

Unleaded sunburn

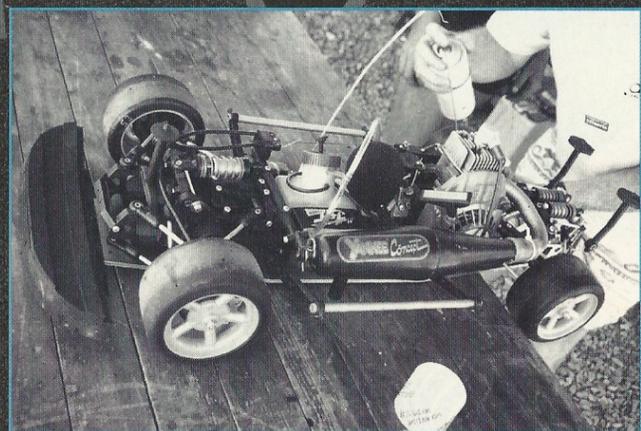
top SCALE

THE VENUE

Set on the south coast of Brittany the venue should have been, and in many ways was, ideal. Those who were moaning did have some grounds, only one toilet with no showers and very limited room for camping was not really good enough for such an event, even if there were plenty of bushes round the site. However, the fact is that with no other venue prepared to stage the meeting the small Concarneau Club stepped in and stretched itself to the very

limit to run it. When we went down for a look at the track on the Monday club members were all hard at work with paint brushes and it was very evident that much work had been put in over the preceding weeks.

The track was a simple design with lots of short to medium length straights linked by 180 degree bends and once the dust had been blown off good grip. Just the thing to make the engines work hard which as we shall see later was going to prove to be a problem for some teams.



There were a lot of the impressive new Yankee's about.

The race organisation may have lacked the feutonic efficiency of the Germans the previous year but every thing was done with a quite smile and good humour. Somehow the fact that the press had to wait for the results at the end of each day didn't seem to matter when the waiting was done sitting under the shade of a tree with a few glasses of a refreshing liquid supplied by the club. As for the young lady who did the English translations and appeared round the pits occasionally with a tray of sweets and a smile for everyone the French should seriously consider promoting her ahead of St Joan!

On behalf of all the drivers thank you Concarneau for staging the event and for all your hard work and hospitality.

THE WEATHER

It was the weather more than anything else that was to dominate the event and everything else that went on. The climate at Concarneau, which is not that far south, should have been ideal but that week a heat wave descended on us with temperatures that were almost unbelievable. One driver measured the air temperature some 3 inches above the track and recorded a staggering 40 degrees C!

Basically to do well you needed to be able to keep the engine running on full song in the heat and the weekend was all about the struggle to do just that. The elements effecting this were the engine position in the car, the make of engine, the type of body and the fuel being used.

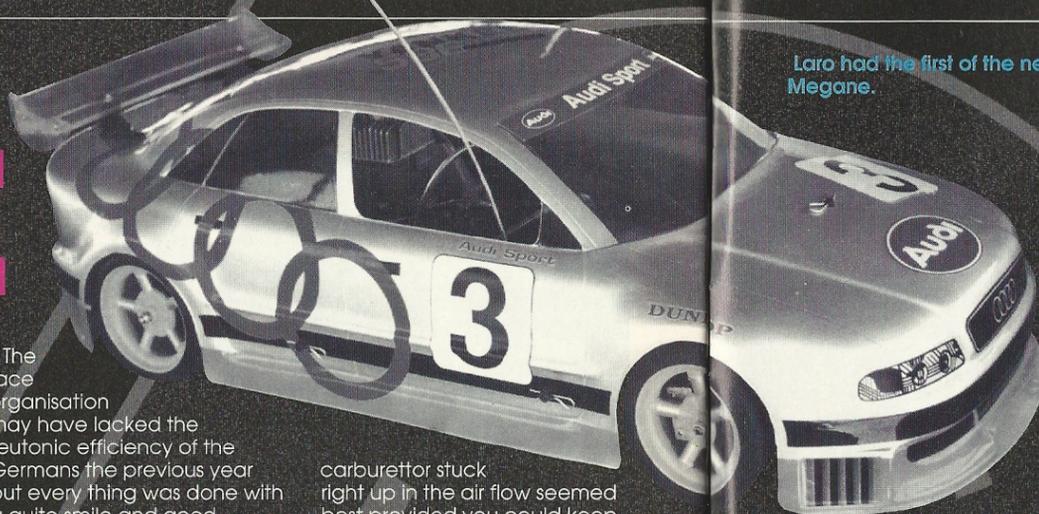
As far as the cars were concerned the FG with its

