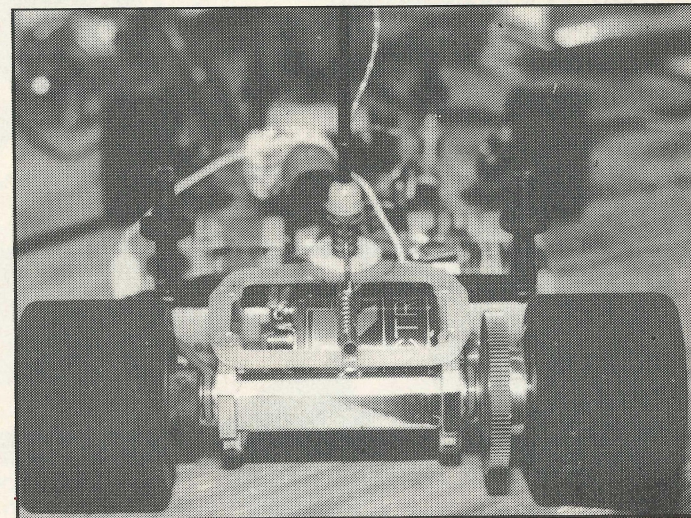
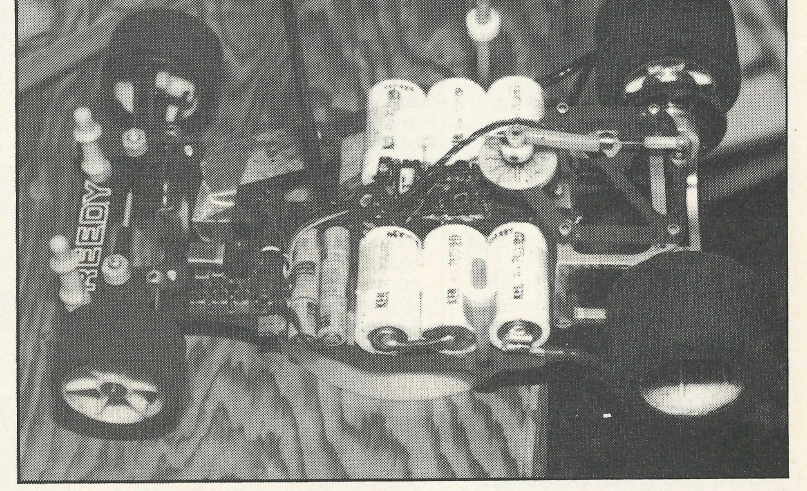
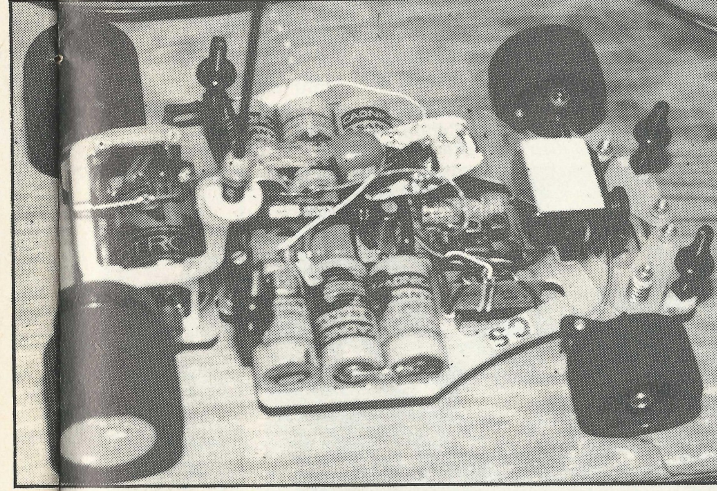
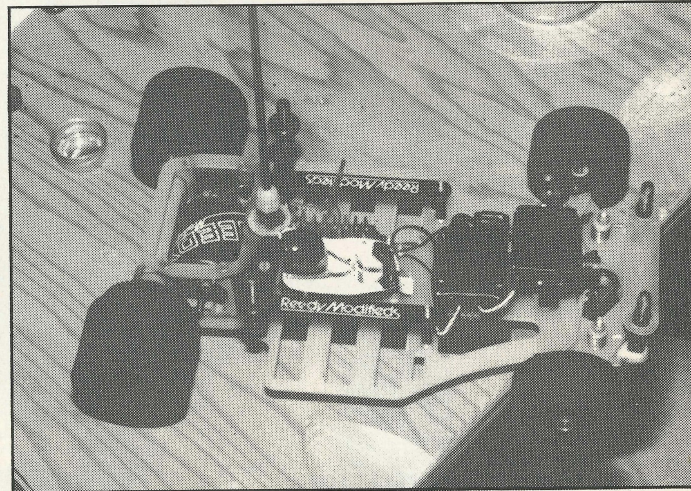




