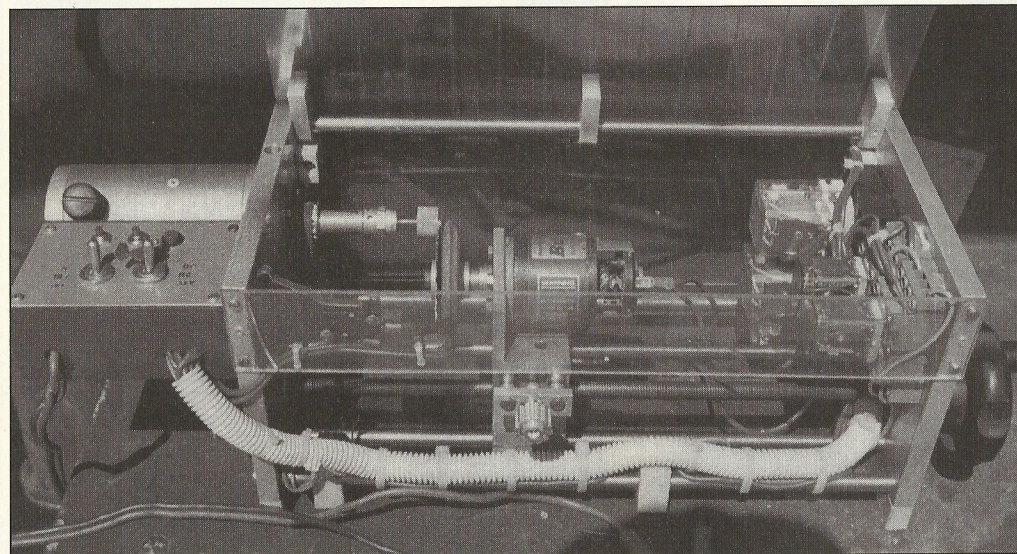


on the PIPE

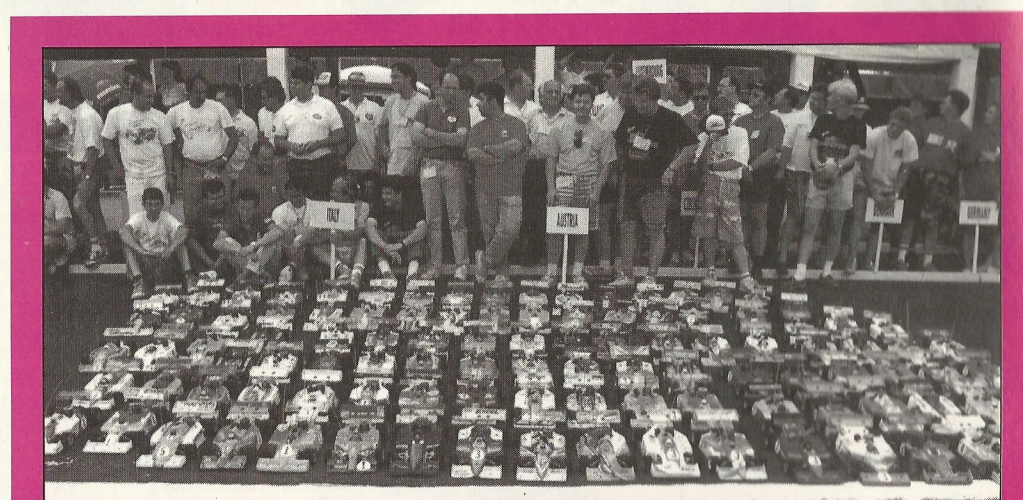
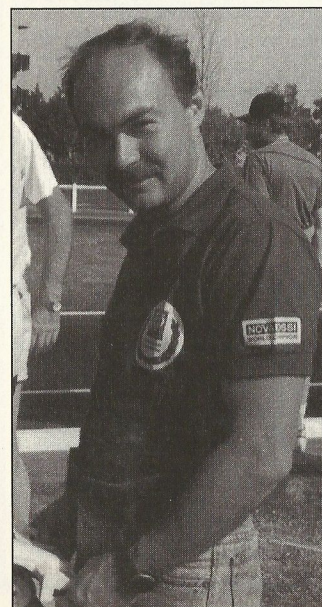