carburettor stuck right up in the air flow seemed best provided you could keep the fuel in the tank cool. Next best or perhaps equally as good were the BMT cars with their upright engines and the pipe places horizontally across the back of the engine. One of the team did tell me when I commented on the number of pipes they had available that they had done a lot of work on the pipe design to promote cooler running of the engines. Next best to that was the cars with their engines upright in the chassis. Finally in the deepest trouble were the Laro cars with the carb tucked neatly down behind the fuel tank, especially with the Zenoh engine installation, right out of the air flow.

As far as the engines go we can say for certain that the Solo engines did seem able to run with no problems even in a Laro using legal fuel.

The helicopter based Zenoh in the BMT cars also seemed well able to cope with the heat, aided no doubt by the position of the pipe. They were one of the teams whose fuel was being widely questioned by many but the fact is that they were just as fast in the final, when they knew the fuel would be checked, as they were in qualifying so they would have had to have been incredibly stupid or maybe cynical to have used a fuel that could have failed the tests.

Some F7 engines seemed fine and some seemed in very severe problems. All I can say is that the fuel being used in some smelt very funny, and one engine that had been flying all weekend was totally



Laro had the first of the new Megane.

unable to cope with the heat when subsequently run on standard fuel. So on the F7 the verdict must remain an open one.

Standard Zenoh's, especially in FG cars had few problems but the more highly tuned versions, especially those with increased compression ratios and modified carburettors were in dead trouble.

As far as bodies go being able to get air to exit the car low down at the rear was a huge advantage. Those based on the German Touring Car Series, where some of the rear of the body could legitimately be cut away, were best. One other problem is that pump fuel varies from country to country and indeed according to the time of year it is on sale. Petrol from Southern Italy is generally held to be the best followed by German and for some strange reason Swiss petrol.

The big shock to all of us with regard to fuel came when it was announced that all drivers should be using unleaded fuel and this was backed up by a copy of a rule book that none of us had ever seen. It seems to most of us that this is a stupid rule that has somehow been included and needs to be reversed.

Firstly the engine handbooks say use leaded fuel so it's difficult to see why the rule should say unleaded.

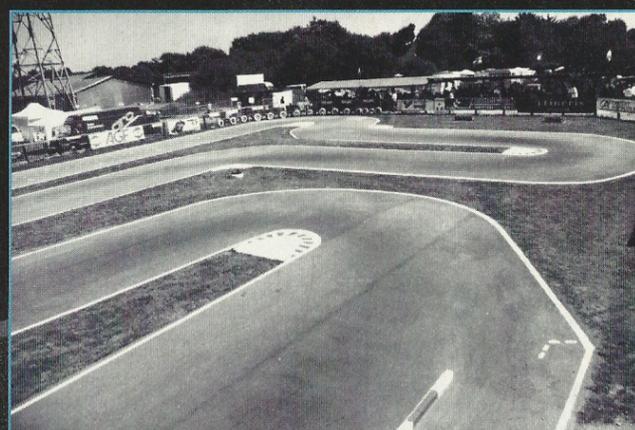
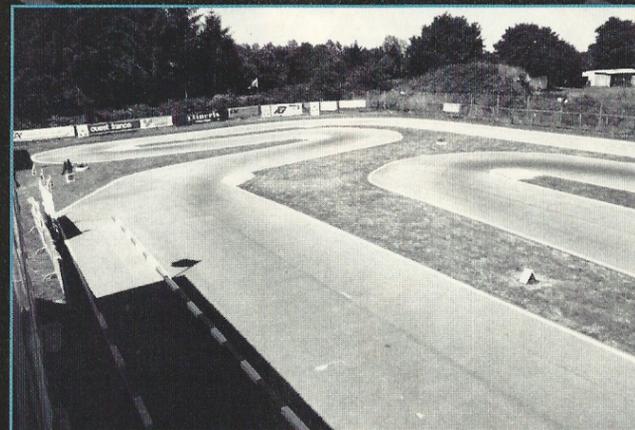
Secondly on health grounds. Lead is a cumulative poison and the small amounts we are likely to be subjected to by the

