



Forty years on, one-litre F3 screamers return to Monaco

Four decades - less one week, but who's counting? – after its last appearance as a contemporary class, one-litre Formula 3 made a triumphant return to the streets of Monaco, where it proved one of the highlights the ACM's 7th Grand Prix Historique extravaganza on May 1/2.

Tony Trimmer, who won the final F1 support race of the era in 1970, in a Race Cars International-entered Brabham BT28, was there to witness the action, as was three-time World Champion Sir Jackie Stewart, who won the first (six years earlier to the day) in 1964, driving one of Ken Tyrrell's Cooper-BMC T72s.

While Stewart dominated, leaving Silvio Moser (Brabham-BMC BT6) and Mauro Bianchi (Alpine-Renault) way behind, Trimmer pipped fellow BT28 driver Jean-Pierre Cassegrain by 1.1 seconds, with fellow Britons Bev Bond (Lotus 59), the late Gerry Birrell (BT28) and Richard Scott (Chevron B17) leading the chase as the Ford MAE engine's heyday drew to close.

This time round, with amateur historic racers rather than up-and-coming pros filling the grid, the lead battle was incredibly closely-fought for much of the distance. Switzerland's Christian Traber (ex-Ian Walker Racing Brabham BT21) may have led all the way, but he had to drive defensively throughout to stave off first Moscow-based Ulsterman Paul McMorrان (in the unique Crossle 17F originally intended for Birrell) and French class stalwart Francois Derossi (Chevron B17).

But that's jumping the gun. Having been deluged with entries, reflecting unprecedented interest in the historic category, the ACM first had the unenviable task of selecting a representative entry from which two qualifying sessions would determine the 40-car grid for Sunday morning's race.

Drivers representing nine nations, and cars from 13 marques – some one-offs, others fresh from restoration and all beautifully presented – made the cut. Of the 32 who arrived, American Tupper Robinson was first to fall, damaging his newly-finished U2 Mk4 too badly to continue when he hooked first gear instead of third gear and clonked the guardrail in the opening track session. Onlookers were thus denied the opportunity to see a front-engined F3 car run there for the first time since marque founder Arthur Mallock saddled his U2 in '64.

Monegasque naval architect Richard Hein used his local knowledge to surprise the establishment by qualifying his Brabham BT28 on pole, leapfrogging morning pacesetters Derossi and Traber with best lap of 1m53.119s (106.29kph). Derossi, Italian 1000cc F3 prime mover Tommaso Gelmini (his ex-Jean-Claude Guenard 1966 Matra MS5 dressed as a works car) and Traber were within 0.7s at the close, with McMorrان and Richard Eyre (first time out in his Jolly Club/Oliver Speight Racing Chevron B15) best of the Brits in seventh and 12th places respectively.

Reigning Peter Hanson Trophy (and HSCC CRC) champion Chris Holland (ex-Mike Knight BT21), Ian Bankhurst (Alexis Mk8), Steve Wilkinson (BT21) and Monaco-domiciled Geoff O'Nion (ex-Mike Keens Tecno 69) also made it into the top 20, in a field which included period F3 racers Hermann Unold (Tecno), Rene Ligonnet (Chevron B15) and Ferdinand Gustafson (Brabham BT18).



A plan for 1970 Monaco F3 winner Tony Trimmer to contest the 2010 Historic race in a similar Brabham BT28 sadly collapsed at the logistical stage. Matthew Watts of Retro Track & Air offered TT a car and an MAE engine to build, and the ACM kept an entry open for the 67-year-old, but the funding to turn the dream into reality proved elusive. "It would have cost around £10,000 to do it, but we couldn't find it in time," he said.

Four weeks before Monaco, Ian Bankhurst's 1965 Alexis Mk8 was little more than a repaired frame, surrounded restored components, in Simon Hadfield's workshop where the new body was being massaged to fit prior to painting. Unbelievably, the ex-Terry Ogilvie-Hardy Project X car – last raced at Chimay in '69 – ran with 10 days to spare at Mallory Park, having never looked as good. Bankhurst qualified it well in Monaco before a misfire hobbled his MAE. His F3 debut was thus postponed.