1988 EURO *Champs*



**David Gale reports from
Brugge on yet another
British win.**

Ever since the inaugural European Championships, Britain has taken a leading role, supplying five consecutive Euro-Champs in the form of Neal Francis, Jim Davis, Mickey Booth, Phil Olsen, and Andy Dobson. With Andy's departure to America our hopes have been firmly placed on one young man's shoulders, namely Phil Davies. After four attempts (and four 3rd places) I can gladly report that Phil has finally become the 6th British European Champ, adding this title to that of the 1987 Buggy European Champion, and confirming his position as Britains No. 1 driver.

A total of 20 British drivers made the trip, along with another five onlookers, all using the services of the coach laid on by Nigel Piltz. This was a masterly feat by Nigel, and without doubt it was to give the whole meeting much team spirit. Thankfully Nigel's coach driving was kept to a minimum, as it is almost as good as Cecil's map reading! On arrival at Harwich we were informed that the ferry was running about 7 hours late, so a trip to Frinton on Sea for afternoon tea was undertaken. Having terrorised the local population we made our way back to the ferry terminus, when upon a lively discussion on the merits of the 1.7 Ahr capacity 'SCE' Sanyo cells ensued.

This discussion lasted nearly three hours, as drivers made their opinions known, with the general feeling being that the

use of the batteries should be made illegal until they are commercially available to everyone. The good news for this meeting being that the EFRA committee had already chose not to allow these cells for a period of three months. We finally boarded the ferry just after midnight, retiring to our cabins about 4am after a few jars. Unfortunately we were woken to the news that some toe-rag had been doing the rounds, and stolen about £800 from various members of the team - not the best way to start a meeting, so remember to lock your cabin door when travelling by ferry, and to use the lock up's if provided.

We arrived at the venue at about 9pm, booked into the motel, and set off for some food. Two 'boarding' party's of about 10 were sent to each of the two pizza hut's to confuse the natives, who promptly got there own back when serving the bill. This came to around 20 quid per head, which caused some glum faces and lots of pocket searching for Danish Hafplings. Friday morning dawned good and bright for those of us whose sleep patterns had not been disturbed, and after filling up our 'doggy bags' from the breakfast table we made our way to the sports hall hosting the event. Initial impressions of the track were deceptive, as it seemed to be very small and tight with more hairpins than Dolly Parton! However once practice began it soon became clear that this was not the case,

and that the infield was a challenging selection of continuous curves, relying on the driver using the whole track width, to keep the car flowing from Apex to Apex.

The track was marked out with very unforgiving barriers made of solid wood nailed to the floor, with each apex marked with a polystyrene flap arrangement.

This allowed for a small margin of error on the drivers part, as being deformable they could be 'clipped' in a similar way to slalom poles on a Ski run. However exceeding the limit was the surest way of reducing ones car to a kit of parts! Hot rumour of the meeting was that Ian Spashet was being sought after by the Danish Forestry commission and Greenpeace for his attempts to reduce the track markings to a size more commonly found in matchboxes!

On Friday the format was two practice runs followed by two

rounds of heats.

TQ after found one being Phil Davies with a 33 lapper, closely followed by Mika Leppalati, the Finnish Euro Champ, and José Rosas the French champion. After the second round Ulf Ebenhcitd moved ahead of Phil with Jurgen Lautenbach 3rd, and Anders Nilson and yours truly moving ahead of José for the 5th and 6th respectively. Tim Dakin was also going well at this point in 9th place. For the evening meal our wallets were lightened further by yet another 20 quid pizza, although we had to leave Rob Roy back at the hotel to enable him to 'tune' into his normal sleep patterns.

On Saturday the final three rounds of heats were held, to be followed by the customary banquet.