use of leaded fuel in such small engines is unlikely to be dangerous. However, the some of the substances used in unleaded are known to be carcinogenic and bearing in mind the fact that our engines have no cats on them I know which fuel I'd personally rather be subjected to. Immediately after the announcement most drivers realising they could not check for lead headed for the scrutineering bay with cans of so called unleaded fuel in their hands all of which passed! By the time the 89th driver (Jeff Cooke) went through they had wised up and Jeff was told "Your fuel is OK today but tomorrow we will be checking for lead". Needless to say they never did and more than one driver was seen pouring away a can of unused leaded fuel at the end of the meeting.

SCRUTINEERING

Whilst this was completed in reasonably good humour it was nevertheless somewhat ridiculous that none of us, including the works teams and manufacturers had a copy of the rule book and what's more didn't even know how to get one. EFRA's excuse that "one" is sent to each National Body or that one can be purchased by sending a stack of Dutch Guilders to some obscure address or that they are too expensive to give one to each driver is pathetic. The reason they are so expensive is that so few are printed. Every driver when he joins the BRCA gets a handbook and Large Scale drivers get a second one for Large Scale only so every driver who takes out an expensive EFRA licence, at many times the cost of the BRCA membership should be sent a full EFRA rule book.

One British driver arrived back at the pits telling all how he'd sorted the scrutineers out and told them what he was and was not going to do. Not a wise move that. Come the first round of qualifying he got called in for scrutineering, failed and lost his score at which point, when he'd calmed down, he promptly had to do what the scrutineers had asked him to do in the first place!

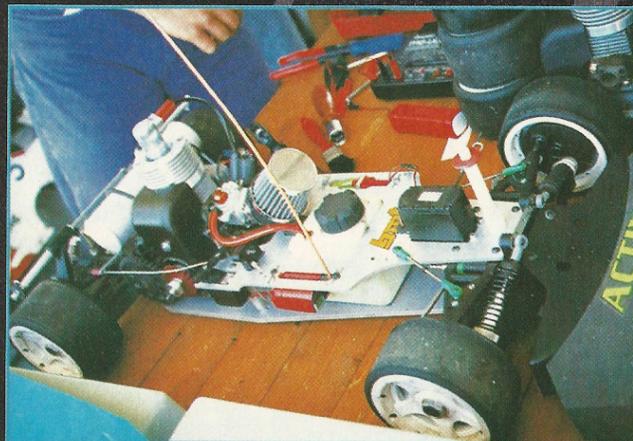


The Concarneau circuit was made up of short straights and hairpin bends.



Brits abroad.

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS: CONCARNEAU



The winning BMT of Fantini.



Moving the fuel tank was the only way to get cool air to the carb on Team Leake's Laro.

PRACTICE

For the week before the meeting the circuit was closed. On the Thursday we had one ten minute free practice session followed by one timed one in the afternoon. Friday had one timed practice session in the morning only. This lack of track time made it very difficult to set the cars up for such an important event. Most of us

spent the time experimenting on how best to get the cars to run in the heat.

