

# ipped on line — but Jones is fastest

RACING driver Karl Jones, of Lampeter, set the fastest lap in the Champion of Brands Formula Ford 1600 race at Brands Hatch after being fifth fastest in practice.

Jones, who was third in the 1981 Dunlop/Autosport Star of Tomorrow series, moved to Brands Hatch to further his career and was entered by his employers, the Brands Hatch Racing School.

He was involved in a tremendous scrap for third place, being pipped on the line to finish fourth in his employer's Royale RP29.

Jones is one of the excellent crop of young Welsh drivers hoping to make the big time and is currently looking for sponsorship to break into Formula 3 racing.

Unfortunately, it was a bad day for the Welsh drivers at the Cadwell Park circuit. Viv Wallace at one stage looked as if he might take the honours in the Wendy Woods Special Saloon Championship race after being third fastest in practice.

But at the start of the third lap, Wallace's gearstick snapped in half as he was turning into the corner after the pits.

He managed to kick the remaining length of stick into gear, but could only manage to engage second. Thus hampered, he was passed by the rest of the runners to finish last.

Wallace still came second in class, and Barry Reece won his class — as all the other 850 and one-litre runners failed to finish.

So Reece is

lucky seventh

to keep the

lead, with

points

four

Let

3

## Karl gives Wales lift

LAMPETER'S KARL Jones helped Wales score their best result in the Formula Ford World Cup when he finished 12th in the final at Brands Hatch yesterday.

His points helped Wales finish seventh out of the 14 nations competing. England won the World Cup for the third year running with Andrew Gilbert-Scott as the overall winner.

## A vital race for Jones

LAMPETER'S Karl Jones lines up for the 12th round of the Champion of Brands Hatch Formula Ford 1600 series on Sunday.

Jones, who moved to Brands Hatch to further his career, needs a win to keep his championship hopes alive.

He is his own mechanic and is confident his employer's Royale RP 29 can produce the goods.

Meanwhile, Barry Reece, of Caerphilly, and Viv Wallace, of Pontypridd, will be at Snetterton on Sunday for the next round of the Wendy Woods Special Saloon Car Championship.

Reece leads in the Isis Talbot and is confident that he can repeat his 1980 performance when he won the championship.

But second placed Wallace is equally determined, so an exciting battle can be expected.

Martin Williams, of Llantwit Major, will also be at Snetterton to compete in the Monroe Production Saloon Championship.

Williams leads the 2300cc class and is in a position to make a serious championship challenge with the right performance.

## LUCKY 13 AS JONES ROARS TO VICTORY

LAMPETER'S Karl Jones won the 13th round of the "Champion of Brands Hatch" Formula Ford 1600 championship despite a near collision.

Jones, in a Royale RP29, led from the grid, but was challenged on the final lap. He managed to stay on the track, but the other car spun off.

Jones is in fourth place and with a few wins in the remaining five rounds he could take the championship.

Caerphilly's Barry Reece set yet another lap record in the Wendy Woods Special Saloon Car Championship at Snetterton.

His Isis Talbot won the 850cc class and maintained first position overall. Second placed Viv Wallace also had a class win and moved one point closer to Reece.

### Exciting

Both men are determined to win. "There are only two more rounds to go, so it will be quite exciting now," said Reece.

Martin Williams, of Llantwit Major, won his class and came fourth overall in the BRSCC Production Saloon Car Championship at Oulton Park.

But he was not so successful at Mallory Park when he lined up for the Monroe Production Saloon Car Championship.

He was well placed near the top of the championship, but his chances of success were hit when he missed a gear and damaged the engine of his Toyota Celica in practice forcing him to withdraw.

Also at Brands Hatch, in the Champion of Brands Formula Ford series, Lampeter's Karl Jones will be out in the Brands Hatch Racing School Royale RP29.

Jones, who has had a patchy season in terms of results, was another driver to suffer from a torrential downpour and finished well down in the last round.



## NGE

t week, despite being  
l up in practice after  
aning on the flooded  
ck.



Visually, there is little to differentiate the Group N (left) and Group A RS Turbos. In terms of performance and handling there is quite a lot...