In the first round Jurgen Lautenbach cruised round to score the first 34 lapper, with team mate Stephen Oberle moving up to 5th with yet

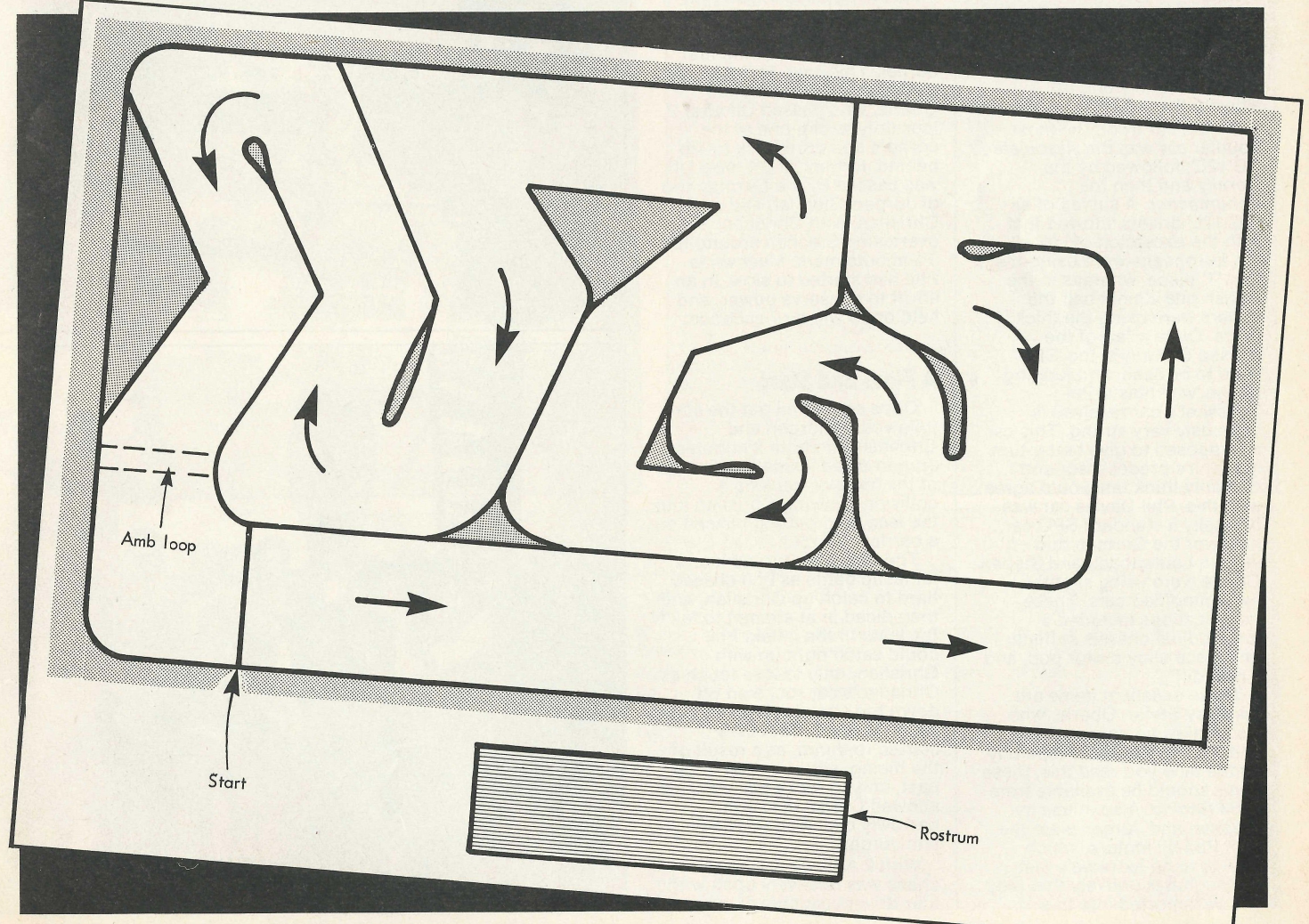
another fast 33 lapper. Jurgen's 34 lapper obviously spurred on drivers, as in round two, four more managed to break the barrier, with Ulf fastest, then Mika and last years Euro Champ Christian Kiel moving

up to 3rd. Phil Davies also scored 34 laps, but a hefty mega dump left him 5th overall.

