. Hans Stuck (Auto Union C-type) 3 hr 52 min 36.4 sec; 3. Antonio Brivio (Alfa Romeo 8C-35) 3 hr 57 min 05.0 sec; 4. Rudolf Hasse (Auto Union C-type) 3 hr 59 min 13.2 sec; 5. Luigi Fagioli/Rudolf Caracciola (Mercedes-Benz W25) 21 laps; 6. Ernst von Delius (Auto Union C-type) 21 laps. <p>Fastest lap: Bernd Rosemeyer - 9 min 56.6 sec.</p>
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1937

<p>JUNE 13 10 laps 228.1 km/141 miles</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bernd Rosemeyer (Auto Union C-type) 1 hr 42 min 11.5 sec, 113.5 kph/82.95 mph; 2. Rudolf Caracciola (Mercedes-Benz W125) 1 hr 43 min 01.8 sec; 3. Manfred von Brauchitsch (Mercedes-Benz W125) 1 hr 43 min 56.8 sec; 4. Rudolf Hasse (Auto Union C-type) 1 hr 45 min 46.0 sec; 5. Tazio Nuvolari (Alfa Romeo 12C) 1 hr 46 min 25.0 sec; 6. Hermann Lang (Mercedes-Benz W125) 1 hr 48 min 06.0 sec; <p>Fastest lap: Bernd Rosemeyer - 9 min 58.8 sec, 137.0 kmh/85.13 mph.</p>	<p>JULY 25 22 laps 501.82 km/311.83 miles</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rudolf Caracciola (Mercedes-Benz W125) 3 hr 46 min 00.1 sec, 133.2 kph/82.77 mph; 2. Manfred von Brauchitsch (Mercedes-Benz W125) 3 hr 46 min 46.3 sec; 3. Bernd Rosemeyer (Auto Union C-type) 3 hr 47 min 01.4 sec; 4. Tazio Nuvolari (Alfa Romeo 12C-36) 3 hr 50 min 04.0 sec; 5. Rudolf Hasse (Auto Union C-type) 3 hr 51 min 25.0 sec; 6. Christian Kautz (Mercedes-Benz W125) 3 hr 52 min 10.3 sec; <p>Fastest lap: Bernd Rosemeyer - 9 min 53.4 sec, 137.8 kph/85.62 mph.</p>
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1938

<p>No race</p>	<p>JULY 24 22 laps 501.82 km/311.83 miles</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Richard Seaman (Mercedes-Benz W154) 3 hr 51 min 46.2 sec, 129.9 kph/80.71 mph; 2. Rudolf Caracciola/Hermann Lang (Mercedes-Benz W154) 3 hr 55 min 06.1 sec; 3. Hans Stuck (Auto Union D-type) 4 hr 00 min 42.3 sec; 4. Hermann Paul Müller/Tazio Nuvolari (Auto Union D-type) 4 hr 01 min 19.1 sec; 5. René Dreyfus (Delahaye 145) 21 laps; 6. Paul Pietsch (Maserati 4CM) 21 laps; <p>Fastest lap: Richard Seaman - 10 min 78.1 sec, 134.76 kph/83.76 mph.</p>
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1939

