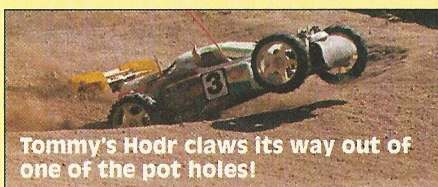


1/8 RallyX

Euro Champs

Coimbra, Portugal

The European Championships were held this year in Portugal, with the British drivers and mechanics taking various routes to get there. Some had flown to Oporto, hired cars and driven down to Coimbra, the old University city. Others had taken the long 24 hour ferry from Plymouth to Santander and endured a six hour drive across Spain and over the border to Portugal. One crew drove from Dieppe through France and Spain; a long hot run, but better than being tossed about on a boat in the Bay of Biscay. That drive took 18 hours with a stop for a little sleep. Guess which route I took? Yes — number three. All the drivers met up in Coimbra having arrived safely on Tuesday evening, and after a meal at a pavement cafe we all walked across the river bridge to the track. The venue was ideally sited — only a mere 400 metres from our hotel,



Tommy's Hodr claws its way out of one of the pot holes!

so the cars and trailers were parked up and it would be walkies for the race week. The track was of the usual surface which we have become used to in Europe — loose dirt. However, the track was well designed and the pit area was supplied with sufficient mains hook-ups for everyone with compressors on hand to blow away the dust. Everyone was tucked up in bed early, as racing was due to start first thing on Wednesday morning.

Wednesday arrived bright and sunny and a hot day was promised. Magic! First things first and everyone had to book in at the registration caravan. The young girls in charge were most helpful and spoke very good English. Actually, by the end of the week their vocabulary had increased considerably with the help of one or

Roberto Ghedhini's Crono avoiding the bumps on his way to victory.



Roberto Ghedhini obviously enjoys showering in Champagne!

Roberto Ghedhini does 'The Italian Job' and retains the title of European Champion for 1993!



Tony Miller and David Chung restarting Tommy's car during the Final.

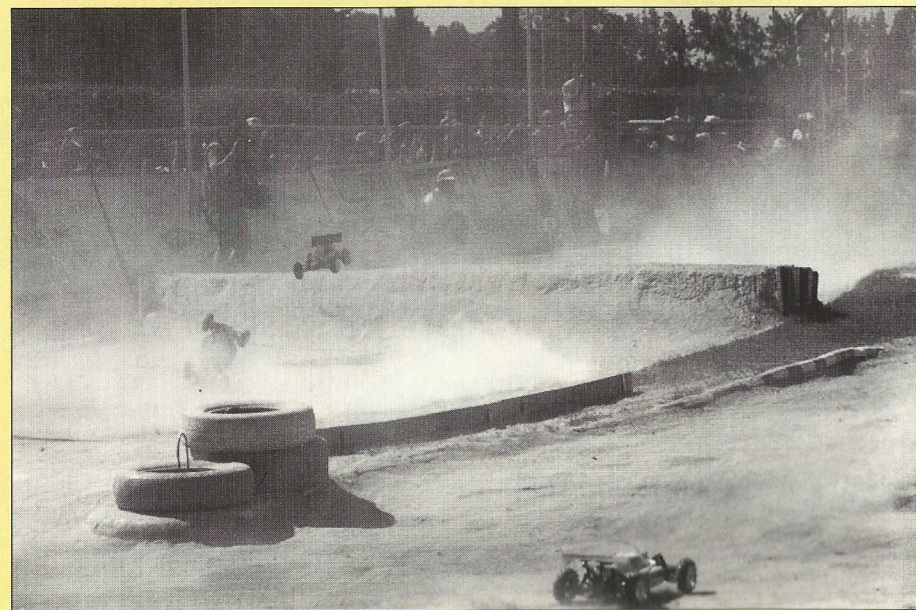
two of our British crew, but we won't dwell on that! As soon as registration was over with we received our drivers and mechanics badges. The drivers badge was divided into five sections, each one counting for one ten minute practise session. The next step was to find the section allocated to Great Britain in the pit area, set up and take the car to technical inspection. This involved checking all the dimensions of the car, including the wing, size of tyre, homologation of the silencer and capacity of fuel tank, the latter always being most critical. The only tank that is always on the limit is the Serpent tank used by the lot of the racers, although this year the Corsair has a new tank which is also very close. When the car satisfied all those requirements, the scrutineer engraved the car's chassis with his mark. Finally we were ready to go out and practise. By now it was already afternoon, so with 145 drivers entered for the event from 16 European countries, one run would be all there would be time for.

