

ALLAN McCALL

PART TWO

TEAM TUI

Peter concludes his look at Allan McCall's remarkable career, covering his time with the Tui racing cars, the loss of his best friend Bert Hawthorne, his work with Formula Atlantic cars, the Tasman Series and his time at Indianapolis.

Words: **PETER HILL**

Following Allan McCall and Bert Hawthorne's 1970 Formula 3 foray, in 1971 Allan converted the Formula 3 Tui to the American Formula B specification at Bob Sparshott's BS Fabrications factory in Luton, UK. The car was entered in the SCCA Continental Championship by Fred Opert and driven by Bert Hawthorne. Hawthorne battled with Allan Lader for the title but Lader amassed more points than the Kiwi, who missed one race and had two DNFs. The Tui had to settle for second place but had finished ahead of big fields of Brabham, Lotus, Chevron and March.

Following their Formula 3 campaign, Bert secured some money to race in Formula 2 in 1972. He and Allan took Tui chassis AM29/1 to Thruxton where, despite being untested, Bert ran as high as fifth before the fuel pump failed. Hockenheim was the next race; the track where Bert's hero, Jim Clark had been killed. In practice Bert was involved in a tangle with another car – the Tui got

airborne and hit the barrier. Bert was killed. Allan was shattered by the death of his friend.

"Bert was one of the class acts. He would have gone on to great things, I'm absolutely certain of that."

Chassis AM29/1 was destroyed so Allan built a new chassis, numbering it BH2-1 in memory of his friend.

JOHN WATSON AND THE TUI

Despite Bert's death, Allan went on to have a major impact on a number of other racing drivers' careers, the first of these being John Watson. Watson has no doubt about the importance of the short time that he spent racing the Tui in Formula 2.

"Bert Hawthorne had been killed and Allan was regrouping", recalls Watson. "The car had been entered for Crystal Palace and I was asked would I drive. Obviously, I took the opportunity with open arms and the car was very competitive. Then we continued onwards and took part in the

majority of the European Formula 2 events.

"Allan was an unusual and remarkable man, having worked at Lotus in Formula 1 in the '60s and then going on to build his own Formula 2 car, which was like a mini version of a McLaren M7A. Allan was just one of those amazing people who could design and build a car, at the same time running it as a business while trying to make a living out of it.

"Getting the drive in the Tui was pivotal in my career. In '70 and '71 I ran my little Brabham, but it was a family affair and when the rules changed we couldn't afford the costs involved. I thought my day in the sun had finished. When the opportunity arose to drive for Allan, I couldn't wait to get behind the wheel and get racing again.

"At the end of '72, when the Formula 2 project had wound up, John Surtees asked me to drive for him in '73 in his F2 team. I opted to go the Brabham route when Hexagon offered me a Formula 2 drive and occasional outings in a Formula 1 car. That was





Allan with John Watson and Tui F3.

essentially a consequence of the opportunity that Allan provided me.

“The Tui was a lovely car to drive – beautifully constructed. It did everything you hoped a racing car to do. Allan was one of those highly gifted people who could make anything; he had a great pair of hands. Really, it was the car that got me back onto the treadmill of international motor racing. It was very important to me.

“I travelled with Allan to a number of events, driving through Europe. I remember Allan fell asleep while he was driving and nearly had a head-on accident. It was only divine intervention that we didn’t all get killed. He was just exhausted and momentarily nodded off but came around just in time to avoid the accident.”

Allan commented on events at the Imola race.

“John crashed early in the first heat and wiped the rear wing off. In the pits we took the front wings off to balance it and he went faster than he’d been able to qualify for the

final. Then he came right up through the field in the second heat to finish second, eighteen inches behind Bob Wollek’s Brabham.”

Dave Morgan took over the Tui seat after it was vacated by Watson. One highlight was when Morgan put the Tui on pole at Albi. He also drove the Tui in its last Formula 2 race at Hockenheim.

TUI SUPER VEE

Before Bert Hawthorne’s death, in a deal with the racing car constructor Leda, Allan designed a new Formula Atlantic car. Allan and Bert built the first four cars at Leda’s Poole premises. The idea was that Fred Opert would take the agency and sell them in quantity in North America. It didn’t quite work out as planned. Nick Phillips of *Motor Sport* magazine described how it happened:

“He [Opert] also sold Chevrons and decided not to take the Tui Atlantics. What he did need was a Super Vee to sell. Bert [Hawthorne] was still running Fred’s driving school for him at

Bridgehampton. ‘He told a little porky, saying we had a Super Vee,’ explains McCall. ‘In just over a week, we took the first completed Atlantic car and converted it.’

