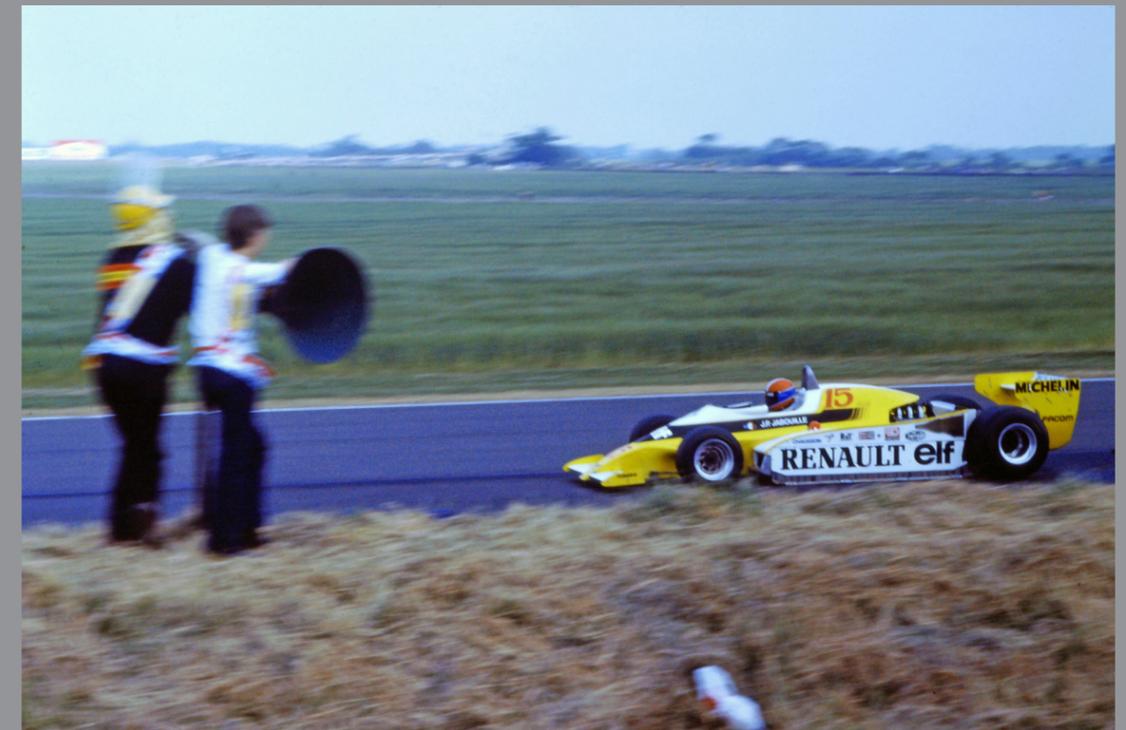


# Plus ça change

*The photographs of E.V. Starr Words: Tim Beavis*



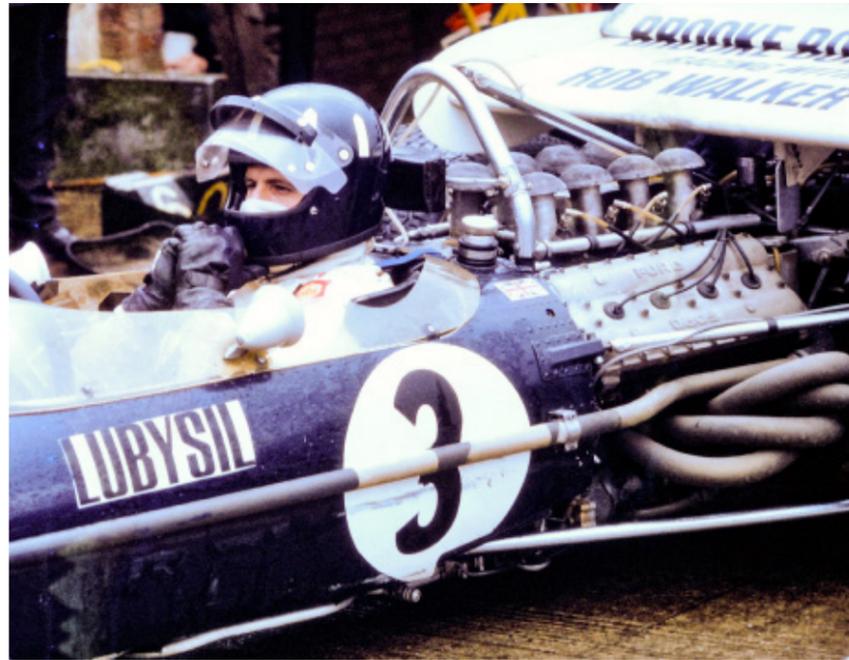
The 1970s and 80s were a time of huge innovation in Formula One as constructors poured over the regulations and then bent them to within an inch of their lives in order to create a race advantage. The era spawned aerodynamic design, notably ground effect as well as fan cars, six-wheelers and of course turbos. These giant technological leaps were not always matched in terms of safety and circuit infrastructure and as we look back at these evocative images we can appreciate just how far the sport has come. That said, many fans find modern Formula One rather sterile and distant and yearn for the good old days when drivers were human and accessible allowing a closer bond between those who did and those who followed.



