

*Golden Years 1959-60*

# HOW IT ALL STARTED . . .

Charles Newton Cooper, founder of both the Cooper Car Company, and Cooper's Garage (Surbiton), was born in Paris on October 14th, 1893, into a theatrical family dating back to eighteenth century Drury Lane. He was educated at Tiffin's School, Kingston, and at fifteen years of age was apprenticed to Napier's of Acton where he was fortunate enough to spend some time working on the legendary S. F. Edge's car. Charles stayed at Napier's until the outbreak of the 1914-18 War, and then volunteered for the 3rd M.T. Cavalry Division. He served throughout the French campaign, and was a casualty of the gas attack at Valenciennes in 1918.

Charles entered the one-man business of Derby Motors in Kingston, reconditioning ex-Army motor-cycles, until he was able to lease a small builder's yard in the Ewell Road under the name of Cooper's Garage (1920). Charles was married in 1922 to Miss Elsie Paul, and their son John was born the following year.

During the thirties Charles and Elsie had also teamed up for motoring competition, and drove A.C. cars in long-distance regularity trials. In the two-wheeled world Charles rode Zenith motor-cycles in competitive events over a period lasting some five years. He also became a member of the Redhill Flying Club and was awarded his pilot's certificate after thirty hours' flying time.

By 1933 expansion of the business necessitated a move to the present site at 243 Ewell Road, and the staff now consisted of three people.

During these years John had been taking an increasing interest in motor racing and was often seen in attendance at Brooklands. He left Surbiton Grammar School in 1938 and commenced working with his father. An apprenticeship was considered vital but the Second World War prevented this and John spent four years with the Admiralty until war ended. Then began a closer association with his father, Charles having built up a very prosperous business in the new car trade.

Their racing activities started in 1945. The newly formed '500 Club' interested Charles and John a great deal, and subsequently their first Fiat-based 500 was entered for Prescott on July 28th, 1946.

*Charles and John answer a question from the Prime Minister at the '59 Motor Show*



Only five weeks had elapsed since the drawing board stage, a considerable effort for so small an organisation.

Although not initially successful, further sprints and small club meetings were entered. As success came their way, Charles and John were given countless orders for similar cars, and the Cooper Car Co. Ltd. was founded at the beginning of 1947.

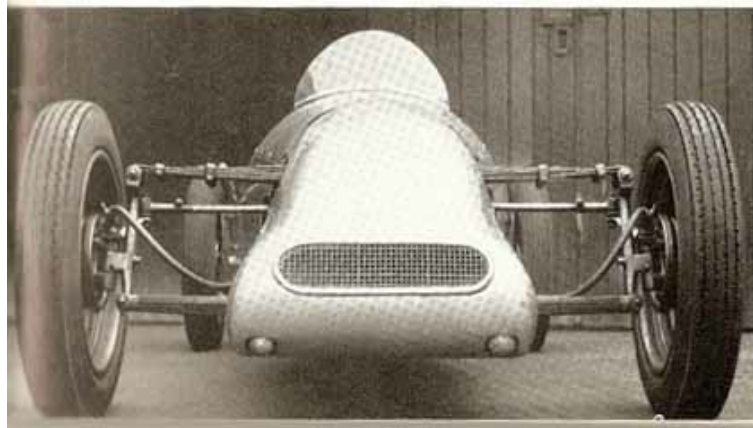
Early customers were Eric Brandon (who had assisted considerably with the construction of the first car), Sir Francis Samuelson, Stirling Moss (his first racing car), Curly Dryden (the first Cooper to have a Norton instead of a J.A.P. engine installed), Spike Rhiando (the first Cooper with a 'twin' fitted), and many others. During the first season of limited production Formula 3 Coopers won fourteen out of sixteen events entered.

Further victories, and subsequent inquiries from all over the world, resulted in the production of fourteen differing types of '500' over a period of eleven years, these being supplemented by sports cars with front or rear mounted engines, capacities and types ranging from 1,100 c.c. Climaxes to Jaguar 3.8 power units. The last '500' jig was only dismantled in early 1959.