“Hawthorne drove the Tui Super Vee in an international race at Daytona, finishing second to Helmuth Koinigg and ahead of Jochen Mass. That was really the last that McCall and Hawthorne had to do with the Super Vee; Leda built plenty, Opert sold them, and they proved very successful.”

Fred Opert Racing ran Bertil Roos in the 1973 USA Super Vee championship in a Tui BH3. Roos won the championship easily with three wins in the nine races.

TECNO FORMULA 1

Kiwi engine man Tom Hooker, who shared a workshop with Allan, thought he had disappeared in 1973, but it turned out Allan had gone to Bologna with friend and fabricator Edi Wyss to show Tecno how to build a monocoque for its Formula 1



project. Being Swiss, Edi spoke Italian which helped Allan to communicate. They and the Tecno guys produced a tub in ten weeks. Hooker's recollection is that Allan's work was simply meant to demonstrate how to do the job, but that first chassis became Chris Amon's racing car. However, the car was handicapped by the Luciano Pederzani-designed flat-twelve engine.

Tom Hooker summed up the situation: "Allan had a hard time working with people, especially the Italians."

GOLDIE HEXAGON RACING FORMULA 1

Allan re-joined John Watson at the end of 1973 at Goldie Hexagon Racing in Formula 1. John Watson describes what happened.

"At the end of 1973, Hexagon did a deal with Bernie [Ecclestone] to acquire the ex-factory BT42s from the 1973 season. When the car turned up it was in a pretty sorry state.

"Allan set about restructuring and considerably beefing up the foot-box area and the foot-box where the chassis joined, making it a much more rigid structure. He also made some changes to the nose to improve the aerodynamics of the car, which Gordon Murray was not very impressed with because egos in motor racing are always very prickly. But Allan used his knowledge and experience to generate, and from his view, improve upon the problems that had come to Hexagon from Brabham. Having known Allan through '72 I was very happy to have him as part of the team in '74. Then at some point, Allan and Paul Michaels, who owned Hexagon, went their own ways and that was the last time I had any real contact with Allan."

TUI FORMULA ATLANTIC

From 1975 through 1977 Allan ran the two TuIs, BH2-1 and BH2-2, in the USA Formula

Atlantic series for a number of drivers including: Tom Gloy, Elliott Forbes-Robinson, Brett Lunger and Damien Magee.

In 1977 Allan ran Kiwi David Oxtan in part of the Canadian Labatt series.

"We started late and finished early but I was very grateful for the opportunity to race in Canada. Allan was a very clever engineer, very resourceful. He was also quite fiery and it was either Allan's way or the highway," Oxtan said.

Tom Gloy tells the story of the early 1970s period.

"I first met Allan in the Atlantic series in Canada in 1975. I was running my own car. He was running John Nicholson and a crazy Irishman, Damien Magee. In '76 he ran Elliott Forbes-Robinson in the Canadian series and I got to know him a lot better during that year. I was driving a Lola 460. The year before I had a 360, which was a good car and we did pretty well, but the 460 was just diabolical. Allan came to me after a session and said, 'Do you have any idea that your car is on three wheels?' I said, 'No, it just won't handle at all!' Then, and this was the ultimate compliment from Allan, he said to me, 'You know you need to drive a decent car. I think you're pretty fast.'

"Lo and behold, halfway through the season he and Elliott have an argument and he fired Elliott, which was much to my benefit because he hired me right away. From that point on we had an amazing relationship. I think in the next three races we finished second, twice to Jacques Villeneuve Snr, and maybe a third place on top of that. We were right there with that little car and one motor that Allan would rebuild. It was phenomenal and it was so much fun, that's what led us to New Zealand."

1975 was also the year that Allan met Daniele Montour, who worked full-time for the organisers of the Trois-Rivières Street Race. Daniele helped Allan with various things that he needed, like places to work and



1. Bert Hawthorne in the Tui at Edmonton, 1971; 2. Hawthorne and Tui, 1972; 3. Tui F2 car, 1972; 4. Allan with John Watson and the Hexagon Brabham, May 1974.

local sponsors, and by the third year they had developed a long-lasting relationship.

NEW ZEALAND TASMAN SERIES

In the 1977 New Zealand Peter Stuyvesant series, Allan ran Tom Gloy in Tui BH2 and came second in the championship, including winning the Lady Wigram Trophy.

Tom Gloy remembers the fun he had with Allan in New Zealand.

“We’d stopped off in Queenstown for a couple of days, just to relax. So, there were three of us at a bar. There was this cute barmaid and she’s being very nice to us. There was me, Keke [Rosberg] and Allan sitting at the bar. Keke introduces us to something he calls a ‘milkshake’. His milkshakes were so many layers of alcohol – Crème de Menthe and Baileys and all kinds of things – they went down so easy. So, we sat there for a couple of hours and had a great time. The manager for some reason was harassing the barmaid and that was irritating us.

