

Tony Vandervell's all-conquering Vanwall racing cars. - Part 7

By Geoffrey O'Connell

(Continued from Part 6 in March Mag)

Three weeks later it was the turn of the **Italian Grand Prix/XXVIII Gran Premio d'Italia** held on the 8th of September at the Autodromo Nazionale di Monza, Monza. The course was 5.7km/3.6mile in length and the competitors had to complete 87 laps. For the 1957 event the track consisted of the permanent road course which was very similar to today's circuit but without the two chicanes, namely Variante del Rettifilo and Variante Ascari. 'Vanwall' drivers were Moss (VW5), Brooks (VW6) and Stuart (VW7). The front row of the starting grid comprised Stuart, Moss, Brooks and Fangio driving a 'Maserati 250F' - still a straight 6-cylinder type. Enzo Ferrari had relented on his stated purpose of not motor



Lancia - Ferrari 801

racing and entered four 'Lancia-Ferrari 801's'. On lap 20 Brooks had to pit to have the throttle mechanism of his racing car freed-up from being stuck open. On lap 23 Stuart pitted with what turned out to be a cracked cylinder head in and around a core plug for which a temporary repair was made. On lap 30 Brooks was in the pits again in respect of oil in the cockpit which it

became apparent was due to a gearbox fastening having unscrewed itself - or had it ever been properly fastened?

If that was not 'sufficient unto the'. In order to re-join the race it was necessary to rid his 'Vanwall' of a fuel vapour lock which had developed, possibly due to the sunny, hot and dry conditions in which the event was run. About lap 46 Stuart came into the pits in respect of the engine fault and had to retire on lap 49. Moss was the race winner 41 seconds ahead of Fangio who was 2 laps ahead of von Trips at the wheel of a 'Lancia-Ferrari 801'. Brooks came across the finishing line in seventh place.

Not a race, more a 'Demonstration Run' was enacted during the **BARC Autumn Meeting** held at Goodwood Circuit on the 28th of September. Between the fourth and fifth races, the Italian GP winning 'Vanwall' (VW5), still in the condition that it had left that event and with Moss at the wheel, gave a presentation performance.

Moss failed to break the Goodwood lap record and was unfortunate in that the racing car's engine incurred problems on his fifth lap of the course.

The last event for that year for the 'Vanwall Racing Team' was the **Moroccan Grand Prix/ VI Grand Prix de Maroc** held at the Ain-Diab public road track on the 27th of October. The race was over 55 laps of the 7.7km/4.8mile circuit.

The track was due west of the Royal Palace, Casablanca, and from the centre of Casablanca City it took 10 minutes by car or taxi and 45 minutes by tram to reach the circuit. Casablanca is also the main port of Morocco. The 'Vanwall Team' consisted of Moss (VW5), Brooks (VW10) and Stuart (VW1). All three drivers qualified but the day after that Moss was sick and could not compete in the race. His illness may well have been due to the fact that at that time the Grand Prix fraternity experienced an outbreak of Asian flu. So, for race day the 'Vanwall' effort was reduced to two racing cars.

Behra won the event in a 'Maserati 250F' (again a straight 6-cylinder unit).

Thirty seconds behind him was second man home Stuart and third was Trintignant driving a 'BRM P25' (straight 4, dohc, 2491cc).

Brabham racing a 'Cooper-Climax T43' (straight 4, dohc, dry sump, 1964cc)



Maserati 250F



BRM P25

was disqualified on lap 8 for a track-dangerous oil leak. Incidentally the Ain-Diab Road race track only functioned in 1957 and 1958. Here endeth the lesson for 1957.

Here beginneth the lesson for **1958** during which the year's competitions for 'Vanwall's' began with the:

Monaco Grand Prix/XVI Grand Prix Automobile, Circuit de Monaco, Monte Carlo, on the 18th of May

involving 100 laps of the 3.1km/2 miles street circuit. Incidentally the length of the course year over year can be rather questionable. 'Vanwall's' were being competed in by Brooks (VW10),

Moss (VW7) and Stuart (VW5). Stuart retired with engine overheating on lap 11 or 12, depending on which account you read. The engine of Brooks racing car began to make a most unpleasant, un-engine like noise on lap 22 so he stopped beside the track beyond Sainte Devote Corner where he found a sparking plug had come undone.