For the final round the tension in the pits was 'electric' (no pun!) as drivers realised that this was the last chance to

qualify for the all important A final. In round 4 Phil Davies blasted round to score 34/10.2 to take FTD from Ulf. Mika also put in another fast 34 lapper to confirm his 3rd position, and then as Ulf came down the

Opposite page: Phil Davies - at last Eurochamp. Left: Phil's winning SPC car. Centre: Stephan Oberles SPC car. Above: Christian Kells RC12L with alloy motor pod. Below left: One piece pod seen on Jurgens SPC.



straight for the 8th lap, leapt out to marshall another car 'stamping' on Ulf's in the process.

Ulf's car was totalled in the incident, and credit must go to him for the cool, calm and restrained manner he accepted the incident (with only a simple shrug of his shoulders) and then imagine what 99% of British drivers would have done. The only other improvement in this round was Kurt Steinbuchel from Denmark, the local hero turning 34 laps, much to the crowds delight, and knocking myself down into the B.

Anyway the top 10 qualifying positions were as follows:

	Best	Time
1. Phil Davies	34	10.2
2. Ulf Ebenhardt	34	11.7
3. Mika Lappalati	34	12.1
4. Christian Kiel	34	13.1
5. Kurt Steinbuchel	34	13.8
6. Stepan Oberle	34	14.4
7. Jurgén Lautenbach	34	17.7
8. Anders Nilson	33	1.5
9. David Gale	33	3.4
10. Stepan Pohl	33	4.5

Considering that an average lap time for the faster drivers was about 14.5 secs only about 8 seconds covered the top 10 places, showing just how tight the competition was. With these sort of differences, grading of heats becomes more and more important. Perhaps a system of re-grading at the end of each day would help, although to put the top 10 drivers in one heat would almost certainly end up slowing them down.

On the car front, the most popular car was the Associated RC 12L, followed by the Corally and then the Schumacher. A survey of all 'RC 12L' drivers showed that with the exception of Ulf, all the Europeans were using the thin 'T' piece, whereas in the British pits almost half the drivers were using the thick 'T' piece. Quite a few of the revised Corally's, the 'SPC' were to be seen, and judging by the 'wall blasts' Ian Spashtet's car received is obviously very strong. This car is supposed to give better turn in that it's predecessor and I certainly think Ian would agree with this. Phil Davies car was basically a standard SPC car, however the German duo of Jurgén Lautenbach and Stepan Oberle were using slightly more modified cars. These modifications included a longitudinal chassis stiffener, one piece alloy motor pod, and a new diff.

These excellent items are made by Stefan Oberle, who also makes a one piece rear end for the 'RC 12L'. Hopefully by the time you read this, these items should be available from SRM Racing. Also in use by Stephan and Jurgén were the LRP Red 'S' motors, which proved to be extremely fast, although it is unlikely that they will be imported into this

country as it is rumoured that they would cost about £75, which is way outside the BRCA's £40 price limit on motors.

The banquet was held in a local school, and provided ample opportunity for drivers to do the things reserved specifically for such events, i.e. get totally plastered and throw things at the opposition! At one time things started to look a bit grim as George Bodonowicz from France was the victim of a direct hit on the head with a plastic beer bottle, the retaliation from which was swift and unexpected as the French unleashed their next onslaught.

Finals

Sunday was finals day, and as usual at such events we stood a fair chance of winning some of these as at least one British driver was in each of the 13 finals. The format was a practice run for all finals to sort out interference etc, and then one final for the B-M finalists, with the three A finals mixed in with the rest. It would have been nicer to have had more than one final, but the organisers were allowing 10 minutes between each final, to give everyone a chance to make the line.

A Final 1st Run

As the lights changed Phil made full advantage of pole position, avoiding the customary pile up at the first corner. This gave Phil a 20 yard lead over Ulf and Stephan Oberle, who passed Ulf after 2 laps only to clip one of the corners and drop back to 4th behind Jurgén. At 2½ mins Ulf was passed by the German trio of Jurgén, Stephan and Christian, with Christian overtaking Stephan around the 6½ minute mark. Meanwhile Phil had started to slow, in an effort to conserve power, and held on to win by 7 seconds.