## Escort agency

With Karl Jones finally gaining a well earned step to the top rung of the tin-top ladder, it's interesting to gauge what sort of move he is making by comparing his two '87 mounts – the successful and the under developed – to see how much harder it will be to be Group A Champion as opposed to Production Saloon Champion.

Karl should really be moving up the single seater ladder of fame, having been a Formula Ford Champion back in 1983, but circumstances and finances led him into production saloons – and front wheel drive ones at that! With 22 wins and the 1986 Monroe Production Saloon Championship accredited to his Fiat Strada Abarth, he moved up a class in '87 and took the major Uniroyal Production Saloon Car Championship in his Asquith Autosport Duckhams Ford Escort RS Turbo.

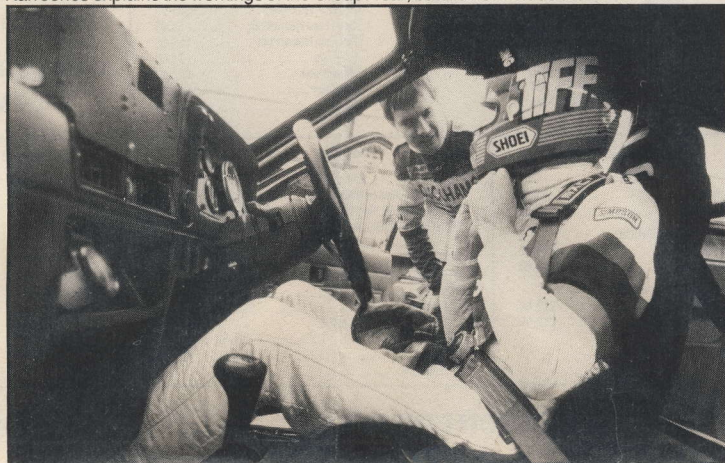
Purchased by Asquith Autosport in Feb '87, the production racer is actually the first machine I have track tested twice! It being the 'original racing RST' used by Mike Smith in 1985 and prepared as a 'long distance' machine for '86, when it won the Donington four-hour race but missed the Willhire success by being shunted in a pre-race test session. The 'original racing RST Test' appeared in AUTOSPORT Mar 21, 1985 while the machine was still awaiting its homologation, and Stuart McCrudden was still deciding which tyres to use and whether to opt for Bilstein or Girling gas shock absorbers.

For Asquith, the answers are BF Goodrich's popular rubber and Bilstein's dampers. Apart from the Mintex competition pads and the 120 litre Premier bag tank there's little else to be done to a production racer apart from fitting a roll cage, racing seat and harness and going racing... Apart that is from a little bit of engine and suspension 'blue printing'. The engine, as in the 'Smitty' era, is tended to by Terry Hoyle – at the time I was quoted 152bhp at the standard 0.55 bar boost, now I'm quoted 165bhp on an '87 'free boost' setting of 0.8 bar. The adjustable suspension settings of the standard car have been set to Karl's

preference and 'Away you go boy!'

The Group A machine is really very different altogether. Purchased by Asquith Autosport from Richard Longman, only four days before the team's Group A debut at the British Grand Prix support event, the car had a marked tendency to devour turbos, and only at the end of its limited five race programme did the team sort the problem out. The chassis is Alan Cur-

Karl Jones explains the workings of the Group A car, but did not include the rev counter!



now's '86 Datapost machine which ran alongside Longman's own machine. Longman dominated the class that year and only failed to match Hodgetts overall championship maximum score by virtue of losing a couple of fastest laps to Mark Hales's RS Turbo and a victory to Curnow himself.

The Group A machine has a Longman tuned powerplant that turns out some 230bhp with 1.2 bar of boost and a rev limit that's up from the 6200rpm of the production racer to 7000rpm. Both the machines transmit their power to the road via the standard Ferguson viscous coupling limited slip differential and both use standard driveshafts. The 'racer' has a stripped interior, but then has to be ballasted to its race legal weight of 965 kilograms – 55 more than the production machine! The extra weight is due to the 'class' limits for Group A as opposed to the 'standard-less-5%' for production racing. There is still the advantage, however, of ballasting the car by adding weight in the most beneficial position.