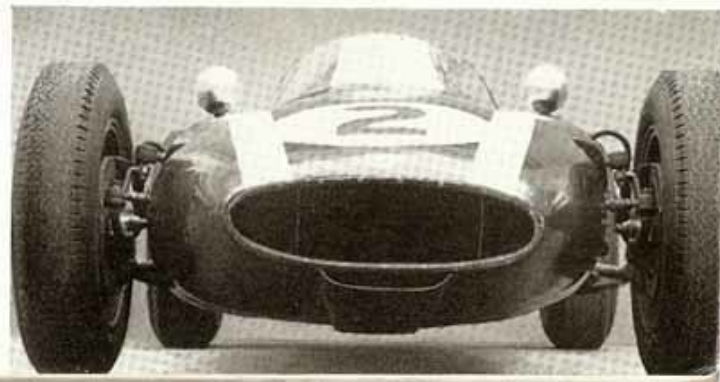
The year 1952 saw the new front-engined Cooper-Bristol in competition, Ecurie Richmond having two for Eric Brandon and Alan Brown, the third car being sold to Mike Hawthorn who was about to enter single-seater racing after winning the 'Motor Sport' Trophy with a Riley tuned by his father. Mike subsequently showed a large number of people the way home on the majority of occasions, and his outstanding International prowess with this car resulted in Enzo Ferrari making a place for him in his 1954 team. This was followed by construction of Cooper-Bristol sports cars, a period unfortunately coinciding with production of similar capacity Maserati and Ferrari engines that developed rather more hairy horses.

1955 was the year when the Cooper first had a Climax engine installed, and the resulting 1,100 c.c. sports car was an outstanding success.

Later developments produced cars with larger and larger engines of 1,500, 2 litre and 2.2 litre capacity. A direct result of Roy Salvadori's foresight and enthusiasm for increasing engine capacities was the Argentine victory of the Rob Walker-Stirling Moss-Cooper-Climax combination. This unexpected success subsequently led to the Cooper-Coventry Climax 2½ litre Grande épreuve cars of today.



*Left: the first of a long line and (below) the 1960 F1 car*





## THE 'WORKS'

During the period of its existence the Cooper Car Company has produced more single seater racing cars than any other factory in the history of motor racing, and is unique in the fact that at the present time it is the only concern existing by the sale of racing cars.

Production cars start life as tubes of varying lengths and gauge. These are fitted into a jig and welded by John Kelly and Terry Kitson. Suspension wishbones are cut, angled and welded by Malcolm King who then passes them to Bruce Judd and Mike Harvey. Bruce and Mike machine the suspension uprights and fit the wishbones and shafts when the machining is completed. They also fit and assemble the steering boxes, and fit the rear brake discs to the wheel shafts. Our Foreman Ernest Looker takes care of the profile machining for the numerous chassis brackets, and then all the various subsidiary units are handed over to Douggie Johnson, complete with the now painted chassis frame. Douggie is in charge of assembly, and with Frank Butler and Hughie Frankland the car begins to take shape. Suspension, engine, steering, brakes, wheels, transmission, instruments, etc., are now fitted and when complete the body panels are attached. Fitting of the body is carried out by Fred and Pete Bedding, two craftsmen who have helped to design and subsequently produce, prototype and production Cooper bodies for over twelve years. Spraying of the body forms the final phase and after a short test another Cooper is ready for delivery.



*Coopers have been in the Ewell Road, Surbiton, since 1920— the fine modern works pictured left was constructed as part of an expansion programme in 1957, by which time more than one thousand cars had been produced.*

## WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE...?

*The end of the 1960 racing season, and the winning, for the third consecutive year, of the World's Constructors' Championship by cars of my manufacture brings me to the crossroads, and the question "Where do we go from here?" now poses itself.*

*It is some satisfaction to me to know I have secured the two immediate objectives I set out to attain—namely to assist in placing British racing cars on the map, and to bring such racing within the means of enthusiasts of comparatively modest means. That I have attained these objectives, the records and results testify, but for me by far the greatest satisfaction has been in seeing this grand sport attracting numbers of young men anxious to pit their skill, knowledge, judgment and nerve not only against each other but against the best drivers in the world.*

*Incidental to and parallel with the attainment of the two objectives to which I have already referred, I have now established the name of my racing cars throughout the world, thus making my venture commercially profitable, and I am pleased that my initial successes and the potentialities of the market were recognised by other enterprising men; for the competitive spirit, either communally, nationally or internationally, is in my opinion conducive to improvement in sport and industry.*

*The accumulated and very valuable knowledge and experience obtained by my team over previous years will be used to improve the future factory entries and, of course, the normal 'production' cars.*

