

FIRST CHAMPION to be declared in the MOTOR SPORT/Shell Formula Three Championship was 28-year-old Tony Trimmer, a former racing mechanic from West Kingsdown in Kent. His Brabham BT28, entered by Race Cars International, won the final race of the series in convincing style at Brands Hatch on October 18th.



THE FINAL four rounds of the MOTOR SPORT/Shell Formula Three Championship built up into an amazingly exciting climax which was finally decided at Brands Hatch on October 18th. An earlier Brands Hatch qualifying event, on August 31st, had been won by Gerry Birrell, who was not previously very well placed in the Championship and had shot into the ratings with the help of some new Dunlop tyres. At Cadwell Park two weeks later there was another surprise result when the unassuming Swedish driver Ulf Svensson carried all before him, despite the presence of all the usual Championship contenders. Svensson, a consistent competitor who at 35 years of age is probably the oldest man racing regularly in the formula, had rain in his favour at the tiny Lincolnshire circuit, for not only was he wearing a regular open-fronted helmet which did not mist up like the now popular all-enveloping type but he was also using a Lucas engine. Users of the Holbay engine discovered in the appalling conditions that their throttle slides were tending to stick open when wet and they were forced to slow down.

Many readers of MOTOR SPORT will have had an opportunity of seeing the penultimate round of the Championship, held at Crystal Palace on October 3rd, on BBC television. Trimmer, with 33 points, started this race with a 3-point advantage over David Walker (Gold Leaf Team Lotus 59) and the race was expected to be unusually close-fought, which indeed it was. The television view of the race was entertaining, but the tactics of several competitors got more and more out of hand as the last lap approached. This all took place astern of Walker, who was about to score his second Championship victory in the 12-race series in his customary unflurried style. The battle for second place was so heated that on the last corner James Hunt (Lotus 59) and Dave Morgan (March 703) collided with each other. A steward's enquiry was convened but by then Hunt had regrettably resorted to fisticuffs to settle his differences. This is very much against the normal spirit of camaraderie which exists in motor racing and was greatly deplored. Trimmer dodged the flying debris to take third place behind Walker and Mike Beuttler (Brabham BT28): this brought about a very tense situation for the final round two weeks later at Brands Hatch. Walker with 39 points was back in the lead, but Trimmer (37 points) was only two behind, and Beuttler had an outside chance of victory if he happened to win and his two rivals failed to score highly. It could have even finished as a Gold Leaf dead-heat if Bev Bond had won, for 9 points would have brought his score exactly level with team-mate Walker.

Organised by the British Automobile Racing Club, the Motor Show 200 meeting has become a British classic, annually attracting large numbers of foreign competitors to the Grand Prix circuit at Brands Hatch. As the last British International race meeting of the year and one in which large numbers of aspiring young drivers take part, it is doubly important, for team managers and sponsors tend to remember only the last race they saw, and thus the memory of this one lingers longer than any other!

As always, the principal contestants were all there in force for what was also to be the last major European race under the present 1-litre Formula-Three regulations. The competitors were divided into two for the eliminating 10-lap heats, won respectively by Birrell and Trimmer. Amazingly, they both completed the distance in exactly the same time of 16 min. 16.4 sec.! Birrell was allotted pole position for the final, with Trimmer in the centre and Hunt's Lotus on the outside: on the second row were Carlos Pace's Lotus in the Brazilian colours and Ian Ashley, who was back in a new Lotus having left the works-supported team of March 703s. The third row contained Colin Vandervell, the son of the late bearing magnate Tony Vandervell of Vanwall fame, who had taken Ashley's March place and was taking part in only his third-ever F3 race. Walker was back on the fourth row, looking unhappy about the performance of his engine. Trimmer too had been unhappy with his engine after the heat, despite his win, and it had been changed for a Felday unit.