In our case we moved the tank right out to the side of the car to provide clean air to the carb, insulated the tank with foil, canted the air filter over at an angle to draw air in from the window and opened out the radiator holes at the front along with holes in the foam bumper to try and get some air flowing through the car. It all helped but not enough.

Many drivers were observed doing what we were at the start of each heat in terms of getting the cars out early and bringing them in for a final ricken off the mixture once the engine was good and hot.

With the track closed during the evenings the Laro Team at one point went off to a nearby track to try find better solutions to the problems which shows just how bad they were.

QUALIFYING

The first round of qualifying was held on the Friday afternoon with the following two rounds

being held on the Saturday. Yes you got just twenty minutes in the track per day and spent the rest waiting around in the pits!

Phillipe Lachat having finally managed to keep his engine running properly drove a blinder in the final qualifying round to take F.T.D. with his Laro Renault Megane, a massive seven seconds ahead of the next qualifier Massimo Fantini with his BMT Alfa. Third fastest was Markus Feildman with his Laro Laguna followed by the Yankee works driver Frederic Veysseyre. All these four drivers qualifying straight into the main final.

Of the Brits Kevin Blears and Alec Cairns qualified down in the 1/256th final but finished up running in the 1/128th along with Kevin Murby, Neil Douglas, Jeff Cooke and Paul Dudley. Alan Leighton just made the cut for the 1/64th final. Steve Leake made the 1/32nd. Young Ben Woods survived a protest by a rival team that he was too young to race and proved the point by qualifying for one of the 1/16th finals along with Ian Oddie who at last seems to be able to keep his engine running thanks to it's new mechanical fuel pump. Chalky Skidmore was the only Brit to do really well qualifying 29th with his Laro to make it straight up into the 1/4 finals.

THE FINALS

The finals were started from a F1 type grid rather than the more normal echelon type start. Since this was on the main straight and followed by a very difficult

corner it accounted for the early demise of many cars.

The only Brit to make it through any final was Kevin Blears who worked his way through to the 1/64 before going out. Of the others that I know about Kevin Murby was out with radio problems, which we later found were due to a plug given to him by FG at the meeting! Jeff Cooke had a ten second penalty which I don't reckon he deserved. Alan Leighton managed to miss the first twelve minutes of his final! Steve Leake suffered a broken bolt in the front suspension on lap six whilst running second in cruise mode on the straight! Ian Oddie went on lap fifteen with broken gears in his steering servo. John Skidmore, our last great hope went the way of many drivers in a first corner collision though he did manage to limp round for five laps.

The two fastest drivers from each semi went through to the final followed by the two next fastest from either final.

The B Semi was the first run and the slowest with Christopher Lachat and Henry Asquith finishing first and second with the Laro cars to move on to the main final.

Four drivers made it through from the A Semi lead by Zini Marco with his Dynamic followed by the Laro of Birgitte Putanier, the FG of Flavio Budulig and the Dynamic of Marco Zini.

THE MAIN FINAL

Even before the final had started it was obvious that some cars had switched back to legal fuel and were not going to be as



A very sad bunch.

fast as they had previously been. Seeing cars continually going out in the warm up and then returning to the pits to have the mixture adjusted gave a good indication of what was going on.

The car that seemed to be in the worst trouble was the Dynamic of Zini Marco which was in and out of the pits continually before the race started then managed only a few laps before the engine could easily be heard leaning out and finally retiring on lap 18.

Phillipe Lachat lead for the first minute but quickly dropped back down the field to fourth place by the five minute mark.

Massimo Fantini moved into the lead within the first minute of the race and stayed there gradually extending his lead for the remainder of the race.

Frederic Veysseyre held second place with his Yankee for the first five minutes then for some reason dropped right back leaving him the task of moving back up the field to fourth place by the end of the meeting.

This left Markus Feildman through into the second place with his Laro that he was to hold until the end of the race.