<p>MAY 21 10 laps 228.1 km/141 miles</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hermann Lang (Mercedes-Benz W154) 1 hr 40 min 57.1 sec, 135 kph/84.14 mph; 2. Tazio Nuvolari (Auto Union D-type) 1 hr 41 min 08.3 sec; 3. Rudolf Caracciola (Mercedes-Benz W154) 1 hr 41 min 28.4 sec; 4. Manfred von Brauchitsch (Mercedes-Benz W154) 1 hr 42 min 53.0 sec; 5. Rudolf Hasse (Auto Union D-type) 1 hr 42 min 56.1 sec; 6. Ulli Bigalke (Auto Union D-type) 1 hr 44 min 52.1 sec; <p>Fastest lap: Hermann Lang - 9 min 52.2 sec, 138.5 kph/86.06 mph.</p>	<p>JULY 23 22 laps 501.82 km/311.83 miles</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rudolf Caracciola (Mercedes-Benz W154) 4 hr 08 min 41.8 sec, 121.2 kph/75.31 mph; 2. Hermann Paul Muller (Auto Union D-type) 4 hr 09 min 39.6 sec; 3. Paul Pietsch (Maserati 8CTF) 21 laps; 4. René Dreyfus (Delahaye 145) 20 laps; 5. 'Georges Raph' (Delahaye 145) 19 laps; 6. Robert Mazaud (Delahaye 145) 19 laps; <p>Fastest lap: Rudolf Caracciola - 10 min 24.2 sec, 131.5 kph/81.71 mph.</p>
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THE NURBURGRING 1000 KMS	THE GERMAN GRAND PRIX
1950	
	<p>AUGUST 20 16 laps 364.9 km/226.7 miles</p> <p>1. Alberto Ascari (Ferrari 166) 2 hr 55 min 00.8 sec, 125.0 kph/77.67 mph; 2. André Simon (Simca-Gordini) 2 hr 57 min 21.7 sec; 3. Maurice Trintignant (Simca-Gordini) 3 hr 03 min 28.5 sec; 4. Toni Ulmen (Veritas) 15 laps; 5. Ernst Seiler (Simca-Gordini) 15 laps; 6. Lance Macklin (HWM) 15 laps;</p> <p>Fastest lap: Alberto Ascari - 10 min 43.6 sec, 127.77 kph/79.35 mph.</p>
1951	
	<p>JULY 29 20 laps 456.2 km/284 miles</p> <p>1. Alberto Ascari (Ferrari 375) 3 hr 23 min 03.3 sec, 134.8 kph/83.71 mph; 2. Juan Manuel Fangio (Alfa Romeo 159) 3hr 23 min 33.8 sec; 3. Jose Froilan Gonzalez (Ferrari 375) 3 hr 27 min 42.3 sec; 4. Luigi Villoresi (Ferrari 375) 3 min 28 min 53.5 sec; 5. Piero Taruffi (Ferrari 375) 3 hr 30 min 52.4 sec; 6. Rudolf Fischer (Ferrari 212) 19 laps;</p> <p>Fastest lap: Juan Manuel Fangio - 9 min 55.8 sec, 137.9 kph/85.64 mph</p>
1952	
	<p>AUGUST 3 18 laps 410.58 km/255.15 miles</p> <p>1. Alberto Ascari (Ferrari 500) 3 hr 06 min 13.3 sec, 132.3 kph/82.09 mph; 2. Giuseppe Farina (Ferrari 500) 3 hr 06 min 27.4 sec; 3. Rudolf Fischer (Ferrari 500) 3 hr 13 min 23.4 sec; 4. Piero Taruffi (Ferrari 500) 17 laps; 5. Jean Behra (Gordini) 17 laps; 6. Roger Laurent (Ferrari 500) 16 laps;</p> <p>Fastest lap: Alberto Ascari - 10 min 05.1 sec, 135.8 kph/84.33 mph.</p>
1953	
<p>AUGUST 30</p> <p>44 laps of the 22.835 km Nordschleife, 1004.74 km/624.32 miles</p> <p>1. Alberto Ascari/Giuseppe Farina (Ferrari 340MM) 8 hr 20 min 44 sec, 120.3 kph/74.75 mph; 2. Roy Salvadori/Ian Stewart (Jaguar C-type) 8 hr 35 min 49 sec; 3. Günther Bechern/Theo Helfrich (Borgward) 8 hr 50 min 03 sec; 4. Trenkel/Schlüter (Porsche 550) 8 hr 56 min 52 sec (1 lap behind); 5. Wolfgang Seidel/Josef Peters (Veritas Meteor) 9 hr 25 min 17 sec; 6. Jock Lawrence/Jimmy Stewart (Jaguar C-type) 9 hr 50 min 58 sec;</p> <p>Fastest lap: Piero Taruffi (Lancia D24) - 10 min 23 sec, 132.0 kph/82.02 mph.</p>	<p>AUGUST 2 18 laps 410.58 km/255.15 miles</p> <p>1. Giuseppe Farina (Ferrari 500) 3 hr 02 min 25.0 sec, 134.97 kph/83.89 mph; 2. Juan Manuel Fangio (Maserati A6GCS) 3 hr 03 min 29.0 sec; 3. Mike Hawthorn (Ferrari 500) 3 hr 04 min 08.6 sec; 4. Felice Bonetto (Maserati A6GCS) 3 hr 11 min 13.6 sec; 5. Baron Toulou de Graffenried (Maserati A6GCS) 17 laps; 6. Stirling Moss (Cooper-Alta) 17 laps;</p> <p>Fastest lap: Alberto Ascari - (Ferrari 500) 9 min 56.0 sec, 137.78 kph/85.62 mph.</p>
1954	
<p>Race cancelled due to non-availability of Mercedes-Benz 300SLRs</p>	<p>AUGUST 1 22 laps 501 km/311.74 miles</p> <p>1. Juan Manuel Fangio (Mercedes-Benz W196) 3 hr 45 min 45.8 sec, 133.5 kph/82.77 mph; 2. Jose Froilan Gonzalez/Mike Hawthorn (Ferrari 625) 3 hr 47 min 22.3 sec; 3. Maurice Trintignant (Ferrari 625) 3 hr 50 min 54.4 sec; 4. Karl Kling (Mercedes-Benz W196) 3 hr 51 min 52.3 sec; 5. Sergio Mantovani (Maserati 250F) 3 hr 54 min 36.3 sec; 6. Piero Taruffi (Ferrari 625) 21 laps;</p> <p>Fastest lap: Karl Kling - 9 min 55.1 sec, 138.0 kph/85.75 mph.</p>
1955	
Race cancelled following the Le Mans disaster	

1956

<p>MAY 27</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stirling Moss/Jean Behra/Harry Schell/Piero Taruffi (Maserati 300S) 7 hr 43 min 54.5 sec, 129.7 kph/80.62 mph; 2. Juan Manuel Fangio/Eugenio Castellotti (Ferrari 860 Monza) 7 hr 44 min 40.7 sec; 3. Phil Hill/Olivier Gendebien/Fon de Portago (Ferrari 860 Monza) 7 hr 53 min 57.9 sec; 4. Wolfgang von Trips/Umberto Maglioli (Porsche RS Spyder) 8 hr 01 min 45.9 sec; 5. Peter Collins/Tony Brooks (Aston Martin DB3S) 43 laps; 6. Hans Herrmann/Richard von Frankenberg (Porsche RS Spyder) 44 laps* <p>(*Cars in every class had to complete the full 44 laps);</p> <p>Fastest lap: Juan Manuel Fangio - 10 min 05.3 sec, 135.6 kph/84.26 mph.</p>	<p>AUGUST 5 22 laps 501 km/311.74 miles</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Juan Manuel Fangio (Lancia-Ferrari) 3 hr 38 min 43.7 sec, 137.8 kph/85.62 mph; 2. Stirling Moss (Maserati 250F) 3 hr 39 min 30.1 sec; 3. Jean Behra (Maserati 250F) 3 hr 46 min 22.0 sec; 4. Francesco Godia (Maserati 250F) 20 laps; 5. Louis Rosier (Maserati 250F) 19 laps; <p>Fastest lap: Juan Manuel Fangio - 9 min 41.6 sec, 141.2 kph/87.74 mph.</p>
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1957