Thursday again was a day of free practise; we simply signed our names on the board at the base of the rostrum against a desired time, with the required frequency and that was that. Friday morning would be for a timed practise session, so if the car wasn't sorted regarding tyres and suspension settings by then, it was tough! Friday afternoon was reserved for the official opening ceremony, where we were given a magnificent display by a number of up and coming gymnasts and a rather hairy helicopter display. All the teams were introduced and I must say that the British team looked the smartest, immaculately turned out in their British Racing Green B.R.C.A. embossed polo shirts. As soon as the opening ceremony had been completed it would be the first round of qualifying out of four. The timed practise in the morning was to seed the heats. At the end of round one the top Brit was Tommy Chung, lying third overall with his Hodr, in fact eight of our drivers were in the top 50.

Another day was over and the weather was perfect. While we had been there, so far every day the temperature had reached the 90s and during the evenings the drivers and mechanics would get together over a meal, usually eaten outdoors at one of the street cafes. Beer would be

in plentiful supply and socialising (!) would go on long after dark.

Saturday was the final qualifying day, but with the track cutting up very badly, it would prove impossible to better the times. Mark Chaplin was awarded the worst tyre-gluer of the year award during the racing, for the four new tyres he glued on all spun off. Wallpaper paste may be cheap Mark, but it doesn't stick tyres to rims! Luckily Mark has a good sense of humour and took all the ribbing in good spirit — to be part of the team one has to have a good sense of humour! I must congratulate the British team on their amazing team spirit; they always work together, whether they are driving Infernos, Unikas, Pirates, Hodrs, Probes, Cronos or Laros, and whenever anyone needs a hand you don't have to look far. The team spirit in the British camp is second to none. Congratulations lads — it means a lot!



Chedhini's Crono taking the smooth outside line in the foreground.

With qualifying over, the top driver was Eric Lappierre driving a Kyosho Inferno for France. The reigning champion Roberto Ghedini was lying in fifth place. In fact after round one the top 27 places remained the same. To me that shows that the track was of poor construction, not giving drivers a fair chance. A track that can have its FTD uprated even in the final round is the type of track that is needed, but this is made even more difficult by the amount of use the track is put to during the practise sessions.

Sunday was for the Christmas tree finals. These started at the 1/256ths. Yours truly was in the first of these along with John Zottl. Well, John went through but I'm afraid that I failed, due to the carburettor slide jamming up, possibly because of the dust. The 1/256th B had Harry Box in it, and he qualified through to the 1/128ths. John Zottl did not qualify through the 1/54ths, neither did Harry, and the 1/128ths also saw the retirement of Tris Jones when his engine breathed its last due to Tris not oiling his foam filter. Whilst on the subject of filters, the one that seemed to be coping with the dust the best was the paper element covered by an oiled foam type that comes as standard with the Mondial engine. The K.N. filter is always very popular but it did seem

British Qualifying Positions - Round Number

| Name | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|----------------|----|----|----|----|
| Tommy Chung | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Mark Stitson | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 |
| Justin Mackey | 19 | 19 | 19 | 19 |
| James Weedon | 22 | 22 | 22 | 22 |
| Mike Cradock | 26 | 26 | 26 | 26 |
| Stewart Wilcox | 40 | 41 | 41 | 41 |
| John Skidmore | 41 | 44 | 44 | 44 |
| Ian Oddie | 43 | 46 | 46 | 46 |

to suffer from becoming clogged. This was to prove the downfall of Paul Entwistle in the 1/64th, so the British drivers were dropping out fast. The next to go was Ralph Allum, with the track having become more rutted than ever, his car simply couldn't cope with the atrocious conditions. The 1/32nd B had two British drivers, Paul Dudley and Mark Chaplin in it. Well, Paul retired after a series of engine cuts but Mark

make it through to the 1/16th where he met Ian Oddie, Gary Marsden, Chalky Skidmore and Tony Miller; Tony being the only lucky one for Mark went out with an ill-handling car after he broke a front shock absorber. Gary retired when a broken aerial wire gave him interference. Chalky had to retire when his carburettor broke and Ian Oddie, who was well in the hunt in the early part of the race, failed to stay there when his engine cut during refuelling! The 1/8A had just Stewart Wilcox representing the Brits, but an ill-handling car was to prove too much for Stewart to cope with, for the track was now absolutely horrendous. The holes that had developed on some of the corners were bigger than the cars; there simply wasn't a racing line left.

The 1/8B was where Tony Miller would leave the field, his car's engine cutting on the start line and Tony simply could not catch up. The 1/4 was where we would lose two more of our team, Mark Stitson and Justin Mackey, both top drivers but unable to stay on the pace with the Europeans. We in the U.K. have a great disadvantage when racing in Europe, for the majority of tracks are dust and we don't have enough experience of how they can change, and what set-up will work the best as the meeting proceeds. Hopefully, in 1994 this will be different, as the Euros are to be held in the U.K. at Pendle. The next two Brits to go out were James Weedon and Mike Cradock, James having engine problems and Mike? Well, Mike had trouble staying on all four wheels. His jumping technique was more like a triple jump, for he landed very hard off the main jump a number of times, which cost him dearly. So as we approached the semis, after what looked as if we had six or seven drivers in with a chance, we were now relying on our sole remaining driver to deliver the goods, and who better to put your money on than Tommy Chung!