Bankhurst Alexis Mk 8

Chris Drake's one-off Spider made it to the race after gearbox surgery overnight, to be joined by Gareth Williams (ex-Derek Bell Lotus 41), Nigel Miller (BT21) and the British-based ex-Ulf Svensson BT28 of enthusiastic Swede Leif Bosson, another HSCC regular with Jeremy Bennett's Nemesis equipe.

Heavy overnight rain left the track damp, white lines and drain covers treacherous for the race, first thing on Sunday morning. "It was very slippery, like Kirkistown on a normal day, and that helped me," grinned McMorran. But not as the gaping hole which stretched in front of him to Ste Devote corner, where the cars of Hein (pushed off the grid with an incurable misfire), Gelmini (engine blew on green flag lap) and Juerg Tobler's Chevron B17 (sidelined during qualifying) should have been!

McMorran duly launched hardest, seizing his chance to split the fast-starting Traber and less adventurous Derossi on the first lap. Paul hung in there too, until his gearbox started to jump out of second mid-race and he fell back behind the Frenchman. On the podium, winner Traber (normally a Ferrari racer) looked bemused by his success, Derossi deflated at the bridesmaid's position and McMorran overjoyed with third.

Michel Renavand (Tecno) pipped Michel Gendre (BT21) for fourth on the road, but was penalised 25 seconds – which bumped him to seventh - for jumping the start, thus Eyre and Unold were promoted to fifth and sixth ahead of the disgruntled Frenchman. Holland (8th), Wilkinson (12th), O'Nion (13th) and Bosson (14th) all went the distance, while Williams and Miller were classified a lap down in this landmark race.



Ligonnet Chevron B15

Another newcomer to the 1000cc Historic F3 pack in Monaco was Chris Drake's curiously-styled Spider, built in 1965 by young Swedish automotive engineer Sven-Harry Akesson. An evolution of his later Sether Falcon sportscar chassis apparently underpinned the first Koeningsegg supercar. An engine failure in testing at Cadwell Park dramatically cut Drake's preparation time for Monaco, where a recurrence of gearbox dramas during qualifying halted the Spider in the race.

A welcome visitor to Monaco was former Team Lotus engineer Glenn Waters, who having helped Mario Andretti to the 1978 F1 World championship, formed the Intersport team, which ran Dave Scott in F3 and F2, then Damon Hill, Martin Donnelly and David Hunt (younger brother of James) in Cellnet-backed F3 Ralts in the mid-'80s. Glenn cut his teeth working on Mike Keens' Tecno – which he was thrilled to see, now owned by Geoff O'Nion and prepped by Colin Denyer – with Auto Speed Developments in the 1000cc era. Later aligned with TOM'S GB, Waters was active in sports prototype racing into the '90s.

After Monaco attention turns to the HSCC organised Historic Formula 3 Peter Hanson Trophy with rounds at the 'HSCC Superprix', 'Gold Cup' and Spa meetings. The 'movers and shakers' of the HF3 movement, Keith Messer, Francois Derossi and David Pullen are working hard to get big 'screamer' entries at all three and target Spa to attract a really big continental entry, including many Monaco competitors. Their ambition is to build the category so that it can sustain a standalone European championship. They urge HF3 owners to support the Peter Hanson and help create a successful future for these terrific little cars.

MONACO F3 WINNERS

1964 Jackie Stewart (GB)	Cooper BMC T72
1965 Peter Revson (USA)	Lotus-Ford 35
1966 Jean-Pierre Beltoise (F)	Matra-Ford MS5
1967 Henri Pescarolo (F)	Matra-Ford MS5
1968 Jean-Pierre Jaussaud (F)	Tecno-Ford 68
1969 Ronnie Peterson (S)	Tecno-Ford 69
1970 Tony Trimmer	Brabham-Ford BT21



Holland Brabham BT21



Derossi, Traber, McMorran



Gelmini Matra MS5



Peter Hanson HF3 Trophy
July 3/4
 Brands Hatch Superprix
August 28/29/30
 Oulton Park Gold Cup
September 25/26
 Spa Six Hour Meeting

The **HISTORIC SPORTS CAR CLUB** is on 0044-(0)1327-858400 or office@hsc.org.uk and can be viewed on the website www.hsc.org.uk