<p>MAY 26</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tony Brooks/Noel Cunningham-Reid (Aston Martin DBR1) 7 hr 33 min 38.2 sec, 132.6 kph/82.45 mph; 2. Peter Collins/Olivier Gendebien (Ferrari 335S) 7 hr 37 min 51.9 sec; 3. Mike Hawthorn/Maurice Trintignant (Ferrari 315S) 7 hr 39 min 27.2 sec; 4. Umberto Maglioli/Edgar Barth (Porsche RS Spyder) 7 hr 47 min 17.2 sec; 5. Juan Manuel Fangio/Stirling Moss/Francisco Godia/Horace Gould (Maserati 300S) 43 laps; 6. Roy Salvadori/Les Leston (Aston Martin DBR1) 43 laps <p>Fastest lap: Stirling Moss (Maserati 450S) - 9 min 49.9 sec, 139.1 kph/86.43 mph.</p>	<p>AUGUST 4 22 laps 501 km/311.74 miles</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Juan Manuel Fangio (Maserati 250F) 3 hr 30 min 38.3 sec, 142.9 kph/88.79 mph; 2. Mike Hawthorn (Ferrari 801) 3 hr 30 min 41.9 sec; 3. Peter Collins (Ferrari 801) 3 hr 31 min 13.9 sec; 4. Luigi Musso (Ferrari 801) 3 hr 34 min 15.9 sec; 5. Stirling Moss (Vanwall) 3 hr 35 min 15.8 sec; 6. Jean Behra (Maserati 250F) 3 hr 35 min 15.8 sec; <p>Fastest lap: Juan Manuel Fangio - 9 min 17.4 sec, 147.3 kph/91.53 mph.</p>
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1958

<p>JUNE 1</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stirling Moss/Jack Brabham (Aston Martin DBR1) 7 hr 23 min 33 sec, 135.8 kph/84.26 mph; 2. Mike Hawthorn/Peter Collins (Ferrari 250TR) 7 hr 27 min 17 sec; 3. Wolfgang von Trips/Olivier Gendebien (Ferrari 250TR) 7 hr 33 min 15 sec; 4. Luigi Musso/Phil Hill (Ferrari 250TR) 43 laps; 5. Wolfgang Seidel/Gino Munaron (Ferrari 250TR) 42 laps; 6. Graham Whitehead/Peter Whitehead (Aston Martin DB3S) 42 laps; <p>Fastest lap: Stirling Moss - 9 min 43.0 sec, 140.9 kph/87.55 mph.</p>	<p>AUGUST 3 15 laps 342.15 km/212.5 miles</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tony Brooks (Vanwall) 2 hr 21 min 15.0 sec, 145.8 kph/90.33 mph; 2. Roy Salvadori (Cooper-Climax) 2 hr 24 min 07.0 sec; 3. Maurice Trintignant (Cooper-Climax) 2 hr 26 min 26.2 sec; 4. Wolfgang von Trips (Ferrari Dino 246) 2 hr 27 min 31.3 sec; 5. Cliff Allison (Lotus-Climax) 13 laps; <p>Fastest lap: Stirling Moss (Vanwall) - 9 min 09.2 sec, 149.6 kph/92.90 mph.</p>
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1959

<p>JUNE 7 GP held at AVUS, Berlin</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stirling Moss/Jack Fairman (Aston Martin DBR1) 7 hr 33 min 18 sec, 132.8 kph/89.2 mph; 2. Phil Hill/Olivier Gendebien (Ferrari TR59) 7 hr 33 min 59 sec; 3. Tony Brooks/Jean Behra (Ferrari TR59) 7 hr 36 min 45 sec; 4. Umberto Maglioli/Hans Herrmann (Porsche RSK) 7 hr 40 min 57 sec; 5. Dan Gurney/Cliff Allison (Ferrari TR59) 43 laps; 6. Walter/Heuberger (Porsche RS Spyder) 42 laps; <p>Fastest lap: Stirling Moss - 9 min 32.0 sec, 143.56 kph/89.2 mph.</p>	<p>GP held at AVUS, Berlin</p>
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1960

<p>MAY 22</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stirling Moss/Dan Gurney (Maserati T61) 7 hr 31 min 40.5 sec, 132.2 kph/82.8 mph; 2. Jo Bonnier/Olivier Gendebien (Porsche RS60) 7 hr 34 min 32.9 sec; 3. Cliff Allison/Willy Mairesse/Phil Hill/Wolfgang von Trips (Ferrari 250TR) 7 hr 35 min 44.1 sec; 4. Hans Herrmann/Maurice Trintignant (Porsche RS60) 7 hr 37 min 57.7 sec; 5. Masten Gregory/Gino Munaron (Maserati T61) 43 laps; 6. H.Walter/T.Losinger (Porsche RSK) 42 laps; <p>Fastest lap: Stirling Moss - 9 min 37.0 sec, 142.4 kph/88.48 mph.</p>	<p>GP for F2 cars, held on the Südschleife</p>
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1961

MAY 28	AUGUST 6 15 laps 342.15 km/212.5 miles
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Masten Gregory/Lucky Casner (Maserati T61) 7 hr 51 min 39.2 sec, 1276 kph/79.3 mph; 2. Pedro Rodriguez/Ricardo Rodriguez (Ferrari 250TR) 43 laps; 3. Phil Hill/Wolfgang von Trips/Olivier Gendebien/Richie Ginther (Ferrari 246SP) 43 laps; 4. Carlo Abate/Colin Davis (Ferrari 250GT) 43 laps; 5. Willy Mairesse/Giancarlo Baghetti (Ferrari 250GT) 43 laps; 6. Fritz Hahn/Helmuth Zick (Porsche Carrera) 43 laps; <p>Fastest lap: Phil Hill - 9 min 15.8 sec, 147.7 kph/91.6 mph.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stirling Moss (Lotus 18/21-Climax) 2 hr 18 min 12.4 sec, 148.6 kph/92.34 mph; 2. Wolfgang von Trips (Ferrari 156) 2 hr 18 min 33.8 sec; 3. Phil Hill (Ferrari 156) 2 hr 18 min 34.9 sec; 4. Jim Clark (Lotus 21-Climax) 2 hr 19 min 29.5 sec; 5. John Surtees (Cooper T53-Climax) 2 hr 20 min 05.5 sec; 6. Bruce McLaren (Cooper T53-Climax) 2 hr 20 min 53.8 sec; <p>Fastest lap: Phil Hill - 8 min 57.8 sec, 152.7 kph/94.89 mph.</p>