Free practice was the order of the day from Monday to Thursday, but by the time that most drivers had arrived on the Wednesday, the "system" in use was in a shambles. For instance, one driver arrived at the circuit at 12 noon, went (on advice) straight into the queue for practice, waited for half an hour, and was told that his ten minute practice session was at 5.15! And this was the second "system" in use! It was eventually conceded that the best way would be to put people out in double heats, ie twenty at a time, for ten minutes. At least that meant that everyone got an equal chance.

Thursday afternoon had the start of technical inspection. Even this had one or two minor problems, but the best was the method of measuring the fuel tank capacity. The actual measuring cylinder was probably accurate to half of one cc, for the legal limit of 125cc. However the method used to empty the tank was — well — just let's say that a pure

A neat fully automatic tyre truer.

Much has been said about the Evry circuit (just south of Paris), over the previous twelve months and perhaps it was some of this which deterred a few of the British from going. On arrival, it was immediately apparent that much work had been undertaken by the French to put the circuit and all its facilities into pristine condition. The surface itself was impressively flat, and this



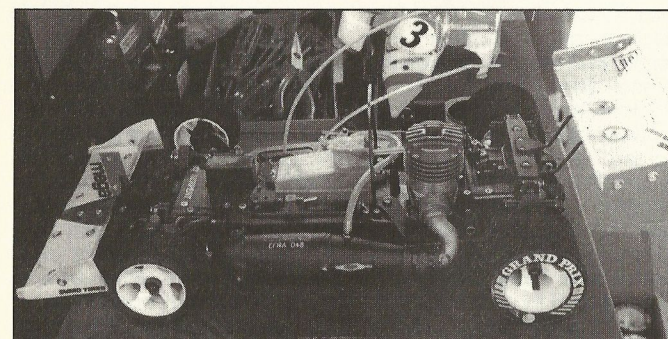
The 1992 European Championships, Evry, France, 20th-26th July.

was the first race by anyone since it had been laid. With one hundred and twenty-one drivers racing, the circuit would be building plenty of traction, especially in the hot

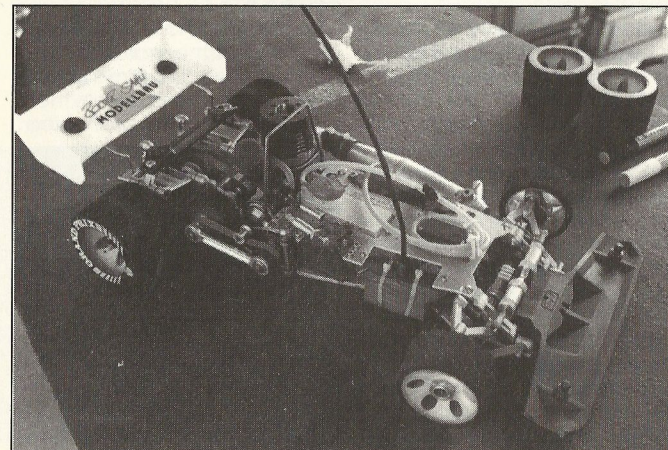
Engine specialist Mario Rossi.

weather that was forecast, and especially with all that castor oil around (not that anyone could be seen regularly shaking their fuel bottle or gallon can as has been suggested by others — but more of that anon).

guess would have been nearer to fact. For instance, my own tank that had been checked several times with results from 120 to 122 cc (giving a nice little safety margin for expansion in hot weather) was "measured" at



Separate front wings were "de Rigeur".



Roger Sahli, one time Serpent/OPS driver, now with Picco.

just under 100! What was surprising was that they still managed to find some tanks as over size!