So now 20 minutes of sheer torture for the car to go through. Tommy started on the second row of the grid immediately behind Erik Lappierre, the holder of the F.T.D., but third on the grid was the current champion, Roberto Ghedini from Italy with his Crono, so we had three different manufacturers at the front: Inferno versus Hodr versus Crono. Well, Tommy drove brilliantly. He led the race almost from the start, leading for the whole race with Ghedini content to take second place; the first five qualifying through to the main A final. The second semi proved to be the quickest, with Maurizio Monesi winning with an Inferno and second was Erwin Weiman with another Inferno. So what did we have lined up for the 45 minute final? Well, let's take a look. On pole position we had the popular Italian, Maurizio Monesi driving a Kyosho Inferno powered by a works prepared O.P.S. — brand new for the final, the engine being fitted during the break, so he would be well on the pace and what's more totally reliable. Second on the grid was Erwin Weiman from Germany with another Inferno, but powered by a Rex. Third, our hero from the best take-away in Maidenhead, possibly even the UK — our very own Tommy Chung, with the car that he imports, the Hodr, powered by O.P.S., but no new engine, just the one he had used all week. Fourth was Daniel Reckward from Germany driving a Mugen using Rex power, then fifth from Italy was Alex Laffranchi with another Inferno, this time powered by a Nova Rossi 2000. Sixth was the current champion, Robert Ghedini from Italy with his Crono powered by Picco, then

came another Inferno driven by another Italian, Andrea Gennari and powered by a Mondial. Eighth was Philippe Lachat from France driving a new car, the Laro Rush, powered by their own engine called simply a P.L.X. Ninth, again from France was Philippe Boeri with the new Super Pirate M4 powered by a Mondial, and finally again from France, the first round F.T.D. holder Eric Lappierre with an Inferno powered by a J.P. Racing Tops engine.

So with the drivers on the rostrum, the cars fuelled up and on the line, who would be standing on the winners podium at the end of the next 45 minutes? Well, it would certainly not go to the out and out fastest car. The track was certainly not a power track. As the race started Tommy raced to the first hairpin, took it very tightly — too tight, and he was upside down and buried before a marshal could rescue him. The other cars raced past him dropping him to last,

| Name | Qual Position | Final Position | Car | Engine | Servo | Nationality |
|-----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|
| Maurizio Monesi | 1 | 3 | Kyosho Inferno | OPS | Futaba 9302 | Italy |
| Erwin Weiman | 2 | 5 | Kyosho Inferno | Rex | KO 1003 | Germany |
| Tommy Chung | 3 | 7 | Hodr | OPS | KO 1003 | Great Britain |
| Daniel Reckward | 4 | 10 | Mugen | Rex | Futaba 9301 | Germany |
| Alex Laffranchi | 5 | 9 | Kyosho Inferno | Nova Rossi 2000 | Futaba 9302 | Italy |
| Roberto Ghedini | 6 | 1 | Crono | Picco | Futaba 9302 | Italy |
| Andrea Gennari | 7 | 2 | Kyosho Inferno | Mondial | Futaba 9302 | Italy |
| Philippe Lachat | 8 | 6 | Rush Laro | PLX | KO 1003 | France |
| Phillippe Boeri | 9 | 4 | Pirate M4 | Mondial | Multiplex MC | France |
| Eric Lappierre | 10 | 8 | Kyosho Inferno | JP Racing Top | KO 1003 | France |

but luckily his engine was still running. He set off in hot pursuit and within the first five minutes he had moved up to sixth place, but out in front was that man again — Ghedini, seemingly making it look easy. Reckward was second and in third was Monesi. So car wise it was Crono, Mugen and Inferno. At ten minutes Monesi moved up to second and was the quickest car on the track, closing the gap on Ghedini. Ghedini responded and began to extend the gap again. Monesi could not respond and began to drop back, making a number of errors. In fact his fellow countryman Andrea Gennari caught him and took second place. Meanwhile, Tommy was in sixth but he broke a steering arm and had to pit for repairs, he also had a plug blow so that had to be changed. Tommy was now down to ninth while in tenth was car two, Daniel Reckward, who had retired with a blown throttle servo. Ghedini was way out in front, seemingly being able to turn on the speed whenever necessary. His driving technique was

obviously the key to success. He drove around the bumps, staying on the outside of all the corners, in fact taking the long way round, but none the less being very quick in doing so. The only way to close the gap was to take the far more treacherous route over the car eating holes. The odd lap would then be quicker, but more often than not the car would fall foul of the conditions.