1962

MAY 27	AUGUST 5 15 laps 342.15 km/212.5 miles
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Phil Hill/Olivier Gendebien (Ferrari 246SP) 7 hr 33 min 27.7 sec, 132.6 kph/82. 2. Mike Parkes/Willy Mairesse (Ferrari 330LM) 7 hr 35 min 49.2 sec; 3. Graham Hill/Hans Herrmann (Porsche RS62) 7hr 42 min 24.6 sec; 4. Jo Bonnier/Dan Gurney (Porsche RS61) 42 laps; 5. Bruce McLaren/Tony Maggs (Aston Martin DBR1) 42 laps; 6. Peter Nocker/Wolfgang Seidel (Ferrari 250GT) 41 laps; <p>Fastest lap: Phil Hill - 9 min 31.9 sec, 143.6 kph/89.22 mph.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Graham Hill (BRM P57) 2 hr 38 min 45.3 sec, 129.2 kph/80.28 mph; 2. John Surtees (Lola-Climax) 2 hr 38 min 47.8 sees; 3. Dan Gurney (Porsche 804) 2 hr 38 min 49.7 sec; 4. Jim Clark (Lotus 25-Climax) 2hr 39 min 29.4 sec; 5. Bruce McLaren (Cooper T60-Climax) 2 hr 40 min 04.9 sec; 6. Ricardo Rodriguez (Ferrari 156) 2 hr 40 min 09.1 sec; <p>Fastest lap: Graham Hill - 10 min 12.2 sec, 134.1 kph/83.33mph.</p>

1963

MAY 19	AUGUST 4 15 laps 342.15 km/212.5 miles
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. John Surtees/Willy Mairesse (Ferrari 250P) 7 hr 32 min 18.4 sec, 133.1 kph/82.7 2. Jean Guichet/Pierre Noblet (Ferrari 250GTO) 7 hr 40 min 03.0 sec; 3. Umberto Maglioli/Carlo Abate (Ferrari 250TR) 43 laps; 4. Edgar Barth/Herbert Linge/Ben Pon/Heini Walter (Porsche Carrera 2) 43 laps; 5. 'Elde'/Gerard von Ophem (Ferrari) 41 laps; 6. David Piper/Ed Cantrell (Ferrari 250GTO) 41 laps; <p>Fastest lap: John Surtees - 9 min 16.0 sec, 1477 kph/91.78 mph.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. John Surtees (Ferrari 156) 2 hr 13 min 06.8 sec, 154.2 kph/95.82 mph; 2. Jim Clark (Lotus 25-Climax) 2 hr 14 min 24.3 sec; 3. Richie Ginther (BRM P57) 2 hr 15 min 51.7 sec; 4. Gerhard Mitter (Porsche 718) 2 hr 21 min 18.3 sec; 5. Jim Hall (Lotus) 14 laps; 6. Jo Bonnier (Cooper T66-Climax) 14 laps; <p>Fastest lap: John Surtees - 8 min 47.0 sec, 155.8 kph/96.81 mph.</p>

1964

MAY 31	AUGUST 2 15 laps 342.15 km/212.5 miles
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ludovico Scarfiotti/Nino Vaccarella (Ferrari 275P) 7 hr 08 min 27.0 sec, 140.0 kph/87.29 mph; 2. Mike Parkes/Jean Guichet (Ferrari 250GTO) 43 laps; 3. Ben Pon/Gerhard Koch (Porsche 904) 43 laps; 4. Lucien Bianchi/Gerard von Ophem (Ferrari 250GTO) 43 laps; 5. Jo Bonnier/Richie Ginther (Porsche RS62) 42 laps; 6. Herbert Muller/Andre Knorr (Porsche 904) 42 laps; <p>Fastest lap: John Surtees (Ferrari 275P) - 9 min 09.0 sec, 149.6 kph/92.96 mph.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. John Surtees (Ferrari 158) 2 hr 12 min 04.8 sec, 155.4 kph/96.56 mph; 2. Graham Hill (BRM P261) 2hr 13 min 20.4 sec; 3. Lorenzo Bandini (Ferrari 156) 2 hr 16 min 57.4 sec; 4. Jo Siffert (Brabham BT11-BRM) 2 hr 17 min 27.9 sec; 5. Maurice Trintignant (BRM P57) 14 laps; 6. Tony Maggs (BRM P57) 14 laps; <p>Fastest lap: John Surtees - 8 min 39.0 secs, 158.2 kph/98.30 mph;</p>

1965

MAY 23	JULY 31 15 laps 342.15 km/212.5 miles
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. John Surtees/Ludovico Scarfiotti (Ferrari 330P) 6 hr 53 min 05.4 sec, 145.9 kph/90.54 mph; 2. Mike Parkes/Jean Guichet (Ferrari 275P) 6 hr 53 min 50.2 sec; 3. Jo Bonnier/Jochen Rindt (Porsche RS62) 7 hr 00 min 59.6 sec; 4. Lorenzo Bandini/Nino Vaccarella (Ferrari Dino 166P) 43 laps; 5. Umberto Maglioli/Herbert Linge (Porsche 906) 43 laps; 6. Peter Nocker/Gunther Klass (Porsche 906); <p>Fastest lap: John Surtees - 8 min 50.5 sec, 154.6 kph/96.06 mph.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jim Clark (Lotus 33-Climax) 2 hr 07 min 52.4 sec, 160.6 kph/99.97 mph; 2. Graham Hill (BRM P261) 2 hr 08 min 08.3 sec; 3. Dan Gurney (Brabham BT11-Climax) 2 hr 08 min 13.8 sec; 4. Jochen Rindt (Cooper T77-Climax) 2 hr 11 min 22.0 sec; 5. Jack Brabham (Brabham BT11-Climax) 2 hr 12 min 33.6 sec; 6. Lorenzo Bandini (Ferrari 158) 2 hr 13 min 01.0 sec; <p>Fastest lap: Jim Clark - 8 min 24.1 sec, 162.9 kph/101.22 mph.</p>