A Final 2nd Start

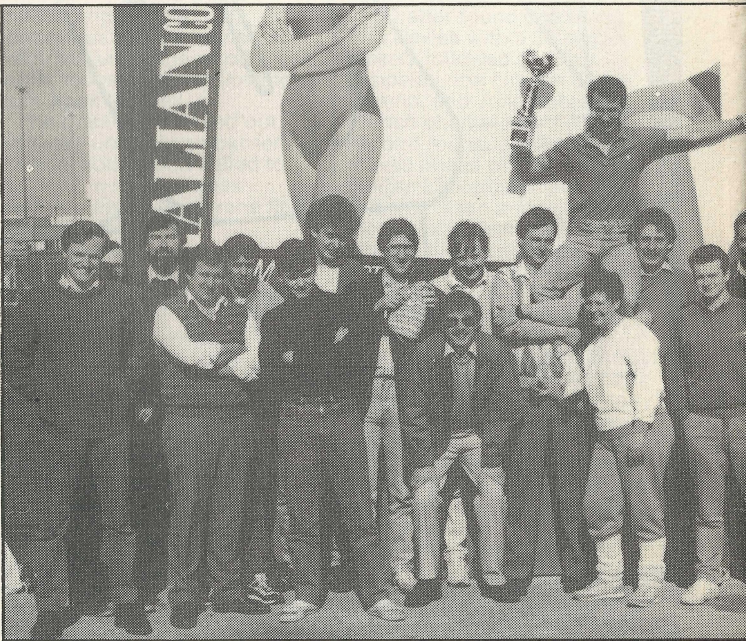
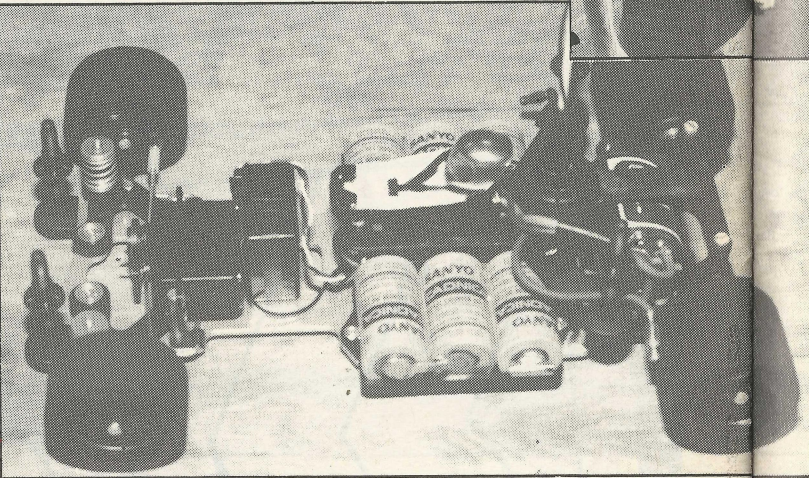
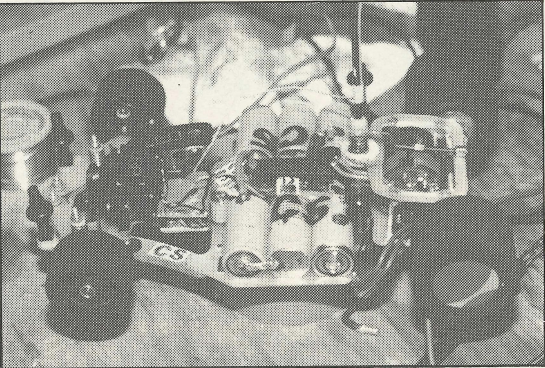
Once again Phil got the start, followed by Jurgén and Christian. At about 2 minutes Jurgén dived inside Phil on one of the hairpins causing a collision allowing Christian into the lead, and putting himself on a barrier.

The final then turned into a fantastic battle as Phil chased hard to catch up Christian, and then dived in at attempt to take the lead. In the infield Phil could catch right up with Christian, only to lose touch as Christian's car rocketed off down the straight. With 40 seconds to go, both cars started to dump, as a result of the dicing, allowing Phil to get past, only to him a barrier. This allowed Christian to win narrowly over Anders Nilson and Jurgén.

With 2 A finals run, the title chase was relatively open with four drivers capable of winning

depending on the outcome of the last final. Phil was in the best position with two good runs, although Christian had the best time to date. This meant that Christian could win as long as Phil did not beat him by more than 2 seconds. This turned out to be immaterial, as when Christian switched his car on the speed controller erupted in a cloud of smoke. Under EFRA rules Christian requested a 5 minute halt, to change to his spare car, but unfortunately failed to make it to the start.

Below: Jurgén Lawtenback's SPC Schumacher car with one piece rear pod. Right: Phil Davies with winning trophy. Centre: Andrew Nilsons 2nd place Corally car. Bottom: The British team after the meeting.



