

1/8

# European Championships

**Bob Errington reports on the 13th European 1/8 Championships from France**

Allo, Allo, now leesen very carefooly, I shall say zis only once.

The thirteenth Euro Champs for 1/8 R/C cars has just been held at Clermont Ferrand in central France, here with a full report is our very own Herr Flick of ze Gestapo, Bob Errington.

Some fourteen European Countries sent their best drivers to this venue with a total of 98 competing. Italy topped the list as usual with 17 entrants followed by host nation France with 16, then came G.B. 11, Switzerland 10, Holland and Germany with 9 a piece, Sweden 5, Belgium and Denmark 4, Luxemburg, Finland and Spain 3 and finally Monaco and Austria with 2 each. The atmosphere, as always, was one of cordiality with acquaintances being made and rekindled. The race officials put themselves at the drivers disposal and even the expected vandalism to the English full size transport did not materialise.

## The Circuit

The circuit itself was 300 metres x 5m wide and laid on a slope running from the clubhouse down to the drivers stand thus giving the added dimensions of climbing hills and driving down slopes as well as cambered and adverse cambered bends. The clubhouse was in fact the on-site restaurant catering for breakfast and a mid day meal at reasonable prices.

All this was conveniently placed above track level thus giving an excellent relaxed view of the proceedings. The usual covered pits and drivers stand combined with transmitter control, was to the now expected standards, there was also a huge compressor supplying four high pressure guns for car cleaning.

The toilets had been provided to normal French standards which means a hole in the ground albeit ceramic. The foot grips, straining bars and the teeth marks in the door, confirmed though that was the place for difficult moments. (I personally think that a safety belt should have been provided and could well have saved a few poor souls.) However the black market price for syrup of figs and prunes helped a few

people on their way.

The view from the circuit was truly magnificent and one could see the whole of Clermont-Ferrand from this mountain circuit. All in all a perfect setting for model car racing.

## Rody Roem



## The Practice

Free practice started on Wednesday morning through till Friday lunchtime with most of the competitors arriving at some stage on the Thursday. The track appeared bumpy at first although this eased as a black line started to appear. However, more apparent was the terrific wear rate for normal racing rubber so much so in fact that the track was swept clean every evening and if a car ventured wide on a bend plumes of spent rubber dust were sent airborne as if dirt track racing.

Times of 20 seconds were thought acceptable and if you could get under 19.5 you were doing well. Then Rody Roem of Holland was clocked at 18.9 secs which started a few tongues wagging. In fact all of the Serpent cars looked smooth and at ease here. But what was interesting was that Rody and Rony Ton were both using belt drive rear ends instead of the usual gear drive!!

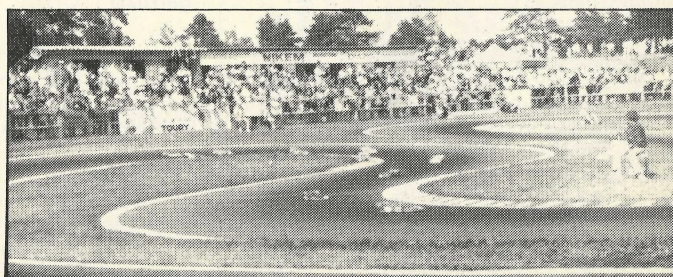
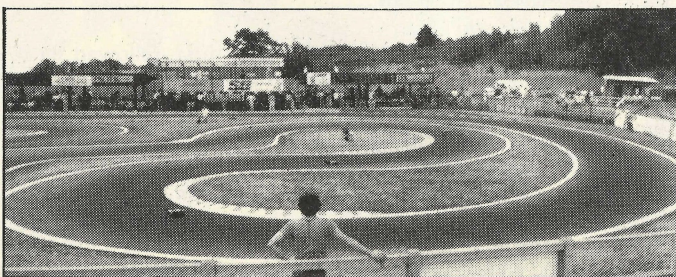
The Italian S.G. cars also looked smooth here, in fact one of them, Bernard of France, was clocked at 18.25 secs, which was the fastest anyone had been clocked at all. These cars had altered since 1985 but were basically as per the new '86 kit, with revised gearing front and back, torque limiter at the front and two speed gearbox. New features not previously seen were a new tank set lower into the car and adjustable rear differential and an experimental spiral cut front level gear, which all added up to a much improved car.

Also from Italy was the Mantuo team with their look-a-like Serpent, so much a-like was this car that they had managed to copy the Serpent stamp and the box!! On the Friday morning they produced their actual version, but one of their team drivers told me that whilst they had been searching for more front grip from their Serpents, now they were looking for tyres with a resemblance to the texture of freshly poured concrete.