1966

JUNE 5	AUGUST 7 15 laps 342.15 km/212.5 miles
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Phil Hill/Jo Bonnier (Chaparral 2D-Chevrolet) 6 hr 58 min 47.6 sec, 143.8 kph/89.32 mph; 2. Ludovico Scarfiotti/Lorenzo Bandini (Ferrari Dino 206S) 6 hr 59 min 29.2 sec; 3. Pedro Rodriguez/Richie Ginther (Ferrari Dino 206S) 7 hr 00 min 02.4 sec; 4. Bob Bondurant/Paul Hawkins (Porsche 906 Carrera 6) 7 hr 06 min 52.8 sec; 5. Guy Ligier/Jo Schlesser (Ford GT40) 43 laps; 6. Peter Sutcliffe/John Taylor (Ford GT40) 43 laps; <p>Fastest lap: John Surtees (Ferrari P3) - 8 min 37.0 sec, 158.8 kph/98.68 mph</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jack Brabham (Brabham BT19-Repco) 2 hr 27 min 03.0 sec, 139.6kph/86.7 mph; 2. John Surtees (Cooper T81-Maserati) 2 hr 27 min 47.4 sec; 3. Jochen Rindt (Cooper T81-Maserati) 2 hr 29 min 35.6 sec; 4. Graham Hill (BRM P261) 2 hr 35 min 44.4 sec; 5. Jackie Stewart (BRM P261) 2 hr 35 min 31.9 sec; 6. Lorenzo Bandini (Ferrari 312) 2 hr 37 min 59.4 sec; <p>Fastest lap: John Surtees - 8 min 49.0 sec, 155.2 kph/96.45 mph.</p>

1967

MAY 28	AUGUST 6 15 laps 342.15 km/212.5 miles
1. Udo Schutz/Joe Buzzetta (Porsche 910/6) 6 hr 54 min 12.9 sec, 145.5 kph/90.43 mph; 2. Paul Hawkins/Gerhard Koch (Porsche 910/6) 6 hr 54 min 13.1 sec; 3. Jochen Neerpasch/Vic Elford (Porsche 910/6) 6 hr 58 min 32.6 sec; 4. Gerhard Mitter/Lucien Bianchi (Porsche 910/8) 43 laps; 5. Andrea de Adamich/Nanni Galli/Roberto Bussinello/Teodoro Zeccoli (Alfa Romeo T33) 43 laps; 6. Hans-Dieter Dechent/Robert Huhn (Porsche 906 Carrera 6) 42 laps; Fastest lap: Phil Hill (Chaparral 2F-Chevrolet) 8 min 42.1 sec, 157.4 kph/97.80 mph.	1. Denny Hulme (Brabham BT24-Repco) 2 hr 05 min 55.7 sec, 163.2 kph/101.4 mph; 2. Jack Brabham (Brabham BT24-Repco) 2 hr 06 min 34.2 sec; 3. Chris Amon (Ferrari 312) 2 hr 06 min 34.7 sec; 4. John Surtees (Honda RA273) 2 hr 08 min 21.4 sec; 5. Jo Bonnier (Cooper T81-Maserati) 2 hr 14 min 37.8 sec; 6. Guy Ligier (Brabham BT20-Repco) 14 laps; Fastest lap: Dan Gurney (Eagle AAR104-Weslake) 8 min 15.1 sec, 166.0 kph/103.2 mph.

1968

MAY 19	AUGUST 4 14 laps 319.69 km/198.65 miles
1. Jo Siffert/Vic Elford (Porsche 908) 6 hr 34 min 06.3 sec, 152.96 kph/95.05 mph; 2. Hans Herrmann/Rolf Stommelen (Porsche 907/8) 6 hr 37 min 07.8 sec; 3. Jacky Ickx/Paul Hawkins (Ford GT40) 6 hr 37 min 57.5 sec; 4. Jochen Neerpasch/Joe Buzzetta (Porsche 907/8) 6 hr 42 min 22.9 sec; 5. Nanni Galli/Ignazio Giunti (Alfa Romeo T33) 43 laps; 6. David Hobbs/Brian Redman (Ford GT40) 43 laps; Fastest lap: Jo Siffert - 8 min 33.0 sec, 160.2 kph/99.5 mph.	1. Jackie Stewart (Matra MS10-Ford) 2 hr 19 min 03.2 sec, 137.9 kph/85.7 mph; 2. Graham Hill (Lotus 49B-Ford) 2 hr 23 min 06.4 sec; 3. Jochen Rindt (Brabham BT26-Repco) 2 hr 23 min 12.6 sec; 4. Jacky Ickx (Ferrari 312) 2 hr 24 min 58.4 sec; 5. Jack Brabham (Brabham BT26-Repco) 2 hr 25 min 24.3 sec; 6. Pedro Rodriguez (BRM P133) 2 hr 25 min 28.2 sec; Fastest lap: Jackie Stewart - 9 min 36.0 sec, 142.7 kph/88.68 mph.

1969

JUNE 1	AUGUST 3 14 laps 319.69 km/198.65 miles
1. Jo Siffert/Brian Redman (Porsche 908/2) 6 hr 11 min 02.3 sec, 162.5 kph/100.96 mph; 2. Hans Herrmann/Rolf Stommelen (Porsche 908/2) 6 hr 15 min 04.2 sec; 3. Vic Elford/Kurt Ahrens (Porsche 908/2) 6 hr 16 min 09.3 sec; 4. Richard Attwood/Rudi Lins (Porsche 908/2) 43 laps; 5. Willi Kauhsen/Karl von Wendt (Porsche 908/2) 42 laps; 6. Helmut Kelleners/Reinhold Jost (Ford GT40) 41 laps; Fastest lap: Chris Amon (Ferrari 312P) - 8 min 03.3 sec, 170.1 kph/105.7 mph.	1. Jacky Ickx (Brabham BT26-Ford) 1hr 49 min 55.4 sec, 174.49 kph/108.43 mph; 2. Jackie Stewart (Matra MS80-Ford) 1 hr 50 min 53.1 sec; 3. Bruce McLaren (McLaren M7C-Ford) 1 hr 53 min 17.0 sec; 4. Graham Hill (Lotus 49B-Ford) 1 hr 53 min 54.2 sec; 5. Jo Siffert (Lotus 49B-Ford) 12 laps*; 6. Jean-Pierre Beltoise (Matra MS80-Ford) 12 laps*; * Not running at finish Fastest lap: Jacky Ickx - 7 min 43.8 sec, 177.24 kph/110.13 mph.