“Allan decided he had to go to the bathroom. He got off his stool and fell flat on his face – and I mean flat. Keke and I looked at him and were like, ‘Wow, I wonder if he’s hurt?’ It was hysterical. We picked him up and put him back on his stool and gave him some more milkshake, which he really didn’t need.”

The manager made the mistake of going out to the pool and standing near the edge. Tom claims it was Keke who pushed him in.

“The stuff that happens when you go racing that no one knows about! That’s what makes it fun.”

ADAMS McCALL ENGINEERING

In 1979 Allan and Kerry Adams established Adams McCall Engineering in the UK. The company handled fabrication work, mainly for March but also for Lola, Fittipaldi and others. Hughie Absalom tells the story of the infamous Don Whittington arriving in the UK to buy an Indy car. He visited Allan who advised him to go to March. Allan rang March, telling them to quickly layout a chassis and some suspension then told Whittington that this was their first Indy car. Legend has it that the Whittington brothers had a briefcase full of cash, no doubt proceeds from their drug business. This was the catalyst for March to start building Indy cars, the first three for the Whittingtons. In return, Allan got March’s fabrication work.

FORMULA ATLANTIC – NORTH AMERICA

Allan got back together with Tom Gloy in 1980 for the North American Atlantic series when Tom was running Ralt RT1s for himself and Rogelio Rodriguez. Despite an interrupted series when Tom raced CART and Formula 2, he still came second in the championship to Villeneuve.

Through the early 1980s, Tom’s motorsport business grew and he asked Allan to join him. The team ran four Atlantic cars that Allan looked after while Tom went off to start a Trans Am programme for the Ford Motor Company.

In 1982 when Dave McMillan won the

Atlantic series, Allan was running cars against him but Dave remembers Allan’s penchant for stirring people up.

“Allan was a great one for coming down the pit road and winding everyone up. When I won the championship, he said to me: ‘You’re the oldest fart in the f***ing field and the only driver who’s flat around turn one’.”

1984: ALLAN AT INDIANAPOLIS

Allan’s relationship with Tom Gloy continued when they ran a car in the 1984 Indianapolis 500 when Allan was working with Rick Galles’ team. Tom recalls their adventure.

“They had Simoniz Wax sponsorship for four races. Allan and Hughie [Absalom] called me up and said, ‘Hey, do you want to go to Indy?’ [I said,] ‘Hell, yes!’

“That was the year I won the Trans Am title so I had had to finagle a lot. Allan ran the car, along with Kiwi Ziggy Harcus. They did the car for me at Indy and four other races, I think. There was one other guy and we were part of that big team at Galles who were running Al [Unser] Junior. They were all on the other side of the building and we had this little space.

“We got this new March, and we thought, ‘where do we start?’ Well, it turns out it came with a handbook! I was real busy racing Trans Am but I came in to Indy to do the rookie orientation. The car just ran flawlessly, and this was my first time doing Indy. Then I missed the first couple of days of practice, because of a Trans Am commitment. So, when I got there on a



5. Allan (in Team Tui t-shirt) and the Tui, Lady Wigram Trophy meeting (Photo Terry Marshall); 6. Allan and Edi Wyss with the Tecno; 7. Allan with David Oxtan in the BH2, at Trois-Rivières (Photo Marc Sproule).

Monday, Allan asked me, 'What's the car doing?' I said whatever I thought it was doing. He said, 'Well ok, let's go back to the garage', and he's peering through this book. I said, 'What's that book?' 'Well, that's the March book. It tells me what to do!' I thought I was going to die laughing.

"Hughie Absalom was the guy running Al Junior and the team. He had complete trust in Allan – they'd been buddies all the way back to the beginning of time. He just let us do our thing.

"By Thursday, just by using this book, and of course Allan's logic, we were running three miles an hour quicker than the A team on the other side of the garage. This isn't sitting real well! They came over to us and asked, 'What the hell are you guys doing?' and we said, 'Well, we're not quite up to page 42 in the book yet but maybe you should read it.' It was hysterical, it was typical Allan.

"The only thing that I got pissed off with him for was when we were really starting to turn some numbers. We were fourth or fifth-fastest and I'm a rookie. I said to Allan, 'Oh my god, happy hour is going to be fun.' 'Happy hour' at the speedway is when the temperatures go way down and power goes up. Allan looked at me and said, 'Fun for somebody but you're not running'. 'What? Why not?' He said, 'We don't need to show off'. That pissed me off. He just didn't want me out there – it was the conservative side of him. We only had one car and I had to qualify the first weekend because I had a race the second weekend for Ford. Maybe that was part of it with Allan; if we damaged the car, I couldn't come back the second weekend because of my deal with Ford."