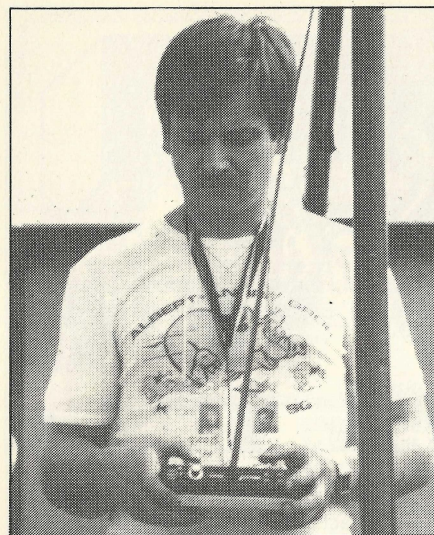
The American company Delta were represented mainly by the Spanish Team who seemed to only use Delta. The car was a little different from the ones seen in England but really was done no justice by those drivers using it.

The other American firm of Associated was slightly better represented with about half a dozen cars present. The car received mixed feelings from those that saw it, some liking it and others feeling it "bitty". Again no top drivers were using it.

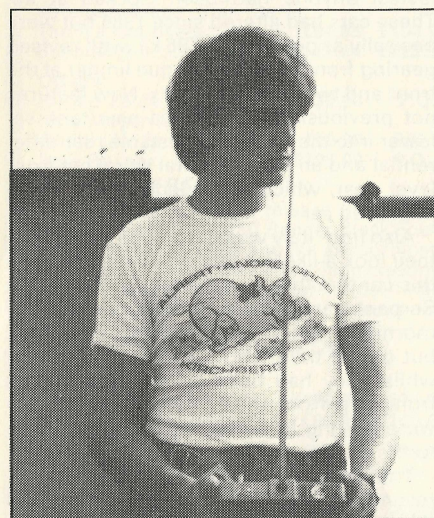
It was nice to see the British P.B. cars well represented here with strong support from France and Sweden with even some Italian drivers. Main new feature here was the prototype wider front wishbones evident on the cars of Paul Pagdin and Bob Errington. Interesting to note the different set ups though, the English cars had roll-bars fitted with free-mounted formula size wings and no rear steering effect, whilst the French cars had no roll bars, high mounted full size wings partly acting as roll bars, and Roll Induced Steering Effect (RISE). Neither showed any real advantage over the other but I for one tried the French settings and







Jacat Buhler



Zender

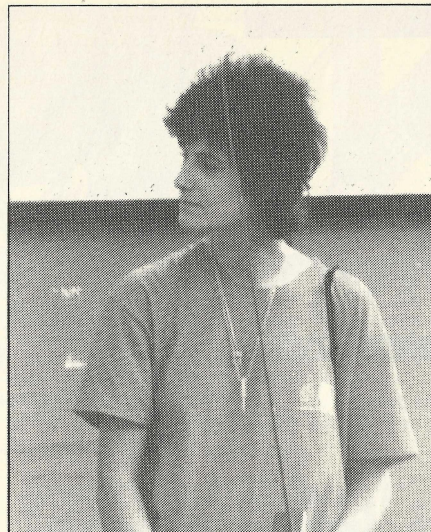


Julio Gheri

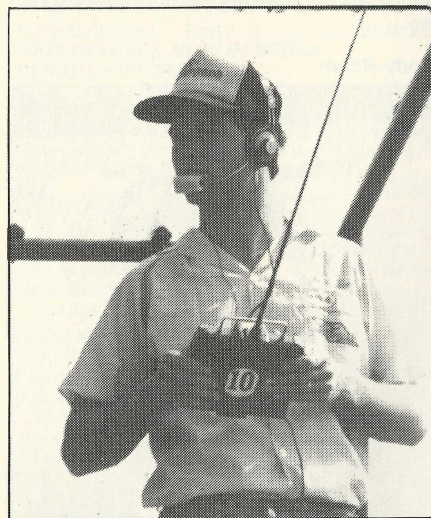
didn't like them!!

With free practice now over, speculation as to who would qualify straight through (i.e. the top four) centred around Rody Roem, Bernard and David Lecat, the latter two both being French and with good previous experience at this venue.

The Friday afternoon official practice showed one thing most evidently and that was that the track was slower in the after-



Miss Lyaudet



Rody Roem



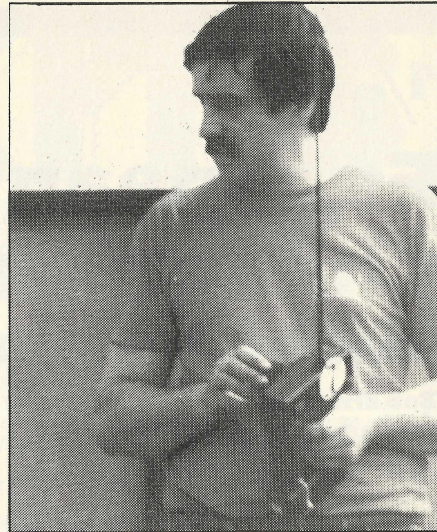
Barruzzi

noon sun. A not unknown phenomena for those who had ventured abroad before — we don't seem to get sun in England, at least not in the summer anyway.