Friday then had the well orchestrated opening ceremony, and didn't the English look smart in their BRCA supplied sweatshirts. Nice one. Now everything looked set for a great race. The organisation was on top of things and had radio contact with each other at all times. Those translating into the handy official language of English, did an excellent job. The on site food was excellent and reasonably priced, and the pit shop was well stocked indeed. The circuit, well this was producing plenty of grip and the "Ellegi" tyres were certainly the ones much in demand. The complex shape and nasty bends were certainly sorting out the men from the boys, but breakages were high, especially on one new car, and the narrow and difficult to see pit entrance would transform many a car, into three wheel configuration.

For the details of the one hundred and twenty cars surveyed, the details were:

Clearly the Italian cars have grown greatly in numbers at everyone else's expense. On the motor front

Motor	No's in '92 (120)	No's in '91 (121)	Difference
TOP	38	34	+3 1/2%
Picco	25	20	+4%
Serpent	18	19	-1%
Rex	16	33	-14%
Nova Rossi	14	2	+10%
OPS	5	10	-4%
Mondial	2	4	-1%
Specials	2	—	—

:Basically this shows a swing from OPS to Picco and, within the Nova Rossi stable, a swing back to the Nova Rossi 2000 range, from Rex.

Many thanks to Monsieur Ferrari for his compilation of this year's statistics.

England did have sixteen drivers present, though two didn't race for different reasons, so we did take all places initially, as to whether we deserved them all is another issue and perhaps one we will re-visit after results

Car	No's in '92 (120)	No's in '91 (121)	Difference
Serpent	46	61	-12 1/2%
BMT	43	33	+8 1/2%
Picco	18	5	+11%
Parsec	9	10	-1%
PB	4	11	-6%

are known.

As to the racing, well the first round of heats started on Friday afternoon and the heats would run in reverse to normal order, ie the A class drivers were in heats five to thirteen. The very first heat saw Dave Dixon (now changed back to Serpent!) clock a seventeen lapper, only to have Alberto Picco put his car nearly a full lap quicker on an eighteen! Heat three saw Michael Salven once again quickest by four seconds from Picco and this was to hold throughout the round. End of round one then had Salven's Serpent on pole with Oliver Mack's Serpent second, followed by the Picco of Picco, then no less than seven BMT's out of the next eight (the eighth being a Parsec), headed by Anders Ljungquist from Sweden. Mark Green was quickest of the British with his new BMT in eighth spot. Dave Dixon 19th and James Haydon 24th on seventeens. Nigel Sayles 25th, Gareth Bell 29th, Steve Tilley 43rd and Steve Hart 44th all on sixteens, with the rest of the lads having either of kind or another.

Round two was thus on Saturday morning which was once again another scorching day. This time it was heat four

which showed the pace with Alexandra Aspesi from Italy, putting his Blitz on pole, nearly three seconds quicker. Salven held onto second, but now it was Michael Baruzzi (the Euro winner from Mendip in 1990) in third with his Picco and Oliver Mack down to fourth. Mark Green was still the quickest Brit, now he was on an eighteen but had still dropped to tenth. Nigel Sayles clocked a mid seventeen to come up to 24th. Dave Dixon dropped to 31st and James Haydon to 36th. Gareth Bell moved up to a seventeen but was now 37th, whilst Paul Rouse came up to a sixteen and 55th. Steve's Tilley and Hart were now 66th and 67th. Bob Errington had an off but now showed fifteen laps to come in at 86th, Harry Chapman 89th and Bhajan Panesar 91st even though he hadn't finished.

Round three had Oliver Mack squeeze into pole just 0.2 sec ahead of Aspesi. Jackie Ermen from Belgium was now third with his BMT and Salven now fourth. Mark Green had slipped to 16th and Nigel Sayles dropped from 24th last round to 38th now as many more drivers were finding the bits of the circuit not to hit. James Haydon went four and a half seconds quicker to only drop to 43rd whilst Dave Dixon dropped down to 45th. Steve Hart improved to a seventeen lapper to place 47th whilst Gareth Bell, through no fault of his own, was ousted from 37th down to 57th!