July 1977 saw Renault launch the first turbocharged engine to be seen on the Formula One starting grid since 1951. The yellow Renault, piloted by Jean-Pierre Jabouille, began by trailing behind hopelessly but by 1979 (*above, British GP Silverstone*) the team was proving to be much more competitive. Spectator safety was, to be honest, something of an afterthought.

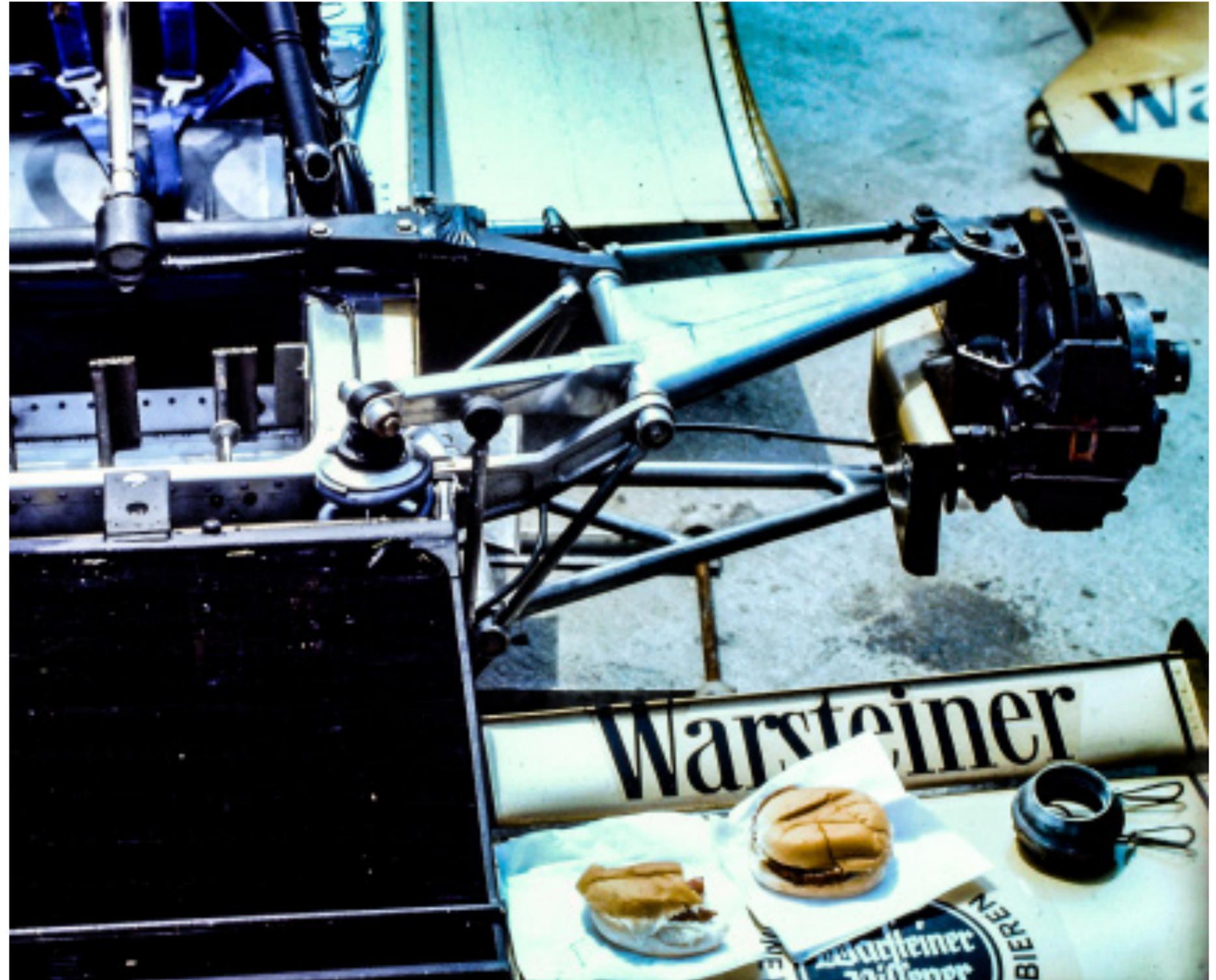
*Opposite*, the six wheeler Tyrell Project 34 car seen at its first public viewing in April 1976 during the BRDC International Trophy meeting at Silverstone. Jody Scheckter ran the car for some demo laps although this particular nose cone was never used in competition.

