

HAWKE—flying on the ground

YOU would be forgiven if you thought that Hawke racing cars are deliberately named after a bird because the company is associated with British Air Ferries. This is not so as the first cars were built back in 1969, years before BAF were involved with the concern. This season the Hawkes are flying on the ground again, with a veritable gaggle of top names using these cars in Formula Ford 1600 — Rick Morris, Derek Warwick, Bernard Devaney, Derek Daly, Geoff Smailes and

others — and such people as Geoff Friswell, Tiff Needell and Stu Baird piloting them in Formula Ford 2000.

Not only that. Hawke have a new Formula 3 car in the early stages of development, while the firm's entry into Formula 1 need not be that far off . . .

David Lazenby is the man behind Hawke from its very beginnings. David, who began construction of a Ford-engined special in his RAF days, joined Lotus in the early 1960s. By 1963 he was world champion Jim Clark's mechanic and two years later he played an important part in Clark's victory in the Indianapolis 500-mile race. In 1968 he was appointed general manager of Lotus Components Ltd, a position he did not retain for long as by the end of the year he had decided to 'go it alone' and started a light engineering business in a tiny workshop at Nazeing, Essex. One of his first tasks was to produce close-ratio gears for the Renault gearboxes used in the infant days of Formula Ford.

Lazenby produced his own Formula Ford design in 1969 and moved to an old stone barn in Waltham Cross High Street to set up a 'production line' of cars named Hawkes. These wedge-shaped machines, known as Hawke DLZs, were very competitively-priced and proved successful in the hands of Tony Roberts (another ex-

Tiff Needell about to slurp some fresh Duckhams ☞ into his Formula Ford 2000 Hawke DL14 (left) and scrapping for the lead at Mallory Park with Merlyn-equipped — but also Duckhams lubricated — rival Bernard Vermilio.

David Oliver photo

by MIKE KETTLEWELL

Lotus man who was Hawke's salesman for a while) and a then-unknown Scot, Tom Walkinshaw, who won the Scottish FF title.

In 1970 over 50 cars were built by the small company. Many found their way across the Atlantic to the lucrative American market, and Hawke were well-pleased when they won the Canadian Formula Ford championship. At the end of the year a further move was made, this time to larger premises at Hoddesdon near the famous Rye House karting complex.

Into 1971 Lazenby consolidated on his Formula Ford triumphs with the introduction of the Hawke DL2B, a derivative of the very first wedge-shaped venture, plus the DL5 Formula Super Vee and the DL6 Formula Atlantic. Plans were also made to construct the Formula 5000 Leda LT22 design under licence, but this project never got off the ground.

Battling against often low finances, David Lazenby continued to produce a series of Formula Ford cars. The snub-nosed DL9 of 1972 (with which Syd Fox won the BARC's Sunbeam Electric championship series) was followed by the DL10 in 1973 and the DL11 in 1974 (this time Fox gained the prestigious British Oxygen series). Now the firm was 'rescued' by the father of a customer . . .

A young teenager named Rupert Keegan bought a Hawke DL11 and, with sponsorship from his father's Southend-based British Air Ferries concern, participated in a full-season of Formula Ford racing. Rupert was a mite impetuous then and became involved in one spectacular accident after another. This meant two



Mike Kettlewell's own picture library furnished this picture of one of the early Hawkes, a 1970 DL2A Formula Ford.



things: fantastic publicity for BAF, and hefty repair bills from Hawke. The outcome, ironically, was that Rupert's dad, Mike Keegan of BAF, bought a 51% share in Hawke.

The extra backing allowed Lazenby to plan for a good 1975 season. As well as the DL12 Formula Ford machine, he produced the DL14 for the brand new Formula Ford 2000 category. At first, the 2000 showed immense promise but was almost always dogged by sheer bad luck — until mid-season when Tiff Needell was offered the wheel and demonstrated that the Hawke was *the* car to conquer.

Into 1976 — with the move from Hertfordshire to Southend completed, Hawke's fortunes soared. In Formula Ford 2000, Tiff Needell, Geoff Friswell and Stu Baird all showed themselves to be race winners and at the time of writing it appeared that either Needell or Friswell would take the Allied Polymer Group championship. So far as Formula Ford 1600 is concerned, the queue for the new DL15 was tremendous. So successful did this machine prove, some drivers abandoned their original chassis and purchased a Hawke.

Mike Keegan also commissioned young racing car designer Adrian Reynard to design and build Formula 3 and Formula 1 Hawkes. The Formula 3 machine was completed in mid-1976 and showed promise in early testing, while the ultimate Hawke, the Grand Prix car, should be ready for 1977 if everything goes according to plan.



One of the leading contenders in this year's Formula Ford 1600 races has been Rick Morris in a Q-protected Hawke DL15 (above). *David Oliver photo*

Geoff Friswell leading a FF2000 field at Mallory in a Hawke DL 14.

David Oliver photo



Evergreen Duckhams and Hawke enthusiast Syd Fox at Brands Hatch in his 1972 championship winning DL9 (above — from Mike Kettlewell) and at Mallory last year in a DL14 (below)