A Final 3rd Run

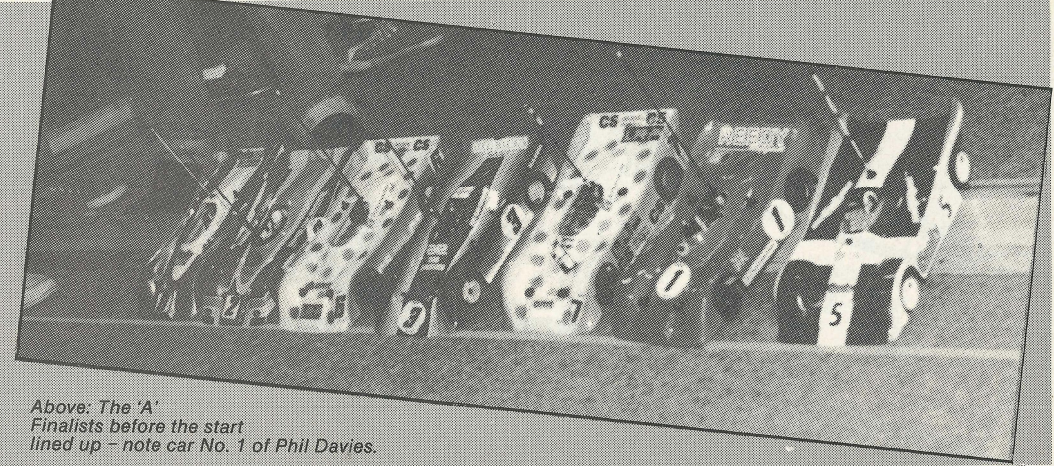
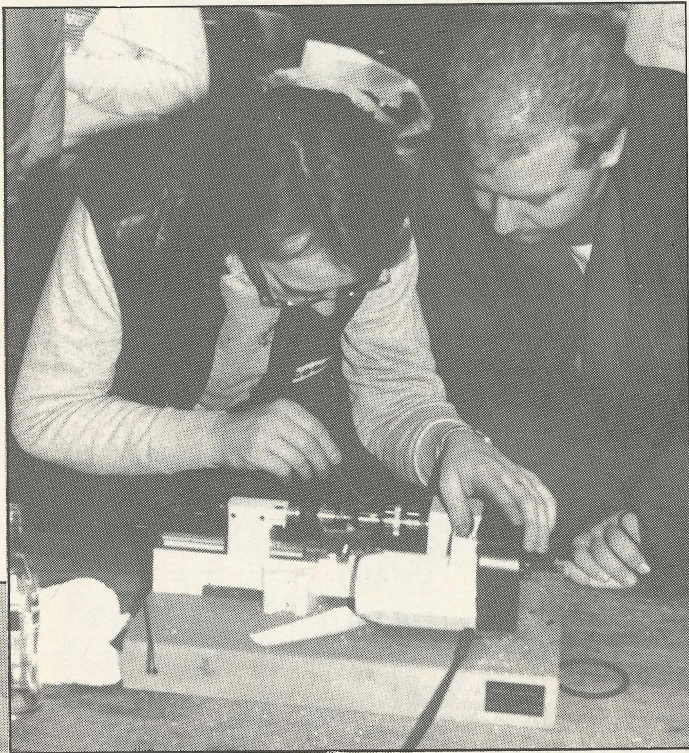
Phil again got the start and pulled out a clear lead over Mika and Jurgén. Jurgén soon passed Mika, but by now Phil was too far away, the only question on everyone's mind being whether Phil could break the 35 lap barrier. With 6 minutes down it was still a possibility, but a small error by Phil allowed his car to spin off the track. This certainly put paid to the 35 lapper, with Phil cruising round for the rest of the race to score 34 laps - 1

second - if only! Further down the field Mika re-passed Jurgén as his cells started to dump, to finish 4 seconds behind Phil at the finish.

This left Phil the overall winner, but other British drivers fared various fortunes. In the I final, Paul Ash demonstrated some skilful driving to hold off a large challenge from Torleif Lidman from Sweden. The Flying Scotsman, John Reid dominated the H final, winning by over a lap from second place.

In the E final Jamie Booth stormed round, to score 33 laps - 9 second, which would have qualified him in 15th place. This was quite a feat considering just how ill Jamie was during this meeting, suffering from a severe bout of flu. In the D final, Pete Farmer was leading comfortably, when his car's driver 'baled' out at the end of the straight, jamming the gear mesh and sending the car into the woodwork at high speed, much to the amusement of the British team.