Just before the 30 minute mark, Alex Lafranche retired with a broken car so Tommy was now up to eighth place with a good chance of seventh as the F.T.D. man, Eric Lappierre, was now having numerous pit stops due to engine problems. His engine was obviously well past its use-by-date. In the closing minutes, Tommy gained seventh place and as the flag fell at the end of the 1993 European Championships, it was that man again, Roberto Ghedini, who was to retain his title. His car never faltered once, and he led the race for almost its entire length, finishing a clear 18

seconds in front of Andrea Gennari, with Maurizio Monesi third. So, a clean sweep for the Italians! A real Italian job, you might say, our man of the moment, Tommy Chung finishing seventh.

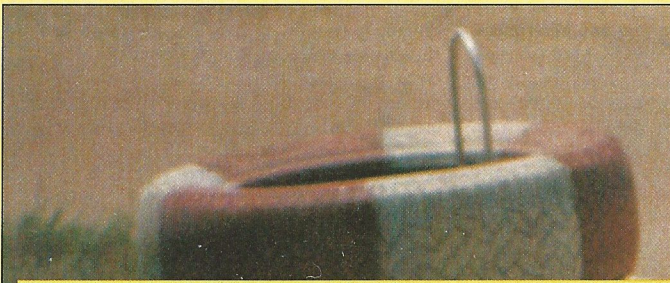
Well, that's it for the '93 Euros, all that's left now are the 'if only's', but hopefully next year the Brits will be leading the field on home soil. See you all in Kettering!

FINAL RESULT

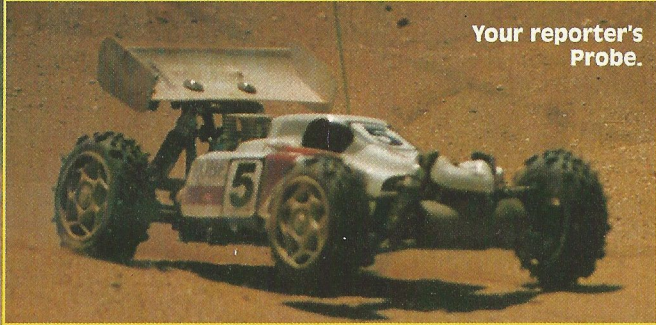
| Pos | Name | Laps | Time |
|-----|-----------------|------|----------|
| 1 | Roberto Ghedini | 71 | 45:20.05 |
| 2 | Andrea Gennari | 71 | 45:38.99 |
| 3 | Maurizio Monesi | 70 | 45:21.11 |
| 4 | Philippe Boeri | 69 | 45:13.25 |
| 5 | Erwin Weimann | 69 | 45:22.09 |
| 6 | Philippe Lachat | 68 | 45:40.05 |
| 7 | Tommy Chung | 65 | 45:23.62 |
| 8 | Eric Lappierre | 57 | 45:01.40 |
| 9 | Alex Laffranchi | 44 | 45:37.36 |
| 10 | Daniel Reckward | 37 | 45:00.19 |

QUALIFICATION

| Pos | Name | Laps | Time |
|-----|-----------------|------|----------|
| 1 | Roberto Ghedini | 32 | 20:33.99 |
| 2 | Andrea Gennari | 32 | 20:34.19 |
| 3 | Maurizio Monesi | 32 | 20:13.74 |
| 4 | Philippe Boeri | 31 | 20:26.68 |
| 5 | Erwin Weimann | 32 | 20:25.65 |
| 6 | Philippe Lachat | 31 | 20:22.99 |
| 7 | Tommy Chung | 32 | 20:29.44 |
| 8 | Eric Lappierre | 31 | 20:58.17 |
| 9 | Alex Laffranchi | 32 | 20:33.52 |
| 10 | Daniel Reckward | 32 | 20:30.03 |



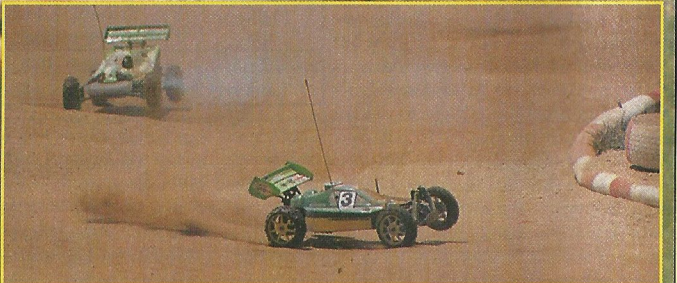
Your reporter's Probe.



The trio that did 'The Italian Job' on the '93 Euro's.



Tommy Chung flew the flag for Britain, but has he developed a new style of driving with an upside down transmitter?



The British Team members, very smartly turned out in their BRCA shirts!

