

Bob Errington's

PIT PATTER

Well, this year the European Championships were held in Denmark for the first time and also featured Formula class cars for the first time since single class championships were run. (The old system had a championship for Formula on the Saturday and another one for Sports/GT on the Sunday).

Denmark had been keen to hold the championships for some years now and so many eyes were going to be upon them. One hundred entrants made the journey and not surprisingly a larger entry than normal came from the Northern Europeans. Italy entered fourteen, which is a great credit when you consider the vast distances involved. Most of their top drivers were not in evidence due to various reasons. None of the S.G. team were there nor any of their top Serpent and Associated drivers. Many stories were changing hands regarding the S.G. drivers, but no real reasons for the absence of the others, hence only four of the 14 were 'A' class drivers! England was the next highest present with thirteen driving after the last minute mix up that is best forgotten. Six out of the thirteen were 'A' class. Germany had eleven with seven of these 'A'. Next was France with only one out of the ten on 'A' status. Switzerland and Holland entered nine each with Denmark the hosts having eight. The remainder of the 100 was made up of seven from Sweden, four from Belgium, and the remainder from five other countries. Thus out of the total entry, only 36 were 'A' class which is a remarkably low



Albert Grob, European Champion 1987

turn out. Why one asks? Was it the distance? Because it was the first time in Denmark? The reported problems of S.G.? The nearness of the World Champs? The 1/10 World Champs in England?

None of these offer any real explanations and each can account for a few people, so was it a combination of all of them, who knows?

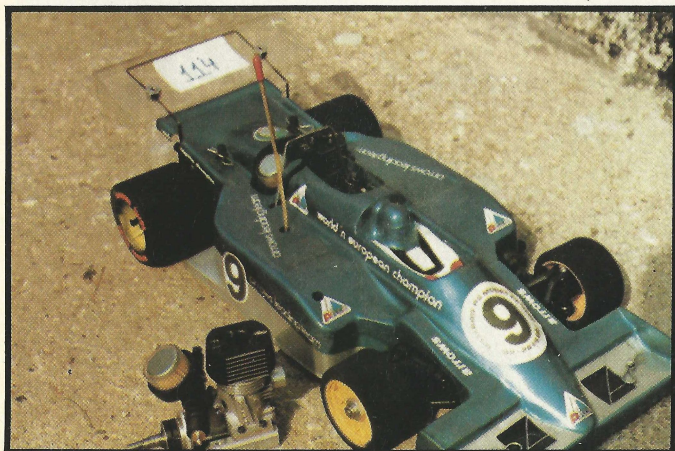
Let's look at the facilities provided. The on site camping was adequate for about eight or nine tents/caravans in comfort which was unfortunate for the thirty that were wedged in. Parking was good, but



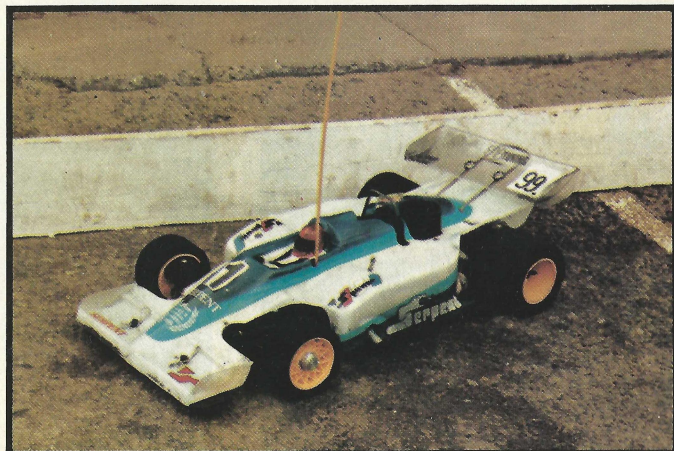
1/8 EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS
DENMARK

you had to be early each day if you didn't want to have to carry the gear too far. The pits were covered in tarpaulin which sagged with the weight of the rain and occasionally let go with dire results. The tables were a little low, even more so when they began to sink into the ground. The track itself was fine and the only criticism was that it comprised three hairpins which really didn't leave a lot of places to pass if your opponent didn't want you to. The width was acceptable but on reflection, for formula cars with open wheels, it would be better to have more width or less cars per

Albert Picco's Serpent sporting the latest Picco F1 engine.