1970

MAY 31	Grand Prix held at Hockenheim
1. Vic Elford/Kurt Ahrens (Porsche 908/3) 6 hr 05 min 21.2 sec, 165.0 kph/102.53 mph; 2. Hans Herrmann/Richard Attwood (Porsche 908/3) 6 hr 10 min 34.8 sec; 3. John Surtees/Nino Vaccarella (Ferrari 512S) 43 laps; 4. Herbert Muller/Mike Parkes (Ferrari 512S) 42 laps; 5. Gerard Larrousse/Helmut Marko (Porsche 908/2) 42 laps; 6. Rudi Lins/Willi Kauhsen (Porsche 908/2) 42 laps; Fastest lap: Pedro Rodriguez (Porsche 908/3) - 7 min 50.4 sec, 174.8 kph/105.93 mph.	

1971

MAY 30	AUGUST 1 12 laps 274.02 km/170.27 miles
1. Vic Elford/Gerard Larrousse (Porsche 908/3) 5 hr 51 min 49.3 sec, 171.4 kph/106.47 mph; 2. Pedro Rodriguez/Joe Siffert (Porsche 908/3) 5 hr 53 min 33.4 sec; 3. Helmut Marko/Gijs van Lennep (Porsche 908/3) 5 hr 53 min 33.5 sec; 4. Andrea de Adamich/Henri Pescarolo (Alfa Romeo T33/3) 5 hr 56 min 20.0 sec; 5. Toine Hezemans/Nino Vaccarella (Alfa Romeo T33/3) 42 laps; 6. Reinhold Jost/Willi Kauhsen (Porsche 917K) 40 laps; Fastest lap: Jacky Ickx (Ferrari 312P) - 7 min 40.8 sec, 178.4 kph/110.85 mph.	1. Jackie Stewart (Tyrrell 003-Ford) 1 hr 29 min 15.7 sec, 184.19 kph/114.45 mph; 2. Francois Cevert (Tyrrell 003-Ford) 1 hr 29 min 45.8 sec; 3. Clay Regazzoni (Ferrari 312 B2) 1 hr 29 min 52.8 sec; 4. Mario Andretti (Ferrari 312 B2) 1 hr 31 min 20.7 sec; 5. Ronnie Peterson (March 711-Ford) 1 hr 31 min 44.8 sec; 6. Tim Schenken (Brabham BT33-Ford) 1 hr 32 min 14.3 sec; Fastest lap: Francois Cevert - 7 min 20.1 sec, 186.79 kph/116.07 mph.

1972

MAY 28	JULY 30 14 laps 319.69 km/198.65 miles
1. Ronnie Peterson/Tim Schenken (Ferrari 312P) 6 hr 01 min 40.2 sec, 166.65 kph/103.57 mph; 2. Brian Redman/Arturo Merzario (Ferrari 312P) 6 hr 06 min 09.9 sec; 3. Andrea de Adamich/Helmut Marko (Alfa Romeo T33TT/3) 43 laps; 4. Derek Bell/Gijs van Lennep (Mirage M6-Ford) 42 laps; 5. John Hine/John Bridges (Chevron B21-Ford) 41 laps; 6. Gerard Larrousse/Jo Bonnier (Lola T290-Ford) 39 laps; Fastest lap: Rolf Stommelen (Alfa Romeo T33TT/3) - 7 min 42.2 sec, 177.9 kph/110.54 mph.	1. Jacky Ickx (Ferrari 312 B2) 1 hr 42 min 12.3 sec, 187.67 kph/116.6 mph; 2. Clay Regazzoni (Ferrari 312 B2) 1 hr 43 min 0.6 sec; 3. Ronnie Peterson (March 721G-Ford) 1 hr 43 min 19.0 sec; 4. Howden Ganley (BRM P160C) 1 hr 44 min 32.5 sec; 5. Brian Redman (McLaren M19A-Ford) 1hr 44 min 48.0 sec; 6. Graham Hill (Brabham BT37-Ford) 1 hr 45 min 11.5 sec; Fastest lap: Jacky Ickx - 7 min 13.6 sec, 189.59 kph/117.8 mph.

1973

<p>MAY 27</p> <p>1. Jacky Ickx/Brian Redman (Ferrari 312P) 5 hr 36 min 53.4 sec, 178.94 kph/111.19 mph;</p> <p>2. Arturo Merzario/Carlos Pace (Ferrari 312P) 5 hr 36 min 53.5 sec;</p> <p>3. John Burton/John Bridges (Chevron B23-Ford) 40 laps;</p> <p>4. Claude Haldi/Bernard Cheneviere (Porsche 908/3) 40 laps;</p> <p>5. Gijs van Lennep/Herbert Muller (Porsche 911 Carrera) 40 laps;</p> <p>6. John Fitzpatrick/Gerry Birrell (Ford Capri RS2600) 39 laps;</p> <p>Fastest lap: Francois Cevert (Matra-Simca MS670) 7 min 20.3 sec, 186.7 kph/116.0 mph.</p>	<p>AUGUST 5 14 laps 319.69 km/198.65 miles</p> <p>1. Jackie Stewart (Tyrrell 006-Ford) 1 hr 42 min 03.0 sec, 187.96 kph/116.79 mph;</p> <p>2. Francois Cevert (Tyrrell 006-Ford) 1 hr 42 min 04.6 sec;</p> <p>3. Jacky Ickx (McLaren M23-Ford) 1 hr 42 min 44.2 sec;</p> <p>4. Carlos Pace (Surtees TS14A-Ford) 1 hr 42 min 56.8 sec;</p> <p>5. Wilson Fittipaldi (Brabham BT42-Ford) 1 hr 43 min 22.9 sec;</p> <p>6. Emerson Fittipaldi (Lotus 72D-Ford) 1 hr 43 min 27.3 sec;</p> <p>Fastest lap: Carlos Pace - 7 min 11.4 sec, 190.55 kph/118.4 mph.</p>
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1974