For most of the race Phillippe Lachat held third place but he had told me earlier that with the need to run his engine rich in the heat he was worried about fuel consumption. As it turned out his worries were well founded when with 29min

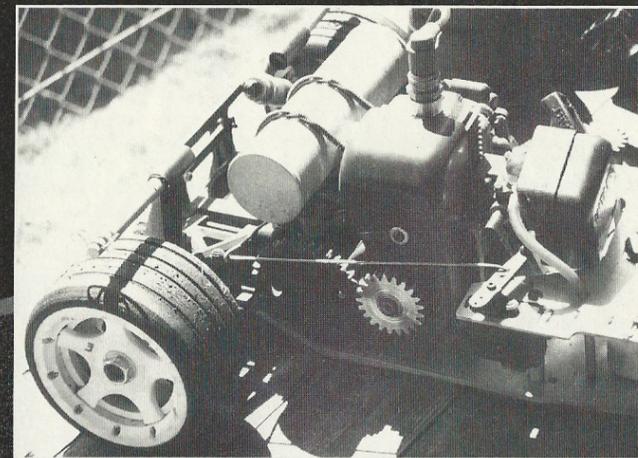
50sec of the 30min race run he suddenly ran out of fuel as his car approached the pits leaving him unable to continue or complete the last lap putting him back down into 6th place.

So there we are a fine race won in style by a driver and car combination that deserved to win. Massimo drove a magnificent race, much of it with a damaged body.

The results are subject to the fuel tests and speculation is still rife on that subject. Personally I do believe the BMT drivers did have a fuel advantage but that it was a legal one possibly in the form of an Agip fuel that is on sale in Southern Italy and is well known for being the only fuel that certain highly tuned full size cars can run on.

I know the Italian BMT team did a lot of work on hot weather running in terms of the final pipe design and they must have been helped by the fact that their cars were right down to the weight limit, the placing of the pipe behind the engine, and the fact that the cooling system of the helicopter version of the Zenoah is said to be superior to that of the standard engine.

If the weather had been cooler the result may well have been very different but it wasn't. The BMT team and their drivers both in terms of testing and development before and driving during the meeting did everything just



Note the grooved tyres on a BMT.

right, and hopefully the results of the fuel test will confirm them as worthy winners.