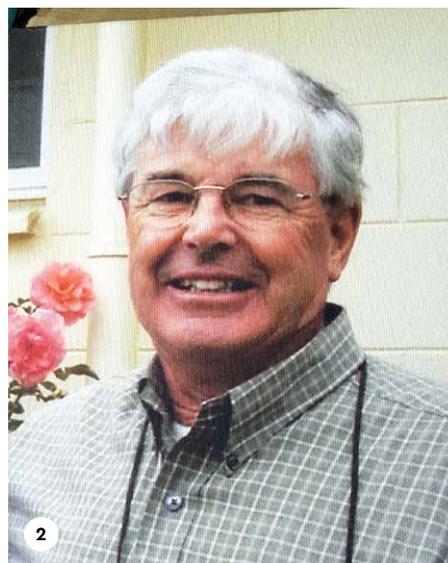
In the race Tom retired with 21 laps to go after his engine expired. He was classified fourteenth.

"People will tell you that Allan could be an ornery devil – and he could, there's no doubt about that. I could be too, so it was a balance."

MORE FORMULA ATLANTIC THEN F3000

In 1985 Allan and Daniele moved from Indianapolis to live in Irvine, California. The following year he ran Ted Prappas in Formula Atlantic, racing two Ralt RT4/86s in both of the North America series – East Coast (plus the Formula 1 support race at Montreal and Trois-Rivières) and the West Coast series called WCAR. Prappas won the WCAR championship.

In 1989 Allan left the USA to establish an F3000 team to run in the UK. He based the team in Croughton, near Silverstone. He purchased a car and transporter, and hired a team manager – his friend Mike Young who had worked for Frank Williams – but the team didn't get off the ground. Allan worked with



1. Allan at Trois-Rivières, 1976 (Photo Marc Sproule); 2. Allan enjoying his 'retirement' in New Zealand.

other F3000 teams, including Stewart Racing and Middlebridge, and provided advice to three sons of former world champions: Damon Hill, Paul Stewart, and Gary Brabham. Jackie Stewart and Jack Brabham both approached Allan to help out, which he was proud of.

TIME TO COME HOME

By 1991 Allan found it increasingly difficult to run a race team profitably so he sold out. He stayed on as the team engineer working with driver Giovanni Bonanno for a few races. After the Sicilian race, Allan and Daniele returned to New Zealand where they bought a house in Auckland. Allan had many projects – he helped local drivers, restored old motor bikes, old cars and a small aeroplane engine. The aeroplane engine was Jay Ivey's experimental engine, given to Allan in bits to put together. In a special 'McCall deal' it was part-payment for a van Allan gave to Jay's wife.

ONE FINAL EUROPEAN ADVENTURE

In 1995 Allan met Craig Lowndes when Craig was racing Formula Holden in New Zealand. It was Craig who lured him out of 'retirement' in 1997. Craig was struggling in Europe racing for Dr Helmut Marko's RSM team in F3000. Craig called Allan who accepted the challenge, moving to Graz in Austria where he took over as Craig's engineer for the remaining seven months of the season. Allan was the lifeline Craig needed.

"I was a sinking ship. I was trying to get my head around, not only the car, but obviously the competition and the circuits," recalls Craig, "I remember being in the workshop when Allan first walked in and he looked at the car, looked at the set-up, and

from what he remembered of the way I drove he said, 'that's not going to suit you at all'.

"What was happening prior to Allan coming was that there was literally one engineer across the two cars [Craig's and Juan Pablo Montoya's]. Montoya liked the car a certain way and, probably because of my background with touring cars, his set up didn't suit me. Literally from that point on we went from qualifying in the top fifteen to qualifying in the top five. Allan completely transformed the second half of the year for me. He brought a huge amount of knowledge and gave me a lot of confidence."

Allan and Daniele, who had joined him for the last part of the 1997 season, returned to New Zealand. In 2002 the pair built a house and a big shed in Greenhithe on Auckland's North Shore, where Allan had an 8m launch in the backyard; it would be his last project.

Allan suffered health issues that were hindering his activities. He had two back operations, the first of which was unsuccessful. He developed heart problems and had stents inserted. In February 2017, he underwent what should have been a routine heart valve replacement and bypass. He never regained consciousness.

Allan McCall was a man of immense talent and ability which, when combined with his work ethic, made him one of the most successful race engineers of his time. He worked for some of the biggest teams in motorsport and with almost 70 drivers, a number of whom became champions while he was engineering or running their cars. His achievements were only exceeded by his modesty.

Allan McCall was another Kiwi who left his mark on the world stage of motorsport. [CD](#)