Salvens T.Q. Serpent



heat.

The meeting itself really at the scrutineering table on Friday with several cars being declared under weight, mind you some cars from the English contingent were almost responsible for breaking the scales. Now the reason that weighing has such relevance is that at the slightly previous World Champs in America, there was no minimum weight limit and any one that wanted to be competitive had his car as light as possible to the extent of having exotic light weight materials in lieu of standard components. Chassis had been lightened to extremes and differentials were out. In consequence of this, to compete to European rules, strips of lead weight were being attached to various parts of the car to bring the weight up to the minimum EFRA standard. The weights used being the type used for full size wheel balancing i.e. strips of lead with a self adhesive backing. The morality of allowing so much temporary weight to be added must surely be questioned! The final crunch being that it was later discovered (?) that the self adhesive was destroyed if fuel was accidentally applied to the weights — result being that lead was always being found out on the circuit. A warning was thus issued that cars would be weighed at random by discretion of the race director.

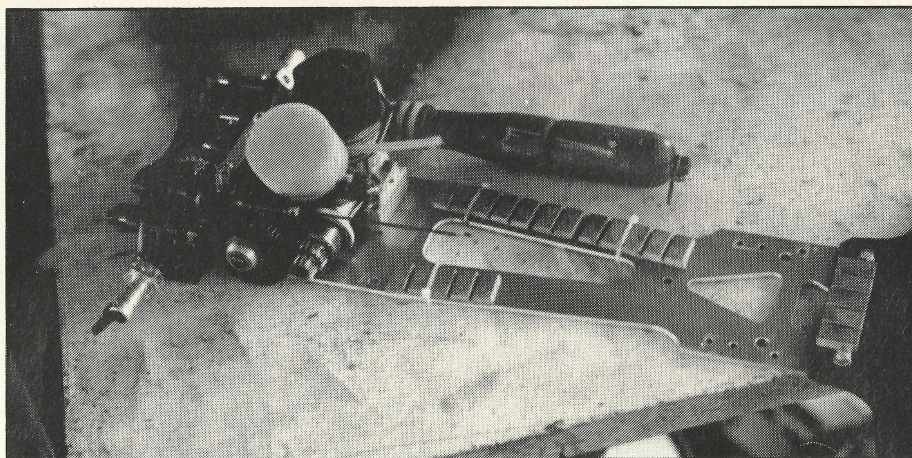
Saturday

Saturday was qualifying day and the 100 drivers were divided into eleven qualifying heats, each with four attempts at getting at good time. Heats one to seven were for 'B' class drivers and heats eight to eleven for the 'A' seeded ones.

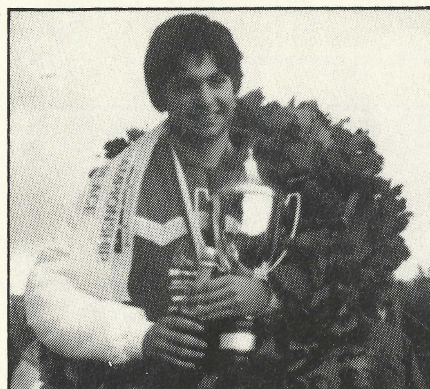
Heat one round one had our own Charlie Dudfield who finished second in the heat to record 18 laps in 5:15.3 which looked to be a good bench mark. Heat two upset things immediately though as Stefano Colombini from Italy notched up 19 laps in 5:08.7 to set tongues wagging. Our own Steve Whitting recorded an 18 in 5:11.6. Heat three and Steve Fagg's troubled run could only produce a 16 lapper. Heat four and Daniele Cantarella notched up the second 19 lapper albeit slightly slower which made Ian Briggs feel even sicker about his 16 laps. Frank Chung in heat five clocked 17 laps whilst Dave Withal in heat six turned in a good 18 in 5:14.6. Heat seven and Albert Grob from Switzerland posted second fastest time with 19 in 5:09.5 whilst Cliff Banks troubles started with a slow 15 lapper which was not as troubled as Alberto Picco's three laps.