ROUND UP

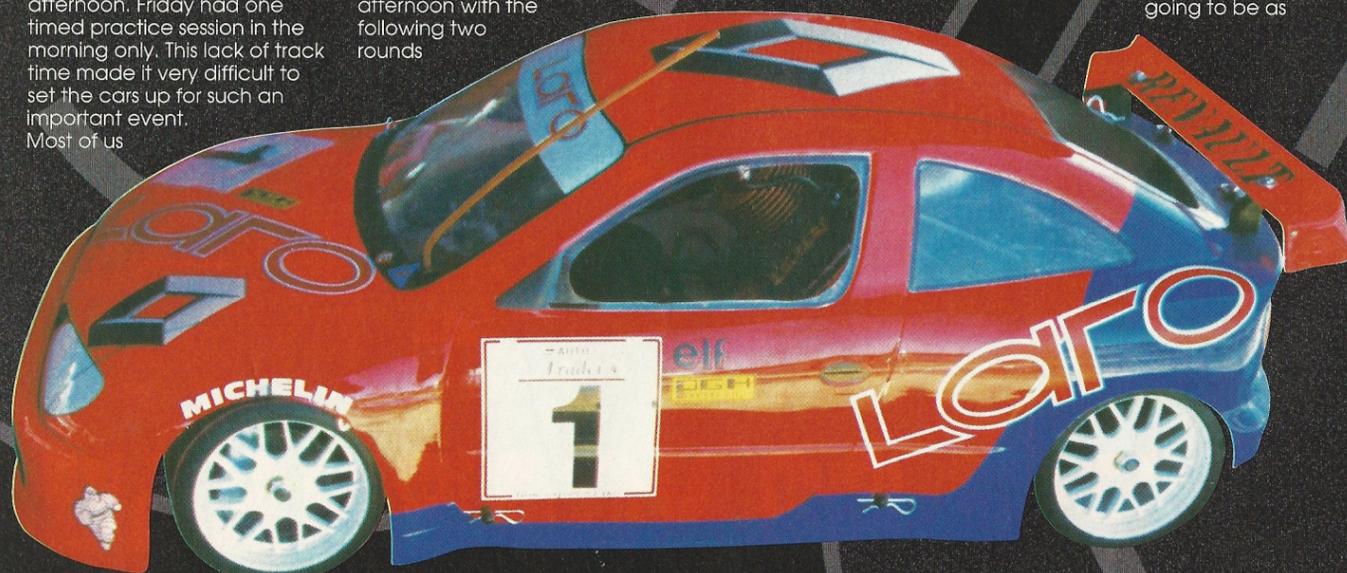
THE CARS

BMT won and went well all weekend and clearly have a very competitive car. They will shortly be on sale in the UK at prices between £1080 built with engine ready to run and £775 for a kit with no engine. The pipe is not included in these prices and is expected to be around £70. BMW, Alpha and Merc bodies will all be available. Although the car uses it's own special clamp type wheels they do also have more conventional wheels available that will enable all makes and types of tyres to be

used. For more details telephone Haley Green Models on 01344 890091.

A couple of points you should take into account before rushing off to buy one is that in the UK you will need to add 1/2 Kg of ballast if you use the lighter helicopter engine, and that you won't be able to use the cut slick tyres they were using in races run to present BRCA rules.

Laro may not have had all the success they've become used to but nevertheless TQ by over seven seconds is impressive at this level of competition as is having five cars in the final and taking second place. The big problem that Laro had was not having any Italian petrol that they could be certain was legal to run in the final.





The latest design in tuned pipes.

FG cars were there in great numbers but only managed to get one car into the final where it finished 8th. However the signs are that they are at last beginning to wake up to the fact that they need to develop the car for racing if they are to fight off the opposition which now exists in such great profusion. What they must do is to put the improvements on the standard car rather than make them expensive extras if they want to succeed in the market place.

There were a surprising number of the new Yankee cars present which certainly looked good (especially the silver Audi) and seem to be well made. The results were mixed with some cars going very well indeed and some dreadfully. One car made the A Final and finished 4th but could I'm sure have finished higher if it had a clear run. This is all much as one would expect from such a new car. By the time you read this some cars will be out on the circuits in the UK and we will certainly be bringing you more details of the car and how it performs in a later issue.

One Dynamic made the final but only lasted 18 laps. Frankly its performance in the warm up and the final itself suggest the performance of the car in the semi that put it there was to say the least questionable.

As far as the SVM goes it can only be said that they had a disappointing meeting. Michele Baruzzi managed only five laps in his semi and Rody Roem could not progress beyond the 1/4 finals. However, the British drivers must have learned something because since their return to

the UK I hear that two of them have managed 27 lap qualifying runs at Halifax which is much better than they have ever done before and puts them within a lap of the fastest Laro drivers at that circuit.

TYRES

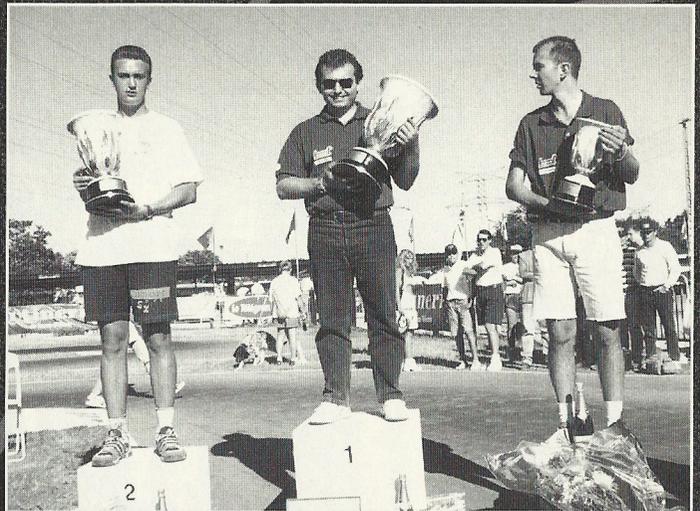
Although we officially know who was using what tyre I've avoided listing them as I'm reasonably sure the list is not accurate due to late changes in tyre choice etc.