*Previous spread*, Denny Hulme sits in his Yardley-sponsored McLaren M19 in the Brands Hatch pit-lane with a team mechanic looking on. Hulme qualified second but slipped to finish fifth in the race behind eventual winner and fellow Kiwi Chris Amon in his Matra.



Above, top, the Rob Walker-run Brooke Bond Lotus 49C with a thoughtful looking Graham Hill behind the wheel. Hill finished a distant sixth behind his former Lotus teammate Rindt in the new Lotus 72 as Jack Brabham ran out of fuel on the last corner at Brands Hatch.

Above, bottom, Tim Schenken's Motul Rondel Racing Brabham BT38 in the Thruxton Paddock at the European F2 race April 1972. This wonderfully colourful car was sponsored by Radio Luxemburg 208 among others. It was withdrawn and did not even run in qualifying.



Above, the Warsteiner Arrows / paddock burger bar. This is the Arrows FA1 car of Riccardo Patrese at the British GP in 1978, the race before the car was banned by the courts as a blatant copy of the Shadow DN9. The courts decreed that Tony Southgate must design a new car for Arrows if they wished to continue competing in F1. Patrese retired in this race, with suspension failure, having qualified well in fifth place.



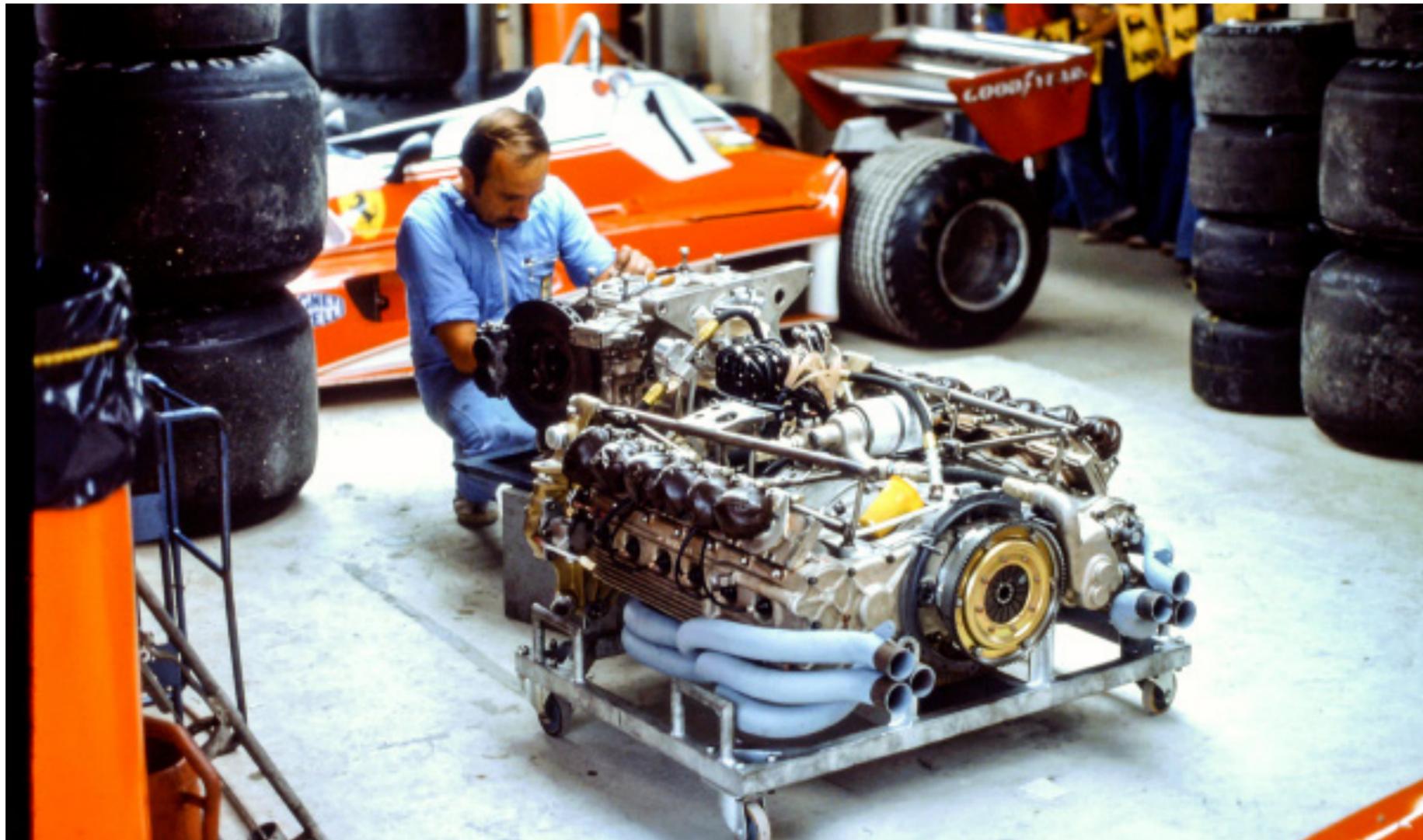
The BMW M1 Procar series ran for just two years, 1979 and '80. Both Champions can be seen here dicing at the 1979 British GP meeting, with Nelson Piquet leading Niki Lauda. This particular race saw Lauda eventually coming out on top and eventually going on to win that year's championship. Piquet would prevail the following year.

