

News Notizie

05.12.2007 TONY FALL 1940-2007

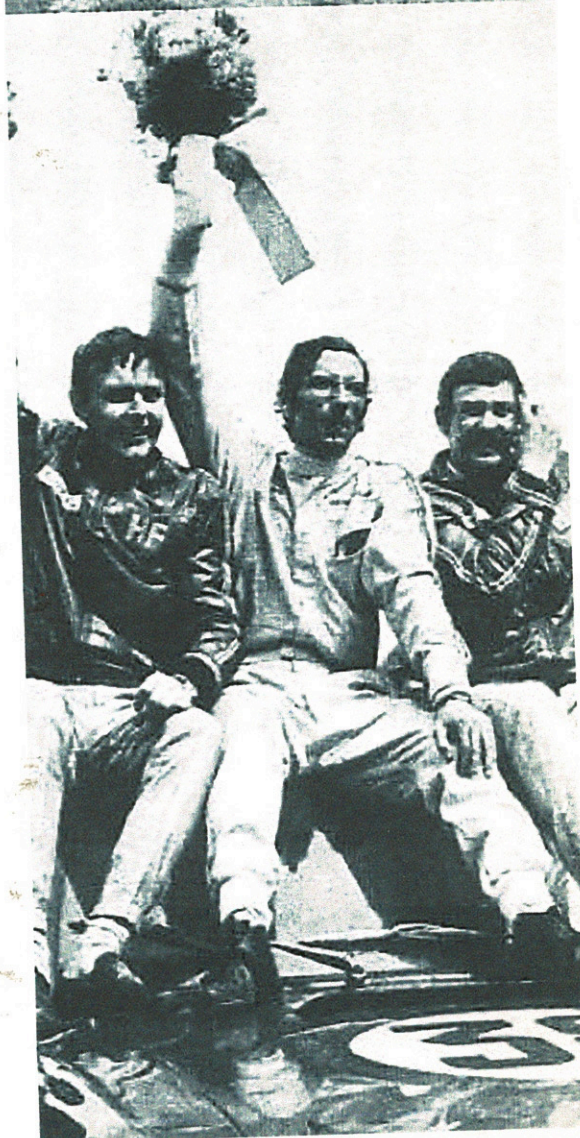
The death has occurred of Tony Fall, former works rally driver, successful team manager, and lately managing director of Safety Devices. Tony was in Tanzania, assisting the organizers of the East African Safari Classic Rally, when he was taken ill. He died in his sleep on the night of Saturday 1 December, of a suspected heart attack.

Richard Anthony Fall was born in Bradford, Yorkshire, in 1940. As a car salesman, he was a club rally driver in a Mini. He was soon spotted by BMC Competitions team manager Stuart Turner, and co-opted into the works team alongside Paddy Hopkirk, Timo Makinen and Rauno Aaltonen. His first major international victory in the Mini was the 1966 Circuit of Ireland, co-driven by Henry Liddon.

He rallied with BMC for three seasons – including competing on the original London Sydney Marathon and finishing 23rd in a Morris 1800 – before joining the works Lancia squad in 1968. In this role, he achieved considerable success with the pretty and compact front-drive Fulvia coupe, including victory on the Rally Portugal in 1968 and his best-ever finish on the RAC Rally, recording third overall in 1969. He also saw success on the race tracks with the Italian firm. Alongside Sweden's Harry Källström and Italian Sergio Barbasio, he was also an integral part of Lancia's win on the 38th Marathon de la Route in 1969, a gruelling 84-hour race at the Nürburgring.

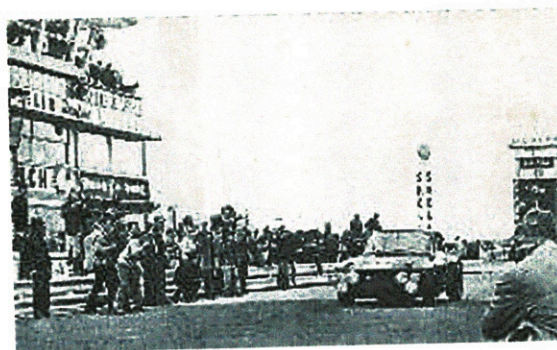
Moving on from Squadra Corse, he would join Datsun for three seasons, achieving many high placings on world rallies, whilst at the same time driving for other factory teams, including BMW, Porsche and VW. Tony tackled the World Cup Rally from London to Mexico in 1970 with a celebrity co-driver, footballer Jimmy Greaves. Together they finished 6th overall. Twenty-five years later, he competed on the re-run of the event, finishing one place higher. Tony achieved 12 international rally wins in his driving career.

A long association with General Motors commenced in 1974, when Tony established the Dealer Opel Team at Tonge Park, Yorkshire, employing driver talent such as Ari Vatanen and Tony Pond. Success in the UK with DOT led to his appointment as Director of Motor Sport for GM Euro Sport, based in Russelsheim, Germany, in 1978. Under his direction, Walter Rohrl became World Rally Champion in 1982, and – in the latter part of the decade – Tony introduced the Opel-Vauxhall Lotus formula for single-seat racing cars, which launched the careers of many Grand Prix stars, including Mika Hakkinen



and David Coulthard.

Tony Fall returned to the UK in 1990, initially as manager, then owner, of the motor sport safety equipment manufacturer, Safety Devices. He was managing director of the Suffolk-based company – famous for the production of roll-over cages – at the time of his death. Tony, who in recent years had driven a replica of his original Datsun in historic rallies with Yvonne Mehta, was in Africa on 'holiday', helping with the organisation of an event he loved, and which had been the scene of many of his triumphs. His wife Pat, sons Richard and Oliver from a previous marriage, and grandchildren Louis (8), Charles (6) and Mia (4), survive him.



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