It's more under the body than under the bonnet that Group A conversion really comes into its own. The six inch wide 15ins standard rims are replaced by 16ins Compomotive wheels and the

195/50 Comp T/As are substituted for Avon racing slicks – or wets – 8ins at the front and 7½ins at the rear. The 9ins diameter front discs with their single pot calipers are discarded in favour of 11ins ventilated discs and four pot calipers, while the standard drums at the rear turn into twin-pot single caliper discs and there's now a cockpit adjustable balance between the front and rear.

With a stiff seam-welded bodyshell, the suspension is free as long as it retains the original pick-up points on the chassis. Stiffer springing is brought in and allied to Leda oil filled shock absorbers. The suspension itself is fully rose jointed and adjustable.

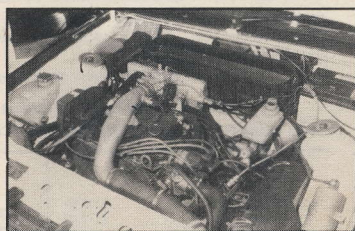
Despite its success in '86, the group A RS Turbo became obsolete overnight with the introduction of the BMW M3 as the dominant force in its class, but the dropping of the turbo regulation lights brought a fresh breath to the production model that had been seen off by the Mercedes 190 in 1986. The previous year had been the swansong of the 2.8 Ford Capri Injection and the 3.0 Opel Monza that had dominated the 2.0-3.0 litre class, the RS Turbo must contest with its 1.8:1 turbo equivalency. Chris Sanders had scored the model's first victory at Donington in July but the promise of championship success in '86 was spoiled by the turbo lights and the Mercedes.

The final score for the '87 Uniroyal Championship was RS Turbos-9, BMW M3s-3, Merc 190s-2. Eight of the Escort's wins were down to Karl – although one was a fortunate promotion from a fuel starved fifth when the four RS Turbos ahead of him were disqualified in a scrutineering clamp-down. Karl backed up his victories with two second places, two thirds and two mechanical retirements.

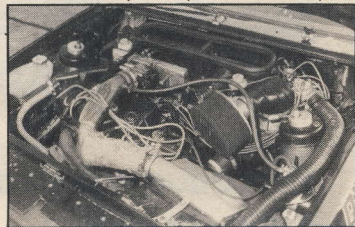
The Group A results were the other extreme! Five starts netted one third place, having led the BMW-free field before a misfire set in, two 'unclassified but still running' (!) and two 'give up and go homes'. The problems were all to do with engine management and turbos – mainly the latter with two of the offending units being replaced during the Tourist Trophy World Championship event.

### Driving impressions

It was on a murky December day that Asquith Autosport delivered its two steeds 'across the road' to Brands and the smart turn-out was a credit to the team's preparation. With only Richard Asquith and Karl himself working on the cars, it has been a genuine low budget existence, with Tim Smith and Richard's brother John helping out part-time at the races and his wife Jan being in charge of both the timekeeping and the day-to-day running of their Blue Chalet Industrial Estate 'Unit



RS Turbos – top: Group A; below: Group N.





The Group A slick tyres allow high speeds.

39". Richard was with Ford's competitions department at Boreham in the seventies and has since prepared Fiestas, Capris, Escorts, Opel Monzas, VW Sciroccos, Lotus Esprit Turbos, Vauxhall Astras and Karl's Fiat Strada!

Being December, Brands was never going to be really dry and the shaded confines of Druids were the normal greasy ice-patch. The Group A machine only had slicks mounted – so I naturally went for the Production machine first!

Instantly the car felt simple and confidence-inspiring, as you would expect from a production car, and the only real complaint was a rather soggy brake pedal – but apparently that's standard as well! The stiffer dampers – still soft by racing standards – and their own suspension alignment allows the car to turn-in to the corners at the first hint of command from the steering. On the faster corners it would then power out with the mildest touch of understeer. At the slower Druids and Clearways, which was also damp, the dreaded power understeer arrived as we powered out of these third gear corners but, I am told, this is not a problem in the dry.

The biggest problem with the test was that, given the conditions, I didn't know if I was on the pace or not! My times dropped from 61.1s to 57.8s with the lap record set at 56.5s and Druids still like ice! I tried driving over all the kerbs – it seems the 'in' thing in saloons – and it certainly did little to upset the designated path of the machine. Without knowing the 'pace' of the day it was really rather difficult to motivate myself to try harder or vary my lines, but my best lap times came from concentrated smoothness rather than any overt hooliganism so I reckon the kerb hopping is done more to straighten the corner than to alter the balance of the handling.