Heat eight was the start of the 'A' drivers and drew lots of attention from the other drivers who eagerly lined the circuit. The pace was quick but both Steve White and James Haydon retired with problems as too did Michael Salven from Germany, even so two more 19 lappers were recorded, Peter Warfringe from Sweden with 19 in 5:11.8 and Traugott Schär from Switzerland with 19 in 5:13.8. Heat nine and another two 19's were in best though came from Michele Baruzzi from Italy with his 19 in 5:04.0 followed by Rody Roem from Holland with 19 in 5:12.2. Our own Paul Pagdin, running the prototype new P.B., did well to clock a dead 16 on an obviously not sorted car.

Heat 10 had Nigel Sayles clock a respectable 18 in 5:03.0 but this was eclipsed by the 19 in 5:13.0 from Roberto Pezzini from Italy and the 19 in 5:14.0 from Germanys



Above: this was what all the fuss was about, the dreaded stick on weights.



Left: second place driver Michele Baruzzi of Italy.

posted we were straight into round two.

Heat one had Guillemier from France clock a 19, whilst heat three saw Steve Fagg improve with a 17 in 5:7.0. Heat four saw two more 19's Cantarella improve his time to 5:10.1 whilst Sahli from Switzerland took a 19 in 5:12.6. Heat six — Dave Withal improved to knock nearly 10 secs. off his time whilst Rene Schar from Switzerland clocked 19 in 5:15.5. Heat seven had Cliff Banks improve by nearly a whole lap to 16 in 5:14.4.



Jurgen Bahr. Heat 11 saw Dave Dixon get a flying start to lead for four minutes til he got clobbered several times whilst trying to lap back markers — no warnings were given. Fave finished with an 18 in 5:08.1 whilst Anders Ljungquist from Sweden eventually won with a 19 in 5:15.3, what would Dave's time have been? Meanwhile Bob Errington got a bad start and actually had Dave Dixon lap him after three minutes!

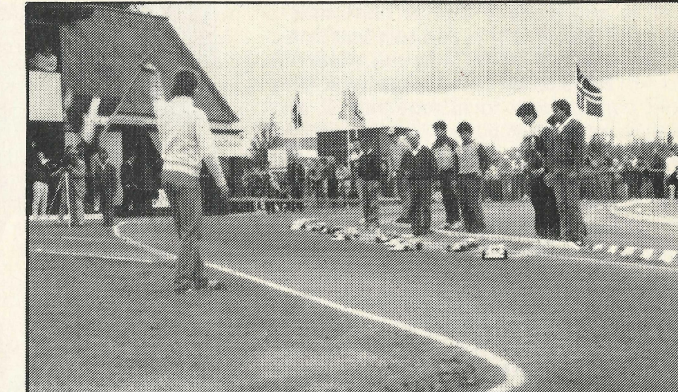
Still with 12 nineteen lappers already

Right: Alberto Picco drove splendidly to finish third.

Below: Denmark's European Championship track, with racing well under way.



Into the banked bend.



They're off, next time they stop they will have completed forty five minutes of racing.

Heat eight was another thing though and was almost a final in itself as no less than five drivers clocked 19 laps. First home though was Michael Salven from Germany with a scorching 5:01.1 then a gap to the ensuing quartet of Traugott Schar, James Haydon, Peter Warfringe and Steve White separated by just 4.3 seconds! Heat nine — Paul Pagdin improved by a lap to 17 in 5:01.1, Rody Roem shaved 2.9 seconds off his 19 lap time and Jacob Buehler from Switzerland joined the 19 plus club with an excellent 19 in 5:09.9.

Heat ten and Nigel Sayles joined the same club with 19 in 5:10.7 whilst Boehr improved by 2 secs and Pezzini by 0.5 sec. Heat 11 and Dave Dixon got a run with 19 in 5:08.5 to be in third spot at the lunch break, Ljungquist took 4.3 secs off his time and Bob Errington took nearly a lap to gain 18 in 5:06.7.

So the lunch break and reflections were that the shape of the track tended to close everyone up and that you needed a fair amount of luck to get in a good time, still top at this stage was Salven with Baruzzi second, Dixon third and Colombini in fourth, two more rounds to go.