What is certain is that whilst a few cars were using Yankee, SLD, Best, Dynamic or BMT tyres etc on the back the vast majority were using PMT 133 tyres which both lasted and worked well providing plenty of grip whilst at the same time not going off in the heat. We had our reservations about these tyres when we tested them in the winter as to how durable they would be in the summer, but the odd thing about them is the hotter it gets the better they seem to work and last!

On the front the choice was not so clear cut with possibly equal numbers of PMT and Medial Pro being the most popular with a smattering of other makes.

ENGINES

The fastest engines were mainly PGH tunes Zenohs but they were also the worst hit by the heat. Since we returned we fitted a manifold to blow cold air from the fan directly on to the side of the carb and then ran the engine at Mendip in just slightly cooler conditions with no problems. I must say that there it was spectacularly fast despite the low gearing



The winning trio, (R-L) Fabio Domanin, the new Euro Champ Massimo Fantini, Markus Fieldman.

we were using. On the straight it raced away from all other engines then just kept on accelerating. On the infield some of its potential was lost in wheelspin.

However, having said that the factory tuned Solo and F7 engines were not far behind.

You might have expected that the Helicopter Zenohs in the winning BMT cars would have been fast but the fact is the result owes more to their ability to deal with the heat rather than that they were especially fast. Indeed we know BMT are going back to look for more speed from their engines, but then what Italian doesn't want more speed!

WAS IT WORTH IT

What with entry fees, EFRA Licence, travel, and accommodation value for money it most certainly is not. Most of the four days is spent sitting around the pits waiting for the two ten minute runs you are going to get on the track. However, if you get out round the other nations pits you can learn an awful lot and you should return to the UK more competitive than before you went out. Indeed this has already shown up in the improved performance of many of the

UK drivers since their return.

The best approach is probably to go early and treat it as your annual holiday then the cost looks more reasonable and if your married there is likely to be less by way of objections from the boss!

The venue for next year has yet to be fixed but Holland seems to be the front runner. If so that is in our favour as Holland is easy to get to and much cheaper for food and drink etc. Indeed the Dutch Team manager was telling me that for what a round of drinks cost him in France he could have been drunk for a week in Holland. If it is in Holland the Dutch are also talking of arranging day trips out for the ladies on race days which should go down very well. They also have facilities at the proposed venue more suitable for such an event by way of toilets and shower blocks etc

Right that's it for this month as ever if you want to telephone me my number is 01892 83 3620 after 8.00 p.m. only please. If you want to go on the Large Scale Mailing List for entry forms etc then send me your details at 91 Nortons Way, Five Oak Green, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 6TF.

colin
LEAKE

FINAL RESULTS

Place	Name	Country	Laps	Car
1st	Massimo Fantini	Italy	79	BMT Alfa Romeo
2nd	Markus Fieldman	Germany	79	Laro Renault Laguna
3rd	Fabio Domanin	Italy	77	BMT Alfa Romeo
4th	Frederic Veyseyre	France	77	Yankee Audi
5th	Henry Asquer	France	77	Laro Renault Megane
6th	Phillipe Lachat	France	76	Laro Renault Megane
7th	Birgitte Putanier	France	76	Laro Renault Megane
8th	Flavio Budlig	Germany	75	FG Mercedes
9th	Christophe Lachat	France	74	Laro Renault Laguna
10th	Marco Zini	Italy	18	Dynamic