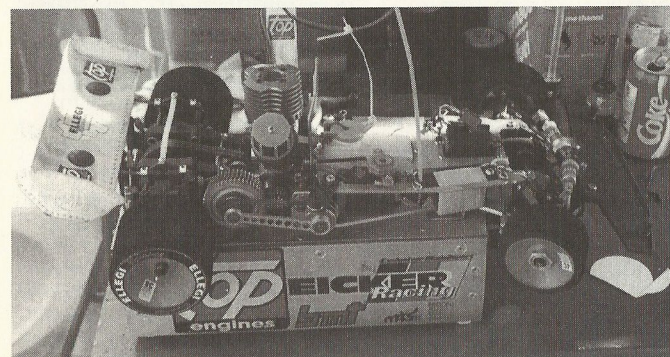
A happy British team.



Steve Tilley took thirteen seconds off his time but with all the other changes, this was only enough to lift him up five places to 61st. Paul Rouse found five seconds — down to 67th, and Neil Woodhead nearly a lap to go up four

places to 70th. Bob Errington's car was running well till a blown plug stopped the motor 30 seconds too early (still it was the quickest fifteen lapper!), down to 89th. Murray Collins did finish a heat this round to clock a fifteen to come in at 100th, leaving Harry Chapman 103rd, Bhajan Panesar 106th and Malc Whiteley now in 114th. And with just the top 94 going through to finals — a little

Matteo Ricci's Serpent Excel.



One of the German BMT cars.

panic was setting in. So — the final round. This time there were no changes in the top four so it was the Serpent of Oliver Mack that was to be the Top Qualifier. Two people moved up into the semis (5th-18th) but Mark Green held on to being the fastest Brit at 18th and was the first Brit back into the semi's after last year's debacle. Nigel Sayles found himself second fastest Brit at 40th with James Haydon just behind at 42nd, both of these in the quarter finals. Dave Dixon was next but one place too many down at 47th meaning that he, and Steve Hart at 50th, were in the sixteenth finals. The thirty second finals featured Gareth Bell at 61st, Steve Tilley at 65th and Paul Rouse at 73rd. Neil Woodhead was another just one place down too many, as he finished at

75th and in the 1/64th finals. The rest, well luck was not their's so we had five not making the cut. But well done to those that did, but this does emphasise that perhaps we should not be entitled to so many places? So to the Sunday — finals day. Racing started quite early with the 1/64th finals. No Brits in the B but the A saw Neil Woodhead clock 59 laps to go through to the thirty seconds, with K. Johansson coming through in third. The B thirty

when he was coming in for fuel. Nigel also had a few problems so ended their runs. Christian Wurt came first and with Jose Rosas third, these two were also off for their third final. The second of these finals saw Dave Dixon out on lap six but Milko Tenthof won yet again so he was now into his fourth finals in the quarters. The quarter finals now saw Christian Wurt come through in second to go into the semis which would be his fourth final, really quite impressive. Milko Tenthof featured in the A quarters, but surely he couldn't go through again. But he did win yet again! So now it was into his fifth final!

So the semi's and now these were reading like a who's who of racing. Britain's top driver Mark Green however ran into some early troubles and was soon out of contention, shame really, but least he was there. Massimo Fantini was an easy winner at the fastest pace to date of 68 laps, Stephano Solaroli was second on 66 and Karl Meister third just five seconds behind and just three seconds ahead of Harold Humn in fourth. The second semi had Rody Roem win now that he has returned to Serpent, and he too clocked 68 laps. Claus Engel was second on 67, Marc Petrucci third on 66 and Alberto Picco fourth on 63. So Picco was out. Meister and Petrucci made it through to the final and Hahn didn't, but by just 0.2 of a second — oh s...!