The third round heat one, Charlie Dudfield takes 7.6 secs off his time, heat two

and Colombini knocks 3.5 secs from his time to place him third, Peter Harder from Denmark knocks 2 secs off his 19 lapper whilst Roland Frankhauser from Switzerland clocks a 19 in 5:15.1.

Heats three to six had Steve Fagg improve by seven secs., Ian Briggs by 4.4 secs., Frank Chung by one lap and Edoardo Picco collect a 19 in 5:14.6. Heat seven and Alberto Picco, the younger brother, improve by a mere 16 laps to record 19 in 5:03.7 to go straight in at number two whilst Grob took five seconds off to move back up to fourth slot. Michael Salven in heat seven got another 19, not as fast as his first but still quicker than anyone else with 5:02.9 — the writing was on the wall.

Weight Watchers

Heat nine caused a stir, not so much because Etienne Guelte from Belgium and Herman Raith from Germany both clocked 19's, but more because Rody Roem's car was weighed after his 19 lap run and was found to be underweight. At this point his time was allowed to stand but he was cautioned! Heat 11 also caused a stir because halfway through the five minute it started to rain, causing the cars most obvious difficulties, the race officials classified

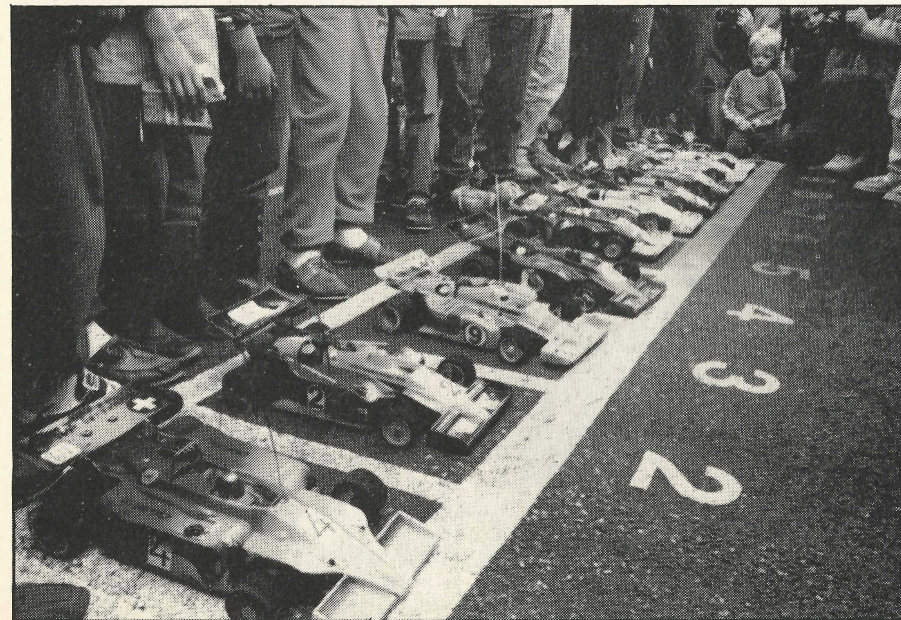
it as a dry heat!! The rain quickly stopped and by the start of the final round of qualifying the track was back to normal.

Heat two and half way through it rained heavily and the race officials called a halt to the proceedings! They then announced that heat two would be re-run when racing re-commenced. This immediately caused comment from those in heat eleven and an official complaint was lodged. No action resulted though and the meeting re-commenced at heat two. Three drivers scored 19, Harder from Denmark improving by 2.3 secs, Giovanni Gresini from Italy scored his first 19 and Colombini a third 19 albeit slightly slower. Steve Whittings times look slightly dubious though as three of his heats are recorded as 18 laps in 5:11.6; surely that can't be right as he is not that consistent!

Improvements were now getting scarcer, Frank Chung scraped 1.8 secs off his time to move up five places, Steve White 1.7 secs to move two places and Schar from Switzerland 0.3 secs to move nowhere. Nigel Sayles, heat 10, took 1.9 secs off to move up five places and thus we are back to heat 11. Dave Dixon lead off and Bob Errington was this time in hot pursuit having escaped the first bend mellee. All looked good for a full two laps when, yes, it rained again this time causing all to retire in despair.