*Initial tests and the proving of prototypes in all categories are even now taking place in preparation for the 1961 season.*

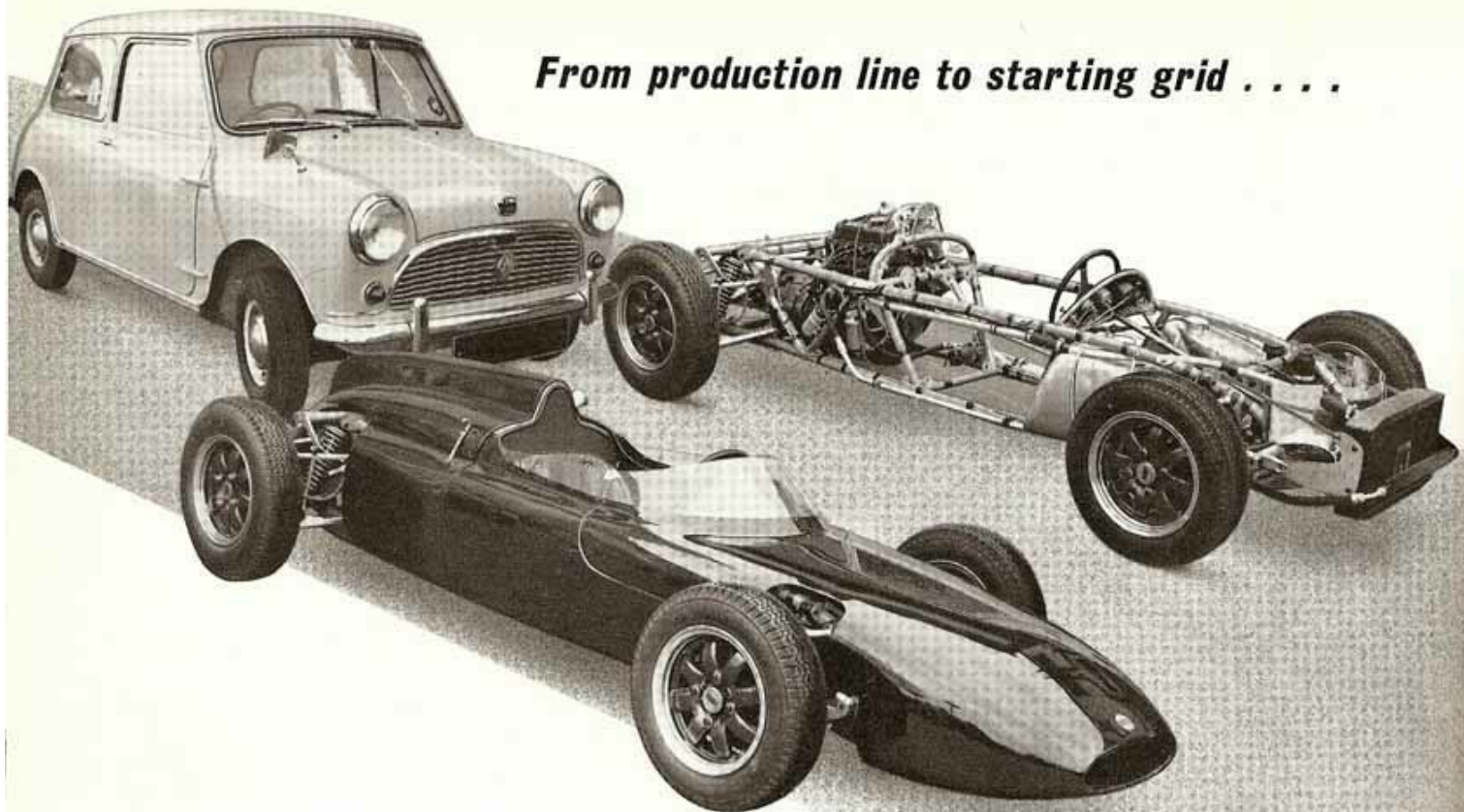
*In the meantime it will be my continued policy to produce the best in racing cars, and maintain British prestige and reputation in this field of sport in so far as I am able.*

*Charles Cooper*

Managing Director.



*From production line to starting grid . . . .*



*The 1961 Cooper Formula Junior is powered by basically the same BMC unit that also drives the famous baby Austin and Morris Cars*