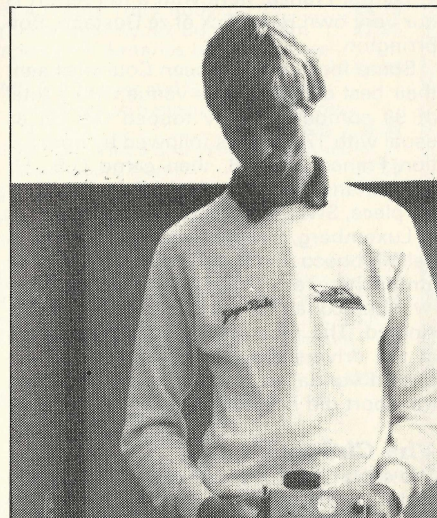
### Qualifying

Saturday dawned cloudy which could be an advantage although a little sun would be nice — no pleasing some people is there!

The ten car heats had been arranged with



Cassagne



Jurger Bahr



Raith

the 'A' class drivers first, followed by the 'B's. The reverse of what you would normally expect, but did the organisers take into account the slowing track?

Heat 1 featured Bukler (Swiss), Calce (Italy), Gheri (Italy), Calpista (Italy), Ton (Holland), and Berron (France), as strong protagonists and sure enough there were a few clashes on the opening laps, but it was Bukler with his Serpent who came

through to win the heat with 16 laps in 5 mins. 6.3secs.

Heat 2 looked like a Serpent outing with Roem (Holland), Tenthof (Holland), Guelte (Belgium), and Salven (Germany), with only Lecat (France) flying the PB flag.

Surprise! Surprise! Roem won the heat with a flying 17 laps 5 mins 17.5 secs, ah well! I wonder who is going to be second.

Heat 3 was more of a mixture with Bahr (Germany), Bortolomasi (Italy), Bergonzini (Italy) and Pagdin (G.B.), (or Pagvin as he was listed), battling for chief honours with Bahr recording the second 17 lapper in 5 mins 18.3 secs, only 0.8 secs behind Roem!

Heat 4, the last of the 'A' drivers, featured Errington (G.B. — who ever he is), Raith (Germany), Bernard (France), Lodi (Italy), Caronello (Italy), Mielke (Germany), Bervoets (Holland) and Sabattini (Italy). Errington (Who?) clocked 16 laps in 5 mins 8.0 secs to take the heat, just.

Heat 5 produced the only real surprises from the 'B' drivers with Barruzzi (Italy) taking his Serpent to 16 laps in 5 mins 4.5 secs and Solaroli (Italy) pushing his PB to 16 laps in 5 mins 7.8 secs.

After heat 10 we went straight into round 2 and sure enough the times were slower with nobody bettering a reasonable run from round 1. So to the lunch break and low and behold we must be back in England 'cos it was blooming well raining and rain it certainly did with no further hope of qualifying unless you had a hydroplane. The last two rounds still proceeded, but only a few brave souls ventured forth despite pleas from the Race Director Eric White to entertain the crowd. By the bye, Eric's request for the drivers briefing for competitors to "Use yer loaves lads!" resulted in many a foreign entrant rushing out and buying sticks of bread!!

Well, with qualifying over the top ten looked like this:-

1 Roem	Holland	Serpent	175:17.5
2 Bahr	Germany	Serpent	175:17.5
3 Baruzzi	Italy	Serpent	165:4.5
4 Buhler	Swiss	Serpent	165:6.3
5 Tenthof	Holland	Serpent	165:6.8
6 Solaroli	Italy	P.B.	165:7.8
7 Guitte	Belgium	Serpent	165:7.8
8 Errington	G.B.	P.B.	165:8.0
9 Calce	Italy	S.G.	165:8.0
10 Ljundkuist	Sweden	P.B.	165:8.2

Other British listings were:-

26	Pagdin	P.B.	165:14.5
28	Discon	Serpent	165:16.8
29	Sayles	P.B.	165:17.1
47	Ashton	P.B.	155:2.9
50	Hayden	Serpent	155:3.9
70	Fagg	P.B.	155:15.7
80	Collins	P.B.	145:6.9
81	Withall	Serpent	145:7.9
87	Richene	P.B.	125:0.7
95	Whitting	Serpent	75:0.0

The only interesting point of the wet afternoon was watching Finnish driver Daniel Kalves drive his Associated around the wet track in a most impressive manner. But I didn't think it ever rained in the States?