At this stage the organisers seemed to realise that if they had not messed around with heat two, then heat eleven would have been completed in the dry! So they had a

The cars after 45 minutes and thirty sets of tyres.



For some it was all too much!



meeting and decided that as heat eleven had only two dry runs, and two wet ones, that they would allow a re-run. Seemed fair! Ah! But this re-run had to be by 6.15 to avoid conflict with local regulations! and the time was now 5.50 and it was now 5.50 and it was tipping it down with rain! So, basically, it was not to be.

Thus after four rounds of qualifying we had no less than twenty eight drivers on nineteen laps and an incredible forty two drivers on 18 laps. In total there were 73 people within two laps of the top qualifier, this really proves the point about the circuit with its hairpin bends, is it does not highlight the differences between drivers as you need little skill to negotiate straights and hairpins, but that is my opinion.

The qualifying list looked like this:-

1. Michael Salven	Germany	Serpent	19 5:1.1
2. Alberto Picco	Italy	Serpent	19 5:3.7
3. Michele Baruzzi	Italy	Serpent	19 5:4.0
4. Albert Grob	Switzerland	Serpent	19 5:4.1
5. Stefano Colombini	Italy	Serpent	19 5:5.2
6. Dave Dixon	G.B.	S.G.	19 5:8.5
7. Stefano Solaroli	Italy	S.G.	19 5:8.5
8. Nigel Sayles	G.B.	S.G.	19 5:8.8
9. Rody Roem	Holland	Serpent	19 5:9.3
10. Jakob Buehler	Switzerland	Serpent	19 5:9.9
11. Danielle Cantarella	Italy	Serpent	19 5:10.1
12. Herman Raith	Germany	Serpent	19 5:10.2

I know you will say that the automatic lap timing gear is the same for everyone, but bear in mind that for this event starting was done by a flag being raised and thus a button to start the timing, manually pressed!

Anyway — the top eighty were to progress to the Sunday for the usual Christmas Tree type finals whilst the other 20 were resigned to watching. You will probably remember that the top four qualifiers go straight to the final and the rest are split odds and evens qualifiers into two semi's, two quarter finals etc.

Finals

First on was the 1/32 'A' Final which after 20 minutes was won by Tony Konings with 66



Steve White collects the best driver award during another Condor moment.

Whitting.

1/8 A and now it was quite wet, although no where near wet enough for M.R.C. tyres. Leppalahti won again with 60 laps to make it to the quarter finals.

1/8 B, still wet and this time won by Klaus Hoschen with 63 laps and our friend, now anyway, Eric Vandereyt placed third with 61 to also make it as far as the quarters. Out went Bob Errington and Dave Withal both retired early on.

Quarter B, now Eric Vandereyt was getting used to the circuit! as he won this one with 70 laps from Klaus Hoschen also on 70. James retired earlier on after a promising start.

So to the semi's where here only the top two from each semi were definites with the next fastest two to go through. The A semi was first and Steve White looked certain to qualify until a last minute incident dropped him back to third place with 70 laps behind Baehr and Pezzini. Dave Dixon lay in fourth spot whilst Nigel Sayles could only manage nine laps before trouble struck.

B Semi was next and was won comfortably by Cantarella with 72 laps with Ljungquist second on 71. Third place man Klaus Hoschen had also scored 71 laps to ensure his place, so now there was only one place to fill and it fell to fourth place in the B semi with 71 laps to Eric Vandereyt. Yes Eric had made it all the way to the final, his car had now done five semi finals a total of 100 minutes racing — just 45 more to do. A magnificent feat for a man who had only qualified in 69th place!

So they lined up for the main event, the 45 minute final for the European Championships of 1987. Four Italians, three Germans, one Swiss, one Swedish and the now famous Eric Vandereyt from Belgium. Cars were a bit one sided with nine Serpents and the lone Mantua of Klaus Hoschen who himself had already come up from the 1/8 finals.

