



Note 66B

Two pioneers of the “Standard” Grand Prix suspension system

In 1948 – 1950, while Cooper were serendipitously using suspension by double transverse links at each wheel which they then developed eventually into the “Standard” Grand Prix car suspension system, two English-built racing cars used this layout as a matter of design choice.

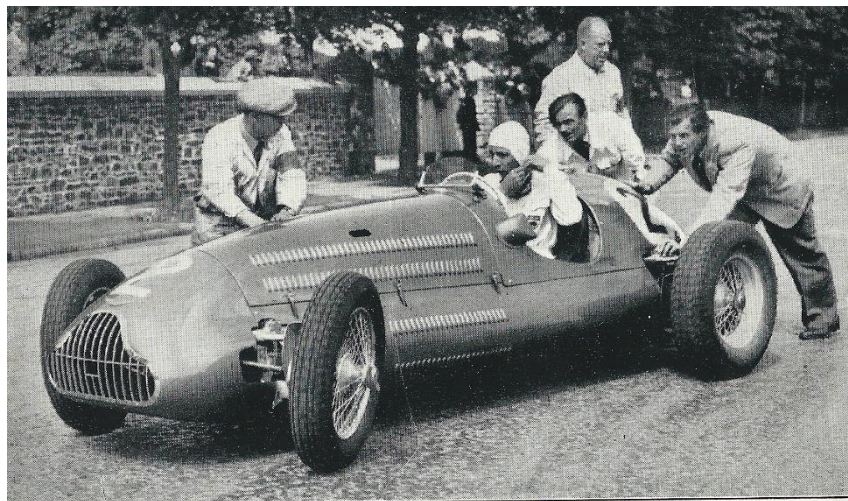
They were the Grand Prix Alta and the Formula F2 HWM.

Both, unlike the Cooper, were front-engined. Neither used roll-stiffening bars to control body roll.

Alta

The 1½ litre 4-cylinder supercharged Grand Prix Alta was designed by Geoffrey Taylor, owner of the small Tolworth firm, in late 1945. It was therefore the first car to follow the pioneering 1935 MG R-type suspension layout. The springing was novel, being rubber blocks in compression (supplied by Dunlop) – a method never seen again in racing cars, though adopted in 1959 by Alec Issigonis’ BMC *Mini*.

The car first raced in 1948 and by 1950 three had been completed for low-budget private owners. Not surprisingly, the best result achieved by these was 2nd place in a minor Irish race in 1950.



DASO 779

The first appearance of the Grand Prix Alta in 1948.

Geoffrey Taylor is standing behind the car. The driver is George Abecassis and the man pushing on the right is John Heath. These two were partners in HW Motors and built the HWM-Alta in 1950, as described below.

The mechanic pushing the car is Alf Francis, who went on to fame with HWM and Rob Walker.

HWM – Alta

John Heath, joint owner with George Abecassis of HW Motors of Walton-on-the-Thames, designed the 1950 HWM-Alta F2/Sports-racing car in 1950. The engine was a 2 litre 4-cylinder naturally-aspirated Alta designed by Geoffrey Taylor.

One transverse link of the pair required at each wheel was provided by a leaf spring.

The team of three cars were only raced stripped down for F2 so were handicapped by the 2-seater body. With Stirling Moss as effective No. 1 driver they achieved results ‘way beyond what might have been expected from a low-budget operation. The most notable result was 3rd place by Moss in the 1950 Bari F1 GP behind two 159 Alfa Romeos.

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Stirling Moss driving the HWM
in the 1950 "Daily Express"
Trophy F1 race at Silverstone.
He finished 6th in this F2 car.



Credit: unknown