The Group A beast was a different proposition altogether. Now you had to work for your money. Close competition and fast smooth driving is one thing but given the grip of racing slicks and a bit of horsepower and you're into a different element. The contrast really is quite dramatic and you are suddenly in a completely different motor car. Far less delicate 'Stirling Moss' finesse, far more grip and go.

The steering wheel now becomes something you *have* to have a firm grip on. The front wheel drive torque-steer fights you every inch of the way, with the power curve characteristics of a turbocharged engine doing little to help the situation. For once I was shuffling my hands round the wheel like a Police instructor on a skid pan! I

felt far happier with my hands always in the 'optimum' position because I was never too sure which way I was going to want to move them next!

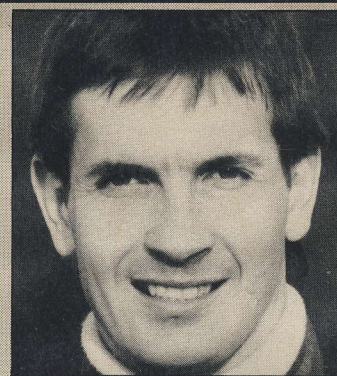
Unfortunately I was lacking a working rev counter so I was changing up on the early side but, to compensate, I now had some excellent brakes to slow me down. The dry Paddock Bend had the best grip, and the Escort could be hustled through at an impressive rate of knots. Bucking and twitching with the typical front drive 'hopping' motion as the front grips-the rear lifts-the front slips-the rear drops-the front grips-etc etc. As long as you hadn't crashed turning-in, all you had to do once the apex had been reached, was to keep the power hard on and just hang on to the steering!

Both chassis demonstrated the expected lift-off oversteer with the production machine worst affected. The longer you held off the power the wider the tail would slide. This characteristic is what gives the production car such a good turn-in. The bonus of it though, is that when you finally turn-in too quickly the best way to scrub off speed is to get sideways and the car even does that for you! The panic, with front wheel drive, only comes when you are exiting the corner hard on the power and the front is just slipping out of line, veering towards the slippery edge which is always waiting to catch you. At this point you *have* to lift, the power is causing the understeer and the old adage that you just keep your foot in and steer out of trouble simply *doesn't* work. The lift will of course step the back out – all you have to do is catch it!

I managed to record a 55.3s in the Group A machine but, again, the conditions made the time irrelevant. A big surprise was how much grip slick racing tyres *can* generate on a greasy surface like Druids as long as there's no standing water to actually 'float' the tyre. In general the Group A car, although being an exciting challenge, was a bit crude in the handling department. I am a racing driver and the Escort demanded an approach nearer to my Rallycross experience in John Welch's Xtrac (AUTOSPORT, Dec 05 1985) than to a true racing car. I don't know what the greatest power ever delivered to a front wheel drive machine is – answers on a postcard please – but I reckon the Escort RS Turbo must be nearing that limit.

While able to enjoy the brute force crudeness of the Group A machine and the challenge of wringing the most out of the production saloon, neither car was really my cup of tea but they *did* both demonstrate how efficient Karl Jones and Asquith Autosport are at 'getting the job done'. The fact that the Escort beats the BMW M3 in one form and loses to it in another shows that one set of regulations is unrealistic and needs alteration but, while the rules stand, the best teams make the most of them. I'm sure both Karl and Richard relish the thought of their new challenge and I'm equally sure they will be quickly on the pace.

Tiff, Richard Asquith and Jones line up alongside the two cars. A successful combination.



Jones – 1987 Prodsaloon champion.

## Western boy makes good

The opposition can blame the *Western Mail*. If it was not for this august journal, then Karl Jones would not have taken to the circuits, and the 1987 Uniroyal Prodsaloon title would have gone to Robb Gravett or Barbara Cowell.