### Finals Day

After tremendous thunderstorms during the night we wondered what would be in store for the day and although the track was dry on arrival, it was certainly wet by the time of the first of the 1/2 finals. This in itself was an event in that the winner, our own team entertainments officer — Murray Collins, was disqualified because his transponder (auto lap counting device) was not evident on his car! However, as the auto system checks the transponders prior to the start of the race, how did they check what was not there? A shame, as not only did it spoil a good race but it was the only blemish on the whole proceedings.

The second 1/2 final was won by Schar of Switzerland but more important was the second place Lyaudet, a young lady from France who, inspired by this 20 min drive, then came second in the 1/16 final and then first in the 1/8 final and then first in the 1/4 final and then first again in the semi final to secure a place in the 45 minute main finals, the fact that her engine eventually blew in the final after 15 mins is by no means surprising!

Lunch had been called prior to the 1/4 finals and by the time it finished the track had dried. The first 1/4 final saw Cassagne (French 'B' class driver) win from Berron (France) and Zehnder (Swiss), with Britain's Paul Pagdin fourth and Dave Discon sixth. The second 1/4 final had Lyaudet (France) win with Kristoffer (Sweden) second and Britains Nigel Sayles third. It had been an unfortunate run for Paul Pagdin as he had been lying first/second and it was only in the last two minutes that the tyres finally called 'enough'. Still, the hubs were now quite prepared for new tyres!

The first semi-final saw Errington retire after 9 mins after a stone had made a mess of the gears and thus Cassagne, Gheri and Zehnder made it through to the main. The second semi added the names of Lyaudet, Lecat and Raith to the list while Nigel Sayles settled for seventh place.

### The Main Final

Line Up.			
1 Roem	Holland	Serpent	OPS
2 Bahr	Germany	Serpent	Mondial
3 Barruzzi	Italy	Serpent	Nova Rossi
4 Buhler	Swiss	Serpent	OPS
5 Cassagne	France	PB	Nova Rossi
6 Lyaudet	France	PB	Nova Rossi
7 Gheri	Italy	SG	Picco
8 Lecat	France	PB	Nova Rossi
9 Zender	Swiss	PB	Nova Rossi
10 Raith	German7	Serpent	Mondial

Right from the start, Roem shot into the

lead followed by Bahr whilst the others sorted themselves out, Gheri's car seemed to be changing gear very late and pulling a lot of revs down the straight until Bang! Exit engine, exit Gheri.

The order now settled down at Roem, Bahr, Buhler, Lecat, Cassagne as the 5 min mark approached, with Raith going for a long term stop with some problem.

It was difficult to tell how long each driver was going to run between pit stops at this stage, but at the 8 min mark Lecat had hit some problems leaving the order at Roem, Bahr, Buhler, Cassagne.

At 10 mins Roem got involved in an incident which let Bahr take the lead where he immediately pitted for fuel so he was going 5 mins dead between stops. Roem didn't pit till 11 1/2 mins so it was obvious that he was going to save one stop over Bahr. It was still very close and after 20 mins Roem held a narrow 5 sec margin over Bahr. Then at 22 1/2 mins, (half way), Roem pitted for fuel and a change of tyres and it was 30 seconds later that he left the pits nearly one lap down on Bahr. Twenty-five mins and Bahr takes a scheduled stop, leaving the pits still a half lap ahead but Roem is now catching fast and just takes back the lead before he fuels at 29 mins. One lap later and Bahr is in for a set of tyres leaving the pits 30 seconds later it is only two laps before Roem takes a full one lap lead over second place Bahr.

At 35 mins there are only six cars left running, but then Lecat retires and Cassagne returns to keep the balance, but the last ten mins saw positions go unchanged to leave the final result as:-

1	Roem	136	Laps
2	Bahr	135	Laps
3	Buhler	133	Laps
4	Zehnder	129	Laps
5	Cassagne	109	Laps
6	Raith	102	Laps
7	Lecat	76	Laps
8	Baruzzi	64	Laps
9	Lyaudet	46	Laps
10	Gheri	10	Laps

Certainly a well deserved win for Rody Roem and Serpent, he can now add European Champion to his list of achievements including the World Champion title that he secured last year in Japan.

### Epilogue

Well G.B. didn't fair too well here with Nigel Sayles heading the final classification at 15th place, Errington 22nd, Pagdin 25th, Discon 29th and Ashton 41st. But most of our top Serpent drivers didn't go! Surely they must be kicking their heels now as they would have stood a good chance.

Thanks to the entertainments manager, Murry Collins, who kept everyone amused throughout the whole event.



Left to Right: Calpista, Mario Rossi, ?, Rossi Senior.

