

SPECIAL REPORT

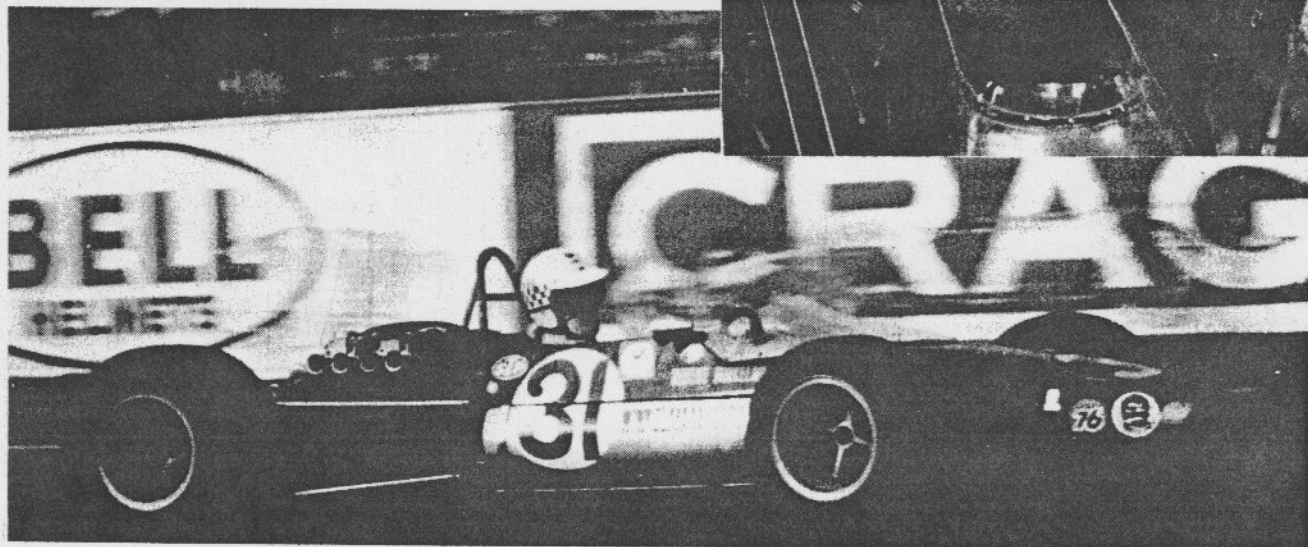
WINKELMANN ON WINKELMANN

In the Feb '93 issue of Victory Lane we ran a short article on the sometime confusion between a Winkelmann and Palliser. Bob noted the article and graciously submitted the following to set the record straight.

Report by Bob Winkelmann

The first chassis was indeed built by Len Wimhurst at his home in London. At the time Len was working for Brabham, and his frame was undoubtedly influenced by the BT 21 suspension geometry. However, it bore little resemblance in design since the reason Len built it was to test his own theories for a more rigid structure.

In a long career of race car fabrication for other manufacturers he had



Top: Len Wimhurst & Hugh Dibley with Palliser-Franklen WDA1 Bottom: Bob Winkelmann in the car in which he won two Nationals on the same weekend

developed many original details which he wanted to incorporate in one car. (I had first met Len at Lola Cars in 1963 when they were building the GT 40 for Ford.

It is a tribute to Len's ingenuity that he was able to do this at his home. He had no bench-vice, he hack-sawed the tubing over his knee, and had so little floor space that he jiggled and welded the frame together on the shop wall.

At this point Len approached Hugh Dibley to supply an engine and test drive the car. No name had been decided yet. Hugh entered it at Mallory Park as a TBN (to be notified), and was sufficiently impressed with its performance that he brought a series of photographs to my house in California for a discussion on the possibilities of production.

Hugh and I had been friends for some years, having competed in the USRRC (United States Road Racing Championship) in '63 and

'64. We both served in the Royal Navy: he as a pilot; I as a flight mechanic and had joined British Overseas Airways after leaving the Navy, albeit at a different period since I left England before Hugh joined BOAC.

He was, I believe, the youngest Concorde pilot and was operating London, New York, Miami, and occasional Honolulu runs which gave him the opportunity for lay-overs in San Francisco.

The photos showed a rugged machine. Len had planned for a possible Formula Libre car, and it could easily handle Formula One or Chevrolet engines. All suspension rod ends were half inch, a necessary detail for off course excursions from American tracks. My experience with Lotus and other British built race cars had made me well aware of the delicacy of the frame and suspension components of most marques. Len's chassis was ideal for the US market.