The connection came about back in '79 when an advertisement caught his eye. The *Western Mail* was offering to pay half of the cost of a course at Brands Hatch Racing School as part of a scheme to encourage young Welsh drivers. The course was thus attended, but the 18-year-old Karl could not afford to continue. However, there was another Welshman on the course, from near Karl's home at Lampeter. This was Tim Davies, and he won the scholarship, which he used to good effect in the Dunlop/Autosport 'Star of Tomorrow' FF1600 Championship in '80. Karl helped Tim during the victorious season, but then moved across to work for Jackie Epstein at Brands Hatch, where part of his salary was paid in races in the school's Escorts.

For '81, Epstein loaned Karl a Royale RP26, which Karl ran himself, doing well enough to finish third overall in the Dunlop/Autosport series. In fact, going into the last round, Karl was in with a chance of the title, but was pipped by Phil Kempe and Mark Peters.

Having used an Abbey Farm Racing Royale for the Festival, as the final round of the Dunlop/Autosport series was the following week, Karl elected to continue the arrangement into '82 and used Bob Juggins's car to good effect, coming second to Andy Ackerley in the Champion of Brands series. The following year, he went one better and won the championship in an updated Ray run by Rob Creswell Racing Services. Backing came from the KS Group, but '83 was perhaps more notable for the fact that Karl met Ron Carnell and struck a deal for oil. The connection with the man from Duckhams has blossomed ever since.

Part of the prize for becoming champion was a test drive in a Formula 1 Lotus. This took a while materialising, though, and Karl was in financial straits, so he accepted £1500 instead. This was finally paid in '85... In '84, Karl made his move onto the RAC championship chase run-

ning a new Reynard. However, the year didn't start too well as his main sponsor pulled out. Howard Drake ran the car at first, but Karl moved over to Mike Parkes's control. However, money was so tight that he could only take on the races at Brands Hatch. Tenth place in the Townsend Thoresen series was all he could salvage.

For '85, there was a change with FF1600 being put behind him. "Over the years, I had driven the school saloons at Brands Hatch a good deal and they had always appealed to me since you can't change them very much within the regulations, leaving the driving down to the driver. Also, while FF1600 was a fine place to start and I, like everyone else, had begun with visions of reaching F1, I realised that saloons were the best route to take if I wanted to earn a living from being a driver. I'm a realist and so I struck a deal to drive a Fiat Strada run by Marshall Asquith in the Prodsaloon championships." The year proved a success, with Karl coming second in class, one point behind Sean Brown's Toyota Corolla. At the first race, he had given the regulars a fright in the wet by climbing from third place to lead. He was trying a little too hard, though, falling off three times but managed to keep it together to win his class. In fact, having led the class from race one, Karl only ceded control half way through the last race.

A Strada was campaigned again in '86 with publicity coming for carrying *Autocar* colours. Taking in both the Uniroyal and the Monroe series, Karl finished in the top four in class on 24 out of 28 attempts and won the Monroe Championship from Colin Blower, by one point. "Colin was very unlucky. We both went into the last race with a chance. He ran out of road at Riches and rolled into the field." The luck wasn't so good in the Willhire 24Hrs, though, as the Strada shared with John Llewellyn and Patrick Watts ran in second place for roughly 9hrs until a fuel tank split. This forced them back to ninth overall.

For last season, Marshall Asquith was disbanded and Richard Asquith established Asquith Autosport near Brands Hatch, so Karl moved back to Kent after two years in Hemel Hempstead. The car was not to be a Fiat, but a Ford Escort RS Turbo. And Karl cleaned up Class B, astounding his fellow competitors by coming fifth overall in the opening round. Cries of 'cheat' were heard and Blower protested, but subsequent inspection revealed that all was legal on the Duckhams-sponsored car.

As the year progressed, it became clear that no other RS Turbo driver would challenge him and it was up to the slowly developing BMW M3s to give chase. They couldn't do much about him, though, and so Karl won Class B, and the overall title, too. It had gone to the last race, though, and again the margin of victory was a solitary point.

Now, with the announcement of Karl's plans for Group A (see *Pit & Paddock*), the talented and spectacular young Welshman is ready to take his career onto a higher plane. It won't be easy, but his class should shine through.

**BRUCE JONES**

Karl, the 1983 Dunlop/Autosport Star of Tomorrow champion, moved to saloons in '85.

