

1982

There's nothing quite like a good club meeting at Brands, and my 1982 season kicked off with the May bank holiday event organised by the BARC (British Automobile Racing Club) in glorious sunshine. The varied programme included Special Saloons, Formula

Ford, Sports 2000, MG Midgets and Formula Ford 2000, which was won by a young Ayrton Senna da Silva. A better combination for a good day's entertainment is hard to imagine.

The pre-British Grand Prix Formula One test days in June were interrupted by rain on both days, but it didn't stop Williams driver Keke Rosberg setting the fastest-ever lap around the Kent circuit in his

Formula One testing at Brands again in 1982, and the Ragnò-sponsored Arrows-Ford A4 of Mauro Baldi rounds Paddock Hill Bend. Baldi ended up 19th of the 24 runners over the two-day session.



Motor Racing at Brands Hatch in the eighties



(Above) Brabham had been using a combination of its Ford Cosworth-engined BT49D model and BMW-powered turbocharged BT50 during the season to date. At the Formula One test days at Brands in June, Nelson Piquet used the BT50 to set the fourth fastest time.



Didier Pironi approaches Druids hairpin in his turbocharged Ferrari 126C2 on his way to setting the sixth fastest time during the test days in June.

normally-aspirated FW08. The Finn recorded a time of 1m 10.296s, an average speed of 133.847mph. I attended on the first of the two days, the Thursday, and there was an impressive turnout of teams, with only Alfa Romeo and Ensign not being present.

It was grandstand seats at Paddock again for the Marlboro British Grand Prix in July, and this meant that we had a superb view of Derek Warwick taking his overweight Toleman-Hart TG181 past the Ferrari 126C2 of Didier Pironi to take second place, having started from 16th on the grid. Alas, it wasn't to last, as a broken CV joint put him out a few laps later. Keke Rosberg had been on pole with a scintillating lap and we eagerly anticipated him streaking away at the front. However, his Williams-Ford FW08 didn't get away on the warm-up lap and he had to start from the back.



The Chilean driver Eliseo Salazar attempted to qualify this ATS-Ford D5 for the 26-car grid at the 1982 British Grand Prix, but could manage only 29th fastest and failed to make the cut.

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Supporting the Grand Prix were the Historic GT racers. Here, Martin Colvill in a Ford GT40 leads John Brindley's McLaren M1C and Gerry Marshall's Lola T222 at Paddock. Colvill suffered falling oil pressure in the race, eventually finishing eighth, while Brindley came in second and Marshall fourth.

Warm sunshine and a huge crowd at the 1982 British Grand Prix. Nelson Piquet's Brabham BMW BT50 leads the McLaren Ford MP4B of Niki Lauda, the Ferrari 126C2 of Didier Pironi, and the rest of the field on the opening lap. Piquet failed to finish, while Lauda went on to win the race with Pironi second.





The Brabham team chose this race to introduce a new tactic to Formula One – re-fuelling mid-race. The idea was to start Nelson Piquet's BT50 on a light fuel load, thereby allowing it to build up a large lead over its rivals before coming in to the pits and, hopefully, rejoining still ahead. The first part went according to plan but Piquet retired before his scheduled pit stop.

The race was won by Niki Lauda in the McLaren-Ford MP4B, ahead of the Ferraris of Pironi and Patrick Tambay.

The circuit was packed with a 90,000 strong crowd, kept entertained by good off-track activities. Brands was famous for the air displays that it put on at Grands Prix, and this year was no exception. As well as the ever-popular Red Arrows, we were treated to a return visit by the Harrier and a low-level fly-past by Concorde. The meeting always provided good value for money on track as well, with additional races for British Saloon Cars, Formula Three and Historic sportscars.

It was a mark of the quality of the meeting that, later in the year, Brands Hatch was awarded the prize for the best organised Grand Prix of 1982 by the Formula One Constructors' Association (FOCA).

I wish I'd been at the World Endurance Championship race, the Shell Oils 1000, in October as it produced a fantastic wet weather drive from Jacky Ickx



One of the features of a Grand Prix at Brands Hatch in the eighties was the spectacular air displays. Here, the Red Arrows 'Synchro Pair' pass each other over the natural bowl of the circuit.

in the Rothmans Porsche 956, winning the two-part race on aggregate and thereby clinching the championship. Four drivers were still in with a shout for the title going in to this, the last round of the World Endurance Championship – Ickx, Riccardo Patrese, Michele Alboreto and Henri Pescarolo.

Ickx hunted down the Lancia of Patrese's co-driver

Teo Fabi during the final three quarters of an hour. Fabi had been just over a minute ahead at the beginning of the stint, but Ickx carved huge chunks out of the Lancia's lead, finishing just two seconds behind at the flag and thereby taking victory on aggregate by 4.7 seconds. It would have been worth standing in the rain to have witnessed a drive like that.