The change seemed to pay off right from the start, when Trimmer surged away to lead the field, never to be headed again, and although he slackened his pace somewhat towards the end he had pulled out four seconds at half-distance and was unchallenged. Initially the pursuit was led by Birrell but the handling of his Brabham started to deteriorate as the shock-absorbers began to fade (the consequence of a minor practice accident), and he was overtaken by the Hunt and Ashley Lotuses. Ashley then took over second place for four laps but this effort came to a sudden halt when he attempted a wall-of-death on the outside of Paddock bend and retired with deranged suspension. Birrell, working very hard indeed, took back the place, having repassed Hunt, but then there was an unexpected late challenge from Pace, who had dropped back from the second-place bunch at the start and then (after a short struggle with Walker) passed Vandervell with four laps to go, did the same to Birrell on the next lap, and scraped across the line with inches to spare from the Scot. Walker, in spite of a smoky engine, just managed to deprive Vandervell of fifth place, but it was not enough to win the Championship. It was a very happy Trimmer who took the rostrum to collect the E. R. Hall Trophy: ten days later, at a formal presentation in Shell House, he was to receive a cheque for £392 and a commemorative oil painting for his achievement in becoming the first MOTOR SPORT/Shell Champion.—M. G. D.

Results:

**E. R. HALL TROPHY (Final)—Brands Hatch—Formula Three—20 laps
85.4 kilometres—Fine**

- 1st : T. Trimmer (Brabham BT28-Felday Ford) .. 32 min. 31.4 sec.—156.36 k.p.h.
- 2nd : J. Hunt (Lotus 59-Holbay Ford) .. 32 min. 33.8 sec.
- 3rd : C. Pace (Lotus 59-Holbay Ford) .. 32 min. 34.0 sec.
- 4th : G. H. Birrell (Brabham BT28-Holbay) .. 32 min. 34.0 sec.
- 5th : D. Walker (Lotus 59-Holbay Ford) .. 32 min. 34.6 sec.
- 6th : C. Vandervell (March 703-Holbay Ford) .. 32 min. 35.2 sec.

Fastest lap : D. Walker (Lotus 59-Holbay Ford), 1 min. 36.2 sec.—159.60 k.p.h.
36 starters — 22 finishers.

1976 MOTOR SPORT/SHELL FORMULA THREE CHAMPIONSHIP

	BRSCC Snetterton (Mar. 27th)	BRDC Silverstone (April 20th)	AC de Monaco (May 9th)	BRSCC Oulton Park (May 23th)	AMOC Silverstone (June 6th)	BARC Croft (July 11th)	RAC Brands Hatch (July 17th)	BARC Thruxton (Aug. 9th)	BRSCC Brands Hatch (Aug. 31st)	BRSCC Cadwell Park (Sept. 13th)	BRSCC Crystal Palace (Oct. 3rd)	BARC Brands Hatch (Oct. 18th)	Total
1st : Tony Trimmer (Lotus 59 and Brabham BT28)	9	1	9	4	-	2	-	4	1	3	4	9	46 (£282)
2nd : David Walker (Lotus 59)	..	9	-	-	9	4	9	3	-	1	6	2	41 (£157)
3rd : Mike Beuttler (Brabham BT28)	..	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	32 (£289)
4th : Bev Bond (Lotus 59)	..	1	4	9	3	-	-	9	-	-	-	-	30 (£240)
5th : Carlos Pace (Lotus 59)	..	2	-	3	4	9	-	2	-	-	-	4	24 (£248)
6th : James Hunt (Lotus 59)	..	-	3	6	1	-	4	-	-	4	-	6	24 (£248)
7th : Gerry Birrell (Brabham BT28)	..	-	3	-	-	3	-	-	9	-	3	3	21 (£220)
8th : Jürg Dubler (Chevron B17)	..	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	6	-	-	-	12 (£230)
9th : Ulf Svensson (Brabham BT28)	..	3	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	9	-	-	12 (£230)
10th : Wilson Fittipaldi (Lotus 59)	..	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	7 (£14)
11th : Richard Scott (Brabham BT38)	..	-	2	2	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	7 (£14)