So the final line up was: Six Serpents and four BMT then. What happened to the best of

1	Oliver Mack	Serpent	Rex
2	Alexandra Aspesi	BMT	TOP
3	Jackie Ermen	BMT	TOP
4	Michael Salven	Serpent	Serpent
5	Massimo Fantini	BMT	TOP
6	Rody Roeti	Serpent	Special
7	Claus Engel	Serpent	Rex
8	Stephano Solaroli	BMT	OPS
9	Karl Meister	Serpent	Serpent
10	Marc Petrucci	Serpent	OPS

the rest? Michael Baruzzi was the highest placed Picco at 5th, Jackie Mouton the highest Parsec at 13th, and Steve Hart the highest PB at 50th. Certainly the Picco cars were running on the pace, they just didn't seem to get the breaks. The Parsec cars looked good early in the week but were not a match for the rest. The PB cars were looking really quite good by the end of qualifying and it would have been interesting if one of the better

drivers had had one. Certainly progress is being made here. The new Serpent Excel cars were going very well. Most seem to have modified anti-roll bars pinched from other makes, and were using very small rear tyres. For instance, Michael Salven quoted qualifying size as 70-72 mm and then went on to say that he would star the 45 min final on 74 or 76 mm(!) and would change halfway through. The new plastic is certainly harder than previous, though this has caused it to be brittle.

The Blitz cars had all been lightened at the rear of the car and were also playing with additional bracing across the top wishbones. Brakes showed



to be a problem (something we had been telling them for some time), so perhaps a mod will be on the way! Tyre size in qualifying was 74-76 mm and they expected to start the final on 78-79 mm. All BMT cars were on 3 speed boxes and all finalists on solid axle.

The Race

When the flag dropped, all cars seemed to get away in order but within just a few laps

a radio problem crashed Salven out, leaving Engel in front from Ermen, with Solaroli a steady third, if a little behind. With the tyre sizes reducing, Ermen was speeding up and with Engel's tyres getting worse, he pitted for new tyres on the offside only. Ermen went through into the lead. Engel exited the pits and not surprisingly his car was pulling to the left now that he had bigger tyres on the outside. This took him about three laps to get over before he was able to settle down. Solaroli was now second so fortunes were still see sawing around. Engel speeded up and went

The finalists.

back into second and set off after Ermen. Ermen sped up as well and so it took a long time for the gap to close, then a small incident put Ermen on the grass for several seconds and let Engel through. Things looked stable again 'till a pit stop and a mistake by Engel meant that Ermen was back in front, but being caught. The pair of them caught Fantini, who had returned to the circuit long before, and Ermen dived inside on the entry to the one of the hairpins. Fantini gave him plenty of room and then as he exited the bend, went wide and slowed to let Engel through. Engel accelerated hard and he too went wide, just clipped one of Fantini's wheels and went on the grass. From the height of the grandstand on the other side of the circuit, it was apparent that Fantini went off line to slow. This resulted in Ermen in front, but another off and loss of time and it was Solaroli who took the lead and held it. Solaroli's car was never the fastest, but he kept going, had no offs, and was richly rewarded by being the 1992



The Big Pot.

European Champion. Truly an exciting race and one that will be remembered for a long time. Another victory for BMT and perhaps an unexpected one for OPS.

British Grand Prix Results

Too late for a report but enough to say victory went to Gary Culver with his PB, Mark White (Serpent Sprint) was second and Neil Woodhead with his PB third. Highest placed Serpent Excel was Paul Cook in fourth. Entries were down at this meeting though. Perhaps we don't like the G.P. format, or is it the times? Should we in fact change the racing format next year to avoid the almost mandatory practice on Fridays? Should we have a race every three weeks instead of every two as at present? And do we really want to race all three days at Bank Holidays? Let us have your ideas.

Finally a word of thanks to a gentleman for his generous gift sent down for my younger son after his accident. He certainly appreciated it, but are your sure Patresse won't miss it? thanks.

bob

ERRINGTON