Glyn Pegler on the SRM lathe giving the team that extra edge.



Above: The 'A' Finalists before the start lined up - note car No. 1 of Phil Davies.

In the C final Rob Roy fought a race long battle with constant Paul, only to dump in a big way. This left Rob as the proud of the slowest lap of the meeting at 61 seconds, but was disqualified for being blown over the line by Jean Michel Fraisse.

The B final turned out to be a real scorcher with yours truly

making full use of pole position to keep ahead of an Anglo-French battle of similar proportions to 'agincourt' between Tim Dakin and José Rosas. This battle lasted nearly 7 minutes, until Tim started to dump allowing José to catch up and pass. Unfortunately at the 7½ minute mark the cells in my car had also cried 'uncle',

allowing José to win by 2 seconds with a time faster than Phil's FTD.

All in all a very well run meeting, and my thanks must go to the Midtydsk R/C Racing Club for hosting the event, Nigel Piltz for arranging the coach, and Phil Davies for restoring the European Crown to British shores.

A Final		1st	2nd	3rd
1. 1:	Phil Davies GB	34/5.5	34/13.0	34/1.0
2. 8:	Anders Nilsson S	33/7.3	34/7.2	34/13.8
3. 7:	Jurgén Lautenbach D	34/12.8	34/11.7	34/9.5
4. 4:	Christian Kiel D	33/2.1	34/3.9	0/0.0
5. 3:	Mika Leppalahti SF	33/7.0	33/13.8	34/5.0
6. 6:	Stephan Oberle D	33/5.6	34/13.9	3/11.7
7. 5:	Kurt Steinbuchel DK	33/3.3	32/0.3	33/1.2
8. 2:	Ulf Ebenhardt S	33/9.3	32/8.6	33/6.8

B-Final		1st	2nd	3rd
9. 3:	Jose Rosas F	34/9.6		
10. 1:	David Gale GB	34/11.6		
11. 6:	Timothy J. Dakin GB	34/17.2		
12. 2:	Stephen Pohl D	33/6.7		
13. 7:	Ralf Krause D	33/6.9		
14. 5:	Sten Nordman SF	33/11.0		
15. 8:	Matthew Ford GB	33/12.1		
16. 4:	Henrik Svendsen DK	33/15.1		

C-Final		1st	2nd	3rd
17. 2:	Constant Paul NL	33/9.9		
18. 7:	Hans Jørgen Justensen DK	33/17.2		
19. 8:	Robert Roy GB	32/0.0		
20. 6:	Klaus Wilhelm D	32/0.1		
21. 3:	Peer Nielsen DK	32/3.1		
22. 1:	Troels Troelsen DK	32/14.1		
23. 5:	Antti-Pekka Jakonen SF	31/15.1		
24. 4:	Ron Schuur DK/USA	23/0.0		

1988 EUROPEAN CHAMPS TECH CHART

Driver	Car	Motor	Ratio	Tyres	Battery	Speed Controller	Body
Phil Davies	Schumacher SPC	Reedy Brown Dot	35.6	TRC	Laser SRM SCR's	Schumacher FWD only	Schumacher TOJ
Ulf Ebenhardt	Associated 12C 12L	Spring/Hornbrew	NA	Associated Green	Gates (GEC)	Anderson FWD only	Schumacher TOJ
Mick Lappalati	Associated RC12L	Reedy Green Dot	34.91	Associated Green	Keil Pushed SC	j&j Laser	Associated TOJ
Christian Kiel	Associated RC12L	Reedy Green Dot	36	Associated Green	Keil Pushed SC	Ralph Helbing	Associated TOJ
Stephan Oberle	Schumacher SPC	LRP Red 'S'	34	CS 'C' Green's	CS SC	CS Rocket	Schumacher TOJ
Kurt Steinbuchel	Corally SP2	Steiner 25 Double special	41.56	UFRA	PK Activated	CS Rocket	KIR BOL
Jurgén Lautenbach	Schumacher SPC	LRP Red 'S'	33.0	CS 'c' Greens	CS SC	CS Rocket	Schumacher TOJ
Anders Nilson	Corally SP2	PK 23 Quad	34.05	TRC	PK Activated	PK	Associated TOJ