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SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL

Len Ogbourne makes patterns for women's dresses by day, drives stock cars by night. Last season he made £120 in a week at tracks up and down the country. Pictured with him in the back of his £25 jalopy is fiancée Eileen Reynolds.

C-R-U-N-C-H . . . And the battered old jalopy somersaults on to its roof, slides across the track, and comes to a shuddering halt against the safety fence.

SCREAMS OF DELIGHT GO UP FROM THE DARKENED TERRACES AS ANOTHER CAR SKIDS ROUND THE CORNER AND CRASHES INTO THE OVERTURNED WRECK. THEN TWO MORE, TURNING THE CORNER OF THE TRACK INTO A TANGLED MASS OF METAL.

Here was Leicester's first stock car circus of 1955—a free-for-all on four wheels that is billed as the most sensational, spectacular sport Britain has ever seen.

THE CLOWNS: Professional car wreckers in goggles, crash helmets and overalls who have found they can make big money out of this bobbysoxers' Brooklands.

ENTERTAINMENT? Maybe, if you have the destructive instincts of a four-year-old.

SPORT? As sporting as an all-in wrestling bout or a South American soccer match.

Yet this travesty of the race track has become incredibly popular in Britain. Almost every night there is a meeting somewhere in the country. Monday's crowd at Parker Drive Stadium was bigger than the attendance at many greyhound and speedway meetings.

What's the fascination? Stock cars are slow compared with motor cycle speedway. Racing takes up only about 50 minutes of the two-hour programme. The other 70 minutes on Monday were monopolised by a fast-talking commentator, gramophone records and a six-year-old boy who lapped the track three times in a baby car.

by Laurie Weston

Neither do crowds go to cheer the home team or because they appreciate skilful driving.

There is no home team. It's every man for himself. And the spectators will be disappointed if they think the grim-faced wreckers are crack drivers.

Any fool who can drive recklessly on the public highway can do the same on a track—without the risk of being stopped by the police.

Mad Enough!

To read the official programme you might think recklessness on the road was a virtue. A paragraph about driver Frank Hay states that since he started driving ten years ago he has never qualified for a no claim bonus from his insurance company.

Another character who applied to become a stock car racer said his only qualification was that his driving licence had been taken away. "This," according to the programme, "showed what a mad driver he was."

It's not difficult to imagine how the impressionable teen-ager would react to this reverence of the road hog.

Most people go because they take a morbid delight



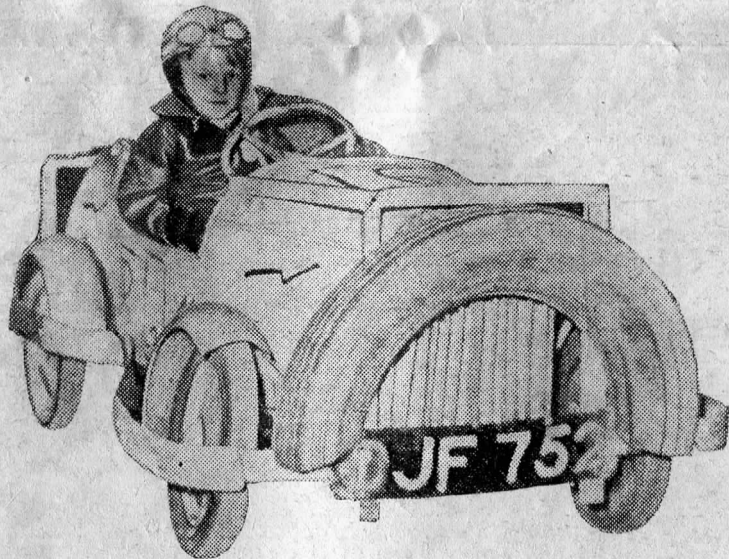
A section of Monday's 9,500 crowd—young and old—at Parker Drive.

is seeing a spectacular crash. They feel they have had their money's worth only if half the cars in each race are barged on to their roofs or wrap their reinforced bumpers round the safety fence.

The crowds would probably be even bigger if there was an occasional serious smash-up.

But there's not much chance. Each driver is securely strapped to his seat. Cars are stripped of windows, windscreens and mirrors. Ambulance men stand by but they are seldom needed.

Stock car racing looks terrifying. It seems a short cut to the grave. But don't be fooled. **IT'S AS DANGEROUS AS A SUNDAY GAME OF BOWLS—AND HALF AS ENTERTAINING.**



Six-year-old Roger Williamson, of 143, Humberstone Road, Leicester, amused spectators in one interval by driving round the track in this model powered by a lawn mower engine.