As he had no hope of restarting the engine, it being on an uphill section of the circuit, he retired. Moss went out on lap 38 with a valve gear failure.

First home was Trintignant driving a 'Cooper Climax T45' (straight 4, dohc, dry sump, 1964cc), 21 seconds ahead of Musso at the wheel of a 'Ferrari 246 F1' (V6, dohc, 2417cc) as was the third finisher Collins who was 59 seconds behind Musso. That Grand Prix was the first F1 motor race that a certain Norman Graham Hill (1929-1975) entered, driving a 'Lotus 12' (straight 4, dohc, 1965cc). He had to retire on lap 69 with either an engine problem or a broken half-shaft. Take your pick.



Cooper Climax T45

A week or so later it was the turn of the **Dutch Grand Prix/VI Grote Prijs van Nederland** at the Circuit Zandvoort held on the 26th of May, a National Holiday Monday. The race comprised 75 laps of the then 4.2km/2.6miles racing track. The 'Vanwall Racing Team' comprised Brooks (VW7), Moss (VW10) and Stuart (VW5).

In the qualifying sessions the three 'Vanwall's' were adjudged to have finished in front of their fellow competitors with Stuart first, Moss second and Brooks third. In the race Brooks retired on lap 13 with handling difficulties and Stuart went out on lap 46 with a broken valve spring holder. Moss won the event 48 seconds ahead of Schell driving a 'BRM P25' who beat Behra home by 94 seconds who was also in a 'BRM P25'.

The 15th of June was the date of the **Belgian Grand Prix/XIX Grote Prijs Van Belgie** raced at the Spa-Francorchamps Circuit over 24 laps of the 14.1km/8.8 miles long course. The by now familiar 'Vanwall Racing Team' of drivers were present – Brooks (VW5), Moss (VW10) and Stuart (VW4).



Maria Teresa de Filippis

Probably the most interesting entrant was the Italian lady Maria Teresa de Filippis (1926-2016) driving a 'Maserati 250F' (a straight 6-cylinder type) who at the time of the Belgian Grand Prix was some 31½ years old.

That event was the first F1 World Drivers' Championship race in which a woman started (and finished) such a race. de Filippis had entered that year's Monaco Grand Prix but failed to qualify.

A year later, in 1959, having joined the 'Behra-Porsche RSK' racing team, it has been reported she was to drive in the sports car race held at the AVUS track, southwestern Berlin, that was staged on the 1st of August in support of the next day's German Grand Prix. Without doubt the team leader Behra did race in the sports car event. On the fourth lap he lost control of his 'Porsche 718 RSK' (flat 4, dohc, 1498cc) and died in a horrific crash in which the racing car ran into a concrete post causing Behra to be thrown out of the machine and strike a flagpole.

He was killed in that impact. His death and those of others in 1958 and 1959, which included her ex-boyfriend Musso in the 1958 French Grand Prix, led her to retire from the sport there and then. de Filippis did not show any interest in motor racing for twenty years, that is until 1979 when she joined the 'Club International des Anciens Pilotes de Grand Prix' – Club International of Former Drivers of Grand Prix. However back to the race. An early loss in the event was Moss who on the first lap missed a gear change which wrecked his 'Vanwall's' engine.

A contender to win the race was Collins driving a 'Ferrari D246' but on lap 5 he had to retire with an overheating engine. Also, on that lap Musso, at the wheel of another

'Ferrari D246', had a tyre failure as a result of which he crashed the racing car. From then on it appears the race settled down to being an uninteresting affair.

That was until the very last lap and the final section to the race finish. In the years between 1947 and 1983 the Start/Finish line was just beyond the hairpin corner of La Source whilst since 1984 the Start/Finish line has

been and is before La Source. Understanding that, the following description of matters to occur should make some sense.

Brooks, the winner of the event, had his *Vanwall* gearbox seize up as he crossed the Finishing line. As Hawthorn, the second driver home, approached the Finishing line the engine of his *Ferrari D246* ceased to work. To complete the hat trick, the suspension of Stuart's 'Vanwall' collapsed as he commenced to round La Source, but he managed to inch over the Finish line in third place. There's close! Incidentally de Filippis finished in tenth (and last) place in front of nine retired racing cars driven by the likes of such luminaries as Brabham, Graham Hill, Musso, Collins, Behra and Moss.



Ferrari D246

Geoffrey

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