<p>MAY 19 Race reduced to 33 laps (753.55 km/468.24 miles), due to oil crisis</p> <p>1. Jean-Pierre Beltoise/Jean-Pierre Jarier (Matra-Simca MS670C) 4 hr 07 min 24.1 sec, 182.75 kph/113.56 mph;</p> <p>2. Rolf Stommelen/Carlos Reutemann (Alfa Romeo T33TT/12) 32 laps;</p> <p>3. Carlos Facetti/Andrea de Adamich (Alfa Romeo T33TT/12) 32 laps;</p> <p>4. James Hunt/Vern Schuppan/Derek Bell (Mirage GR7-Ford) 32 laps;</p> <p>5. Henri Pescarolo/Gerard Larrousse (Matra-Simca MS670C) 31 laps;</p> <p>6. Gijs van Lennep/Herbert Muller (Porsche 911 Carrera RSR) 30 laps;</p> <p>Fastest lap: Jean-Pierre Jarier - 7 min 15.9 sec, 188.59 kph/117.19 mph.</p>	<p>AUGUST 4 14 laps 319.69 km/198.65 miles</p> <p>1. Clay Regazzoni (Ferrari 312 B3) 1 hr 41 min 35.0 sec, 188.8 kph/117.3 mph;</p> <p>2. Jody Scheckter (Tyrrell 007-Ford) 1 hr 42 min 25.7 sec;</p> <p>3. Carlos Reutemann (Brabham BT44-Ford) 1 hr 42 min 58.3 sec;</p> <p>4. Ronnie Peterson (Lotus 76-Ford) 1 hr 42 min 59.2 sec;</p> <p>5. Jacky Ickx (Lotus 72E-Ford) 1 hr 43 min 0.00 sec;</p> <p>6. Tom Pryce (Shadow DN3A-Ford) 1 hr 43 min 53.1 sec;</p> <p>Fastest lap: Jody Scheckter - 7 min 11.1 sec, 190.69 kph/118.49 mph.</p>
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1975

<p>JUNE 1</p> <p>1. Arturo Merzario/Jacques Lafitte (Alfa Romeo T33TT/12) 5 hr 41 min 14.1 sec, 176.7 kph/109.78 mph;</p> <p>2. Tim Schenken/Howden Ganley (Mirage GR7-Ford) 5 hr 41 min 54.0 sec;</p> <p>3. Herbert Müller/Leo Kinnunen (Porsche 908/3) 43 laps;</p> <p>4. Gerard Larrousse/Jean-Pierre Jabouille (Alpine A442-Renault) 43 laps;</p> <p>5. Jorgen Barth/Ernst Kraus (Porsche 908/3) 42 laps;</p> <p>6. Jochen Mass/Jody Scheckter (Alfa Romeo T33TT/12) 42 laps;</p> <p>Fastest lap: Gerard Larrousse - 7 min 20.8 sec, 186.49 kph/115.88 mph.</p>	<p>AUGUST 3 14 laps 319.69 km/198.65 miles</p> <p>1. Carlos Reutemann (Brabham BT44B-Ford) 1 hr 41 min 14.1 sec, 189.5 kph/117.7 mph;</p> <p>2. Jacques Lafitte (Williams FW04-Ford) 1 hr 42 min 51.8 sec;</p> <p>3. Niki Lauda (Ferrari 312T) 1 hr 43 min 37.4 sec;</p> <p>4. Tom Pryce (Shadow DN5A-Ford) 1 hr 44 min 45.5 sec;</p> <p>5. Alan Jones (Hill GHI-Ford) 1 hr 45 min 04.4 sec;</p> <p>6. Gijs van Lennep (Ensign N175-Ford) 1 hr 46 min 19.6 sec;</p> <p>Fastest lap: Clay Regazzoni (Ferrari 312T) - 7 min 06.4 sec, 192.79 kph/119.74 mph.</p>
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1976

<p>MAY 30 47 laps 1071.6 km/667.4 miles</p> <p>1. Dieter Quester/Albrecht Krebs (BMW CSL) 6hr 38 min 20.6 sec, 161.65 kph/100.45 mph;</p> <p>2. Toine Hezemans/Tim Schenken (Porsche 934/5) 6 hr 42 min 14.2 sec;</p> <p>3. Derek Bell/Reinhardt Stenzel/Helmut Kelleners (Porsche 934) 46 laps;</p> <p>4. Claude Haldi/Markus Hotz (Porsche 934/5) 46 laps;</p> <p>5. Gijs van Lennep/Hartwig Bertrams (Porsche 934/5) 45 laps;</p> <p>6. Helmut Bross/Eberhard Sindel (Porsche 934) 44 laps;</p> <p>Fastest lap: Rolf Stommelen (Porsche 935) - 8 min 02.7 sec, 171.29 kph/106.44 mph.</p>	<p>AUGUST 1 14 laps 319.69 km/198.65 miles</p> <p>1. James Hunt (McLaren M23-Ford) 1 hr 41 min 42.7 sec, 188.59 kph/117.182 mph;</p> <p>2. Jody Scheckter (Tyrrell P34-Ford) 1 hr 42 min 10.4 sec;</p> <p>3. Jochen Mass (McLaren M23-Ford) 1 hr 42 min 35.1 sec;</p> <p>4. Carlos Pace (Brabham BT45-Alfa Romeo) 1 hr 42 min 36.9 sec;</p> <p>5. Gunnar Nilsson (Lotus 77-Ford) 1 hr 43 min 40.0 sec;</p> <p>6. Rolf Stommelen (Brabham BT45-Alfa Romeo) 1 hr 44 min 13.0 sec;</p> <p>Fastest lap: Jody Scheckter - 7 min 10.8 sec, 190.82 kph/118.57 mph</p>
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1977

