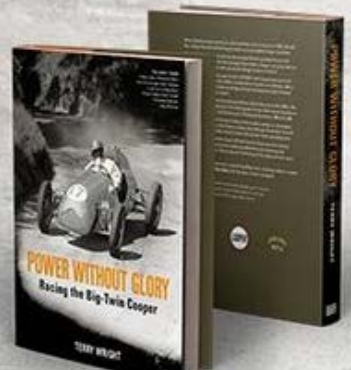


ORDER YOUR COPY NOW
DON'T MISS OUT



POWER WITHOUT GLORY

Racing the Big-Twin Cooper

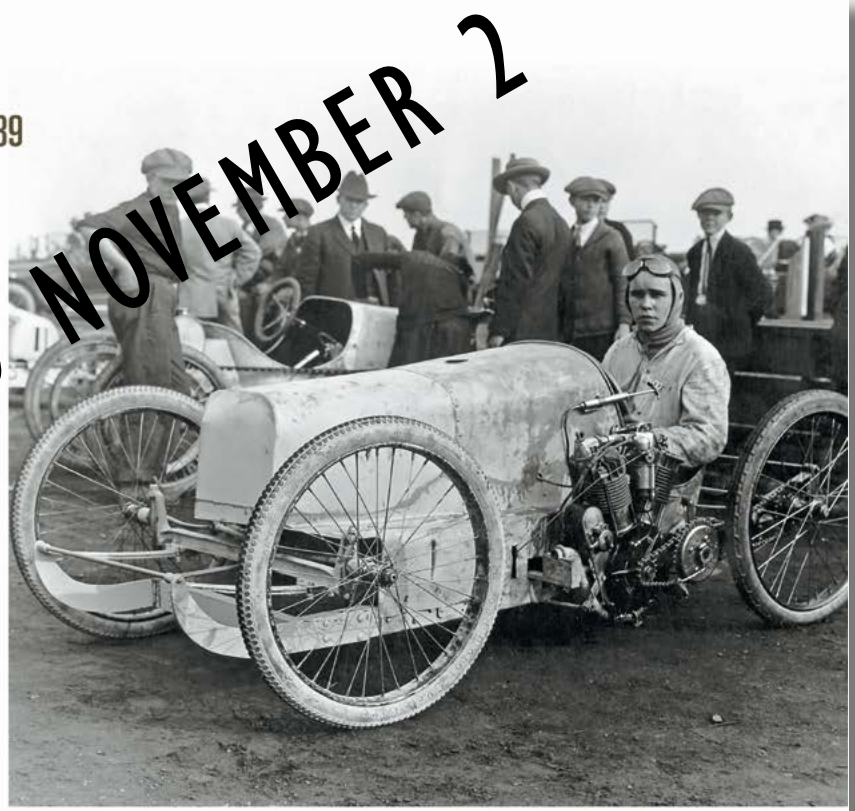
4 Kids and Midgets Dirt Track and Speedway 1914-1939

EUROPEAN MOTOR RACING largely developed on road courses, but in the United States cars and motorcycles could much more readily be raced, not so much on public roads, which did happen, but on a multitude of oval or circular tracks of timber, concrete, brick and dirt. Between 1910 and 1928 at least 24 cities had timber-board tracks which were built specifically for car and/or motorcycle racing. Timber piles were driven into the ground, frames were built and tilted, massive bracing was secured, and then a track of 4 x 6 x 4 inches (that is) sawn timber was nailed down. They could be constructed in a few weeks, and last more than a few years. The first such track built for motor racing was at Playa del Rey, south of Venice, on the coast west of Los Angeles in California, which opened in April 1910. It was a shallow, wide round and steeply banked, with spectators seated around the rim as well as in the field. 'Saucer' was one descriptor; 'pie-pan' was another. The drawn-out opening proceedings copied horse racing with racing and record attempts on seven out of eleven days. This first meeting attracted only 55,000 spectators in total, and it is not clear that things ever got better crowd-wise. There seem to have been just 19 days of racing before the end came. Maybe an arsonist was engaged? On 11 August 1913 a fire started which burned much of the place down, and the up-and-coming sports writer Damon Runyon remarked, 'Playa del Rey burned last night with a great saving of lives.'

Like Playa del Rey most board-tracks only ran for three or four years before failing with problems of finance or fatigue. Unsealed tracks were much more cost-effective, and during the 1920s board track racing was overtaken in popularity by its rival format - dirt track racing. Wherever



A postcard aerial view of the Playa del Rey motor track west of Los Angeles. The Pacific Ocean and the Santa Monica hills are in the distance.



PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 2

Much anticipated after years of research, this new book by Australian author Terry Wright revisits the early history of the modern racing car. It explores the influences behind the first Coopers, including JAP V-twin record-breaking motorcycles, hillclimb and sprint specials and dirt track speedway cars. The engine and chassis designs, and the racing and hillclimbing of the early post-war years, are described and illustrated by hundreds of previously unpublished photographs and drawings.

Power Without Glory is hard-bound with a colour jacket, and is printed four-colour on premium paper and distributed in Britain by Lavenham Press. There are 352 pages size 254 x 203mm and 300 colour or duotone racing, car, engine and document images. The mainly unpublished photos have come from some of the very best photographers of the times.

The story starts with John A Prestwich's motorcycle engine business early in the 20th century and covers the motorcycle world record breaking of the 'twenties and 'thirties that made the JAP brand synonymous with power and speed. For motorcycle enthusiasts the book fills in many gaps in the history of JAP racing engines.

V-twin engines were widely used for car dirt track and cyclecar racing and speed events in both America and Europe from 1913 onwards. The development of these just before World War 1, and during the inter-war years, is described and comprehensively illustrated. Here can be seen many of the influences which led to the post World War 2 development of the Cooper racing car.

The pedigree of the modern racing car is usually considered to have originated with the classic marques of Europe. In this book, the author suggests that the clearest line of descent started before World War 1 with the 'boy' racers of California and was developed between the wars by the 'special' builders of England.

In building their first car in 1946, Charles and John Cooper were strongly influenced by these antecedents. Little did they realize they were embarking on one of motor racing's greatest design revolutions. When they mated their offspring with JAP and Vincent motorcycle engines a new breed emerged. Motor racing was never to be the same again.

Two of Coopers' first customers were to be amongst Britain's greatest drivers - the young Stirling Moss and the even younger Peter Collins. Coopers gave them an affordable start when they were barely old enough to have a licence. With the car's brilliant combination of power and lightness, Moss, Collins and others set out to do battle against the front-engined might of Ferrari, Maserati and others.

The big-twin Cooper went on to dominate British hillclimbing during the 1950's. The 1954 chassis was the prototype of the mid-engined design which swept Cooper to Formula 1 championship drivers' and constructors' wins in 1959 and 1960. Cooper cars played a major part in propelling Britain into a leading position in world motorsport.

Reviewing the book for the Hillclimb and Sprint Association's Speedscene magazine, Jerry Sturman writes of it, "Entertainingly written and superbly laid out with photographs (many not previously seen), workshop general arrangement drawings, significant documents, cutaway illustrations, programme covers and other memorabilia, the book is a visual treat as well as being a meticulously researched, in-depth survey of the history and development of the motorcycle V-twin engine in motorcar competition."

Price £55.00 plus packing and postage. Just click the button on the right for worldwide delivery.

