

They Make Racing Cars—

HAWKE RACING



"SMALL racing car manufacturers like ourselves have to diversify into wider fields of engineering if we are to exist and keep our manpower and equipment fully employed throughout the year." This is the view of Tony Roberts, the sales manager of Hawke, a company founded in the 1969 boom for Formula Ford cars. This season over 50 cars have been sold, many of them for export, but even so the problem of being under-capitalised has been ever present and when we visited the firm at their works in Hoddesdon, Herts., they were in the middle of reconstituting the company thanks to a new injection of capital. Previously known as David Lazenby & Company Ltd., from December 1st the firm will be operating as Hawke Racing Sales Ltd. and Hawke Engineering Ltd.

David Lazenby started constructing Ford Specials in his RAF days, joined Lotus and became Jim Clark's mechanic in 1963 working on Formula One and Indianapolis cars and was an important member of the team which helped Clark win the 1965 "500". In 1968 he became General Manager of Lotus Components Ltd., but before the year was out he had left to start up on his own, first working out of a little workshop in Nazeing where he produced close-ratio gears for the Renault gearboxes used by Formula Ford at that time. He also started work on his own design of Formula Ford which he was building for the man who owned his premises.

The first time the car was tested was in March, 1969, and it was driven by Tony Roberts, who worked for Lotus at that time selling their racing cars. His "secret" testing episode was pictured in one of the weeklies and Roberts promptly left Lotus to join Lazenby along with a local business man, Alex Sorenson, with the aim of breaking into the booming Formula Ford manufacturing market. Roberts was an ex-merchant seaman who got the racing bug once he was on dry land and winning his first race in a Ford Anglia really gave him the impetus he needed. To earn more money to race he drove bulldozers, then switched to selling frozen food and finally landed up at Lotus, by then a well-known competitor with his "spotty" Anglia. Once with Lotus he started racing in Formula Ford, at which he has shown a lot of talent and therefore Hawke do not have to look very far for a works driver.

When the first Hawke appeared it attracted a lot of attention with its very long and wedge-shaped nose, which unfortunately proved rather vulnerable. The chassis featured a lot of cross bracing and particular attention was paid to driver protection. Soon the cars were showing good form on the tracks and Roberts' great talent for salesmanship, coupled with a competitive price tag, had the production rolling. The firm were now in a very draughty old stone barn just off Waltham Cross High Street. In their first year 28 Hawke Formula Fords were sold and, thanks to Roberts' tireless exploits in Europe and North America, many went to export areas. At home present Scottish Formula Two driver Tom Walkinshaw collected the Scottish FF Championship and there was also a good trade in the Lazenby oil pumps for Ford engines.

For 1970 the firm again decided to concentrate solely on Formula Ford with increasingly good results, producing 54 cars in the revised DL2A form, and picked up the Canadian Formula Ford Championship and an increasing good proportion of the American market. Incidentally, it should be explained that Hawke have no connections with the Indianapolis Hawk cars raced by the STP team. The name of the British car is rumoured to have emanated from the fact that, in the old Nazeing buildings, the only company David Lazenby had as he worked into the night was that of a bird of that species.

By the end of 1970 the Waltham Cross premises were getting impossibly small and the firm cast around for a new factory and finally came up with what is now known as Unit 2B, Bantel Works, Rye Road, Hoddesdon. The Hawke factory is one of a cluster of

rather unimposing buildings just near the big karting centre Rye House. Though it is unattractive from the outside, once inside one can see that it is light and functional and obviously serves the purpose well. It is divided into two sections, one for the production of racing cars and the other for the machine shop, which has a good range of machine tools available which are now increasingly being utilised for non-racing car work.

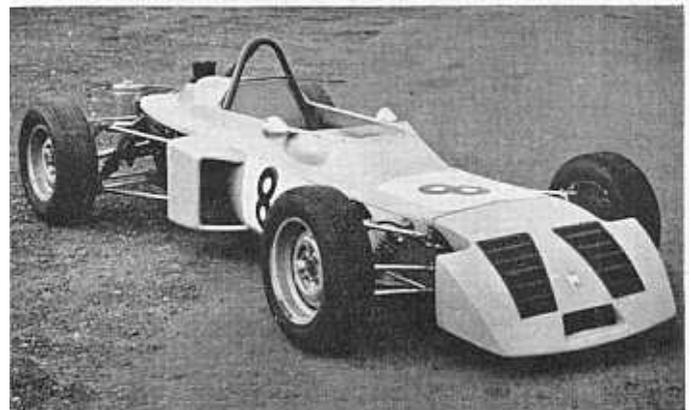
This past season has seen Hawke continue production on a similar level to last year, although sales have been split fairly evenly between the 1971 Ford, the DL2B and a Formula Super Vee derivative called the DL5, plus three Formula Bs. Roberts has split his racing between the two and luck has hardly been on his side, but there have been some very impressive performances and the cars have shown well in the Super Vee category. A plan to market and build under licence the Leda Formula 5000 for the American market never got off the ground, although the car was shown on the Hawke stand at the 1971 Racing Car Show.

A good proportion of the Hawke racing car is built under the Hoddesdon roof and just recently the firm has switched from bought-out chassis to Hawke-built ones. When we visited the firm chassis production for 1972 was going strong with two expert welders stitching together a new Formula Ford and Formula Super Vee frames.

The Hawkes have always used fabricated rather than cast uprights reasoning that these are safer because they will deform but not fracture, possibly saving the driver from even further damage. These are produced by Hawke, as are all the wishbones and other suspension parts. The biggest bought-out item, other than the engines, are the body panels and though several firms have been tried the present supplier is part of the SAH Accessories group in Leighton Buzzard.

With the reconstitution of the company comes a whole range of new cars. Heading the list is the firm's first monocoque chassis which will be a multi-purpose design for Formula Three, Formula Atlantic and Formula B and the aluminium tubs will be constructed by the London firm of Grand Prix Metalwork, who use Hawke as their supplier of machined parts for the range of oil tanks they manufacture. There is also a completely new design for Formula Ford, all previous models were developments of the prototype, and for Formula Super Vee. All three models will have similar bodywork featuring the somewhat Tyrrell-like nose and side radiators as seen in our illustration. Roberts has already raced the prototype Formula Ford and was delighted with its performance, but for 1972 he intends to concentrate on Formula Atlantic with the new monocoque car. All the cars are, of course, designed by David Lazenby, who seems just as happy working a lathe and organising the 12-man workforce as anything else and thus is lucky to have Tony Roberts to do all the fast talking and, for that matter, fast driving.

In the increasingly competitive world of racing car manufacture, just as in the motor industry as a whole, it becomes more and more of a fight for the smaller firm to exist. Hawke seem to be managing well enough, although their future is obviously tied up largely in the success of new models despite their plans for increased diversification. They still offer excellent value: the new Formula Ford will sell at £1,745 complete with race engine and the Super Vee at £2,150, plus a very personal service for all their customers.—A. R. M.



NEW HAWKE.—For the first time since the Hawke firm was inaugurated the design of the Formula Ford has been substantially revised and the new 1972 car is easily recognisable with its Tyrrell-like nose.