<p>MAY 29</p> <p>1. Toine Hezemans/Tim Schenken/Rolf Stommelen (Porsche 935) 5 hr 58 min 30.5 sec, 168.15 kph/104.49 mph;</p> <p>2. Bob Wollek/John Fitzpatrick (Porsche 935) 43 laps;</p> <p>3. Marc Surer/Manfred Winkelhock (BMW 320i) 43 laps;</p> <p>4. Franz Konrad/Paul Keller (Porsche 935) 42 laps;</p> <p>5. Dieter Schornstein/Gotz von Tschirnhaus (Porsche 934/5) 41 laps;</p> <p>6. Manfred Schurti/Helmut Kelleners (Porsche 935) 41 laps;</p> <p>Fastest lap: Bob Wollek - 7 min 40.1 sec, 178.67 kph/111.02 mph</p>	
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1978

<p>MAY 28</p> <p>Aggregate of two 22-lap heats</p> <p>1. Klaus Ludwig/Hans Heyer/Toine Hezemans (Porsche 935) 5 hr 55 min 46.6 sec, 169.44 kph/105.29 mph;</p> <p>2. Jacky Ickx/Manfred Schurti (Porsche 935) 5 hr 56 min 45.2 sec;</p> <p>3. Bob Wollek/Henri Pescarolo (Porsche 935) 6 hr 01 min 03.2 sec;</p> <p>4. Franz Konrad/Volkert Merl/Ralf-Dieter Schreiber (Porsche 935) 6 hr 05 min 09.3 sec;</p> <p>5. Reinhold Jöst/Jürgen Barth (Porsche 935) 6 hr 06 min 24.4 sec;</p> <p>6. Hans-Joachim Stuck/Markus Hottinger (BMW 320i) 6 hr 07 min 53.2 sec;</p> <p>Fastest lap: not published.</p>	
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1979

JUNE 3

1. Manfred Schurti/John Fitzpatrick/Bob Wollek (Porsche 935)
5 hr 57 min 35.1 sec, 168.58 kph/104.76 mph;
2. Klaus Ludwig/Axel Plankenhorn (Porsche 935-K3) 5 hr 57 min 46.8 sec;
3. Henri Pescarolo/Brian Redman (Porsche 935) 43 laps;
4. Dieter Schornstein/Edgar Doren/Gotz von Tschirnhaus (Porsche 935);
5. Volkert Merl/Derek Bell/Rolf Stommelen (Porsche 935) 41 laps;
6. Eckhart Schimpff/Hans-Georg Burger/Anton Fischhaber (BMW 320i) 41 laps;

Fastest lap: Rolf Stommelen - 7 min 41.9 sec, 177.97 kph/110.59 mph.

1980

MAY 25

1. Rolf Stommelen/Jürgen Barth (Porsche 908/4)
5 hr 52 min 15.1 sec, 171.13 kph/106.34 mph;
2. John Fitzpatrick/Axel Frankenhorn/Dick Barbour (Porsche 935-K3)
5 hr 52 min 56.0 sec;
3. Hans-Joachim Stuck/Nelson Piquet (BMW M1) 5 hr 53 min 10.2 sec;
4. Ricardo Patrese/Hans Heyer (Lancia Beta Monte Carlo) 5 hr 55 min 48.0 sec;
5. Bob Wollek/Manfred Schurti (Porsche 935-K3) 5 hr 56 min 24.9 sec;
6. Eddie Cheever/Piercarlo Ghinzani (Lancia Beta Monte Carlo) 43 laps;

Fastest lap: John Fitzpatrick - 7 min 34.3 sec, 180.94 kph/112.44 mph.

1981

MAY 24

Race stopped after 17 laps, due to fatal accident to Herbert Müller

1. Hans-Joachim Stuck/Nelson Piquet (BMW M1)
2 hr 16 min 50.86 sec, 170.19 kph/105.76 mph
2. Reinhold Jöst/Jochen Mass (Porsche 908-80) 2 hr 17 min 10.85 sec;
3. Bob Wollek (Porsche 935-K3) 2 hr 18 min 15.59 sec;
4. Hans Heyer/Piercarlo Ghinzani (Lancia Beta Monte Carlo) 2 hr 18 min 18.70 sec;
5. Edgar Dören/Jürgen Lässig (Porsche 935) 2 hr 21 min 05.72 sec;
6. Volkert Merl/Jürgen Barth (Porsche 908/4) 16 laps;

Fastest lap: Jochen Mass - 7 min 33.53 sec, 181.25 kph/112.63 mph.

1982

MAY 30

1. Ricardo Patrese/Michele Alboreto/Teo Fabi (Lancia LC1)
5 hr 54 min 10.83 sec, 170.2 kph/105.76 mph
2. Henri Pescarolo/Rolf Stommelen (Rondeau M382C-Ford) 43 laps;
3. Helmut Kellner/Enzo Calderari/Umberto Grano (BMW M1) 41 laps;
4. Mario Ketterer/Anton Fischhaber/Eckhart Schimpf (BMW 320i) 39 laps;
5. Richard Lloyd/Tony Dron/Hans Volker (Porsche 924 Carrera GTR) 39 laps;
6. Armin Hahne/Heinz Becker (Mazda RX-7) 39 laps;

Fastest lap: Manfred Winkelhock (Ford C100)
7 min 23.97 sec, 185.16 kph/115.06 mph.

1983

MAY 29

48 laps of a 12.944-mile circuit, 999.8 km/621.31 miles. Race stopped after 25 laps due to an accident. Restarted and run for a further 19 laps. Result on aggregate.

1. Jacky Ickx/Jochen Mass (Porsche 956) 44 laps
in 5 hr 26 min 34.63 sec, 168.4 kph/104.64 mph
2. Bob Wollek/Stefan Johansson (Porsche 956) 5 hr 30 min 34.99 sec;
3. Keke Rosberg/Jan Lammers/Jonathan Palmer (Porsche 956) 43 laps;
4. Hans Heyer/Axel Plankenhorn/Jürgen Lässig (Porsche 956) 42 laps;
5. Oscar Larrauri/Massimo Sigala (Lancia LC1) 40 laps;
6. John Fitzpatrick/David Hobbs (Porsche 956) 39 laps;

Fastest lap: Stefan Bellof (Porsche 956) - 6 min 25.912 sec, 194.32 kph/120.75 mph.