The format of this much lamented series was quite unique. BMW somehow managed to sidestep an FIA rule restricting competing drivers, thus allowing a number of F1 drivers to compete over a Grand Prix weekend while supplementing the line-up with some current touring car and endurance drivers. Imagine this happening now with the current crop of F1 drivers! No doubt the crowds would love it, but their paymasters would undoubtedly take a rather dim view of the idea.

Only competing at the European rounds gave BMW a captive audience in this one-make series and this particular race saw Brabham teammates Lauda and Piquet competing alongside Jones, Stuck, Reutemann, Regazzoni and de Angelis among others. The great German Touring Car driver Dieter Quester drove the TWR entry finishing 6th with a notable mention going to Tiff Needell who finished 9th in a BMW factory car.



Patrick Depailler pushing hard in his Tyrrell 007 during the 1974 British GP at Brands Hatch. The popular Frenchman retired on lap 35 with an engine issue while teammate Scheckter went on to score a lucky victory.



Above left, 1976 and a Ferrari mechanic works on the famous flat 12 engine, likely ready to be used as a spare for the weekend. Behind is Nikki Lauda's 312T2 bearing the number 1 of the current champion. With wheels and tyres stacked around him, you can just see members of the public peering through the rear garage door.

Above, the iconic STP livery on Lauda's March 722 F2 car, seen here at Thruxton for the Jochen Rindt Memorial Trophy in the European F2 championship. Lauda finished third behind teammate Ronnie Peterson. Former Formula One World Champions Graham Hill and John Surtees both retired with engine issues.

Below left, Nikki Lauda chats to the BBC's Barrie Gill at Brands Hatch over the British GP weekend of 17/18 July 1976, just weeks before the Austrian's horrific accident at the Nürburgring. Lauda qualified here on pole and was awarded the race win after James Hunt was disqualified some months later. The story of this famous season is well known and has now been told on the big screen.



"From success, you learn absolutely nothing. From failure and setbacks conclusions can be drawn. That goes for your private life as well as your career."

Niki Lauda

July 1972 at Brands Hatch for the British GP and the colourful crowd looks across Paddock Hill Bend waiting for the field to plunge down the cambered track then up towards Druids Hairpin. With tobacco advertising prominent in the background and the paisley patterned shirts, this could only be the early 70's. With barely a nod to safety, members of the public strain to see their favourites head towards them.