Right at the start Salven got involved in a small mellee which dropped him back slightly. All eyes still focussed on him though as the thought was that he would quickly work his way back up to the front. Quick as he was, he was not making any progress on the leading bunch, and somehow things were not quite right! Salven in fact kept going for about twenty minutes whereupon he retired with failed clutch bearings. Apparently something had gone at the start and the car had never been as good as in the warm up. By this stage

Baruzzi had held the lead until the charging Picco had taken it away from him. Still the rest of the field was within striking distance. At about 25 minutes cars started to pit for rear tyre changes as tyre wear even for 'Silver' type tyres was quite heavy. Picco's stop was a relatively long one and Baruzzi was able to gain the upper hand. However, Cantarella had not stopped for tyres and thus took the lead. For a while the gap widened as Cantarella's tyres still held good and Baruzzi's tyres started to come down to a decent size. Stalking Baruzzi now as the fluorescent coloured car of Grob who had worked his way past Picco.

A few more minutes and fuel stops passed, still Cantarella did not change tyres but now his engine was audibly harder and now Baruzzi and Grob were catching him. Baruzzi then hit some kind of problem which slowed him enough for Grob to take second place. Cantarella then pitted for tyres with just less than six minutes to go — had he left it too late?

Cantarella exited the pits about half a lap behind Grob who was now leading. Into the last two minutes and Cantarella was right behind Grob, would Grob be able to hold him off? The problem never arose as Grob pulled over to let Cantarella back into the lead! Why? we wondered. It was to transpire later that there was some confusion over the announcements made over the P.A. system and the thought was that Grob did not know he was leading by inches from Cantarella. Still, it was Cantarella that crossed the line first just 6.3 seconds ahead of Grob and some laps ahead of Baruzzi. The look on Cantarella's face was pure joy as he savoured the moment, the Italians went wild with delight.

The first three cars were taken for scrutineering and then, after about ten minutes, the fourth place car was called for as well! Why? This was most unusual. Stories started to circulate as to what was happening. One rumour claimed that the first three cars had been illegal!

Eventually it transpired that Cantarella's car had been found underweight by 15 grammes. It had been re-weighted four times always with the same result. The Italians protested, as is their way, but this time no fuss was made when the disqualification stood.

So first place was awarded to Albert Grob, second to Baruzzi and third to Picco. Grob was delighted, if a little surprised, and so now wears the European title for the year.

Final results and placings were thus:-

Final Positions		
1. Albert Grob	CH	151 45:10.2
2. Michele Baruzzi	I	153 45:3.6
3. Alberto Picco	I	152 45:5.0
4. Roberto Pezzini	Italy	151 45:10.8
5. Klaus Hoschen	Germany	148 45:15.1
6. Eric Vandereyt	Belgium	145 45:3.0
7. Jürgen Baehr	Germany	139 45:13.3
8. Anders Ljungquist	Sweden	112 39:22.5
9. Michael Salven	Germany	77 22:37.1
10. Daniele Cantarella	Italy (disq)	157 45:3.9

Finishing Positions Of U.K. Drivers

13. Steve White	70 20:9.3
14. Dave Dixon	70 20:10.3
24. Nigel Sayles	9 2:31.7

37. James Haydon	46 14:25.8
50. Bob Errington	32 13:9.2
51. Dave Withal	14 10:7.7
56. Charlie Dudfield	64 20:9.8
66. Steve Whitting	3 0:36.4
67. Paul Pagdin	68 20:3.9
70. Frank Chung	66 20:21.5
72. Steve Fagg	65 20:10.9
92. Ian Briggs	16 5:10.1
93. Cliff Banks	16 5:14.4

All in all not a bad meeting and well executed by the Danes on their first attempt. Questions must be raised regarding the use of 'add-on' weights though as it could easily have spoiled things. It was nice to see both Cantarella and the Italians take the official verdict so well without any fuss.

Finally our congratulations go to Albert

Grob from Switzerland on his European title. Next year he will have to defend his title in Italy where there is sure to be a host of fast drivers, and with the thought of the trackside swimming pool and almost guaranteed hot weather, it is difficult to wait a whole year!

Pure joy as Daniele Cantarella thinks he has won the title.

