



Champion of the World

By Gregor Grant

WHAT a wonderful achievement, to become the Champion Driver of the World after a lapse of six years! Australian-born Jack Brabham, who was Champion in 1959 and 1960, started circuit-racing in 1953 with a Cooper-HERD 500, after a highly successful career with midget cars on Australian dirt-tracks. He also took part in the very arduous Redex Round-Australia Rally. Backed by Redex, he acquired a 2-litre Cooper-Bristol, with which he won the championships of Queensland and New South Wales.

In 1955 Jack decided to come to England, and arrived unheralded and virtually unknown. He purchased a 2-litre Cooper-Aha, which was not exactly a world-beating machine. Also, in adapting himself to British circuit-racing, Brabham found that dirt-track methods on bends were not very popular with his fellow-competitors, although a delight to spectators. However, he carefully studied the technique of the better drivers, and rapidly lost his "tail-on" style.

It was in that year's British Grand Prix at Aintree that Jack Brabham became known to a greater number of people. With the assistance of the late Charles Cooper and John Cooper, he modified a shovel-tail sports-racing Cooper to take a 2.3-litre six-cylinder Bristol engine. The car was literally still being built on the ferry travelling north. Although it did not finish, owing to suspension trouble, it was most impressive and was actually the first rear-engined British Formula 1 machine. Later in the year he shipped the car to Australia, and with it won the Australian Grand Prix.

For 1956 he acquired the disc-braked, six-cylinder 250F Maserati, but beyond a couple of third places at Snetterton and Aintree, he accomplished little of note. In that year he joined the Cooper Car Co Ltd.

With the F2 Cooper-Coventry Climax he had an extremely successful season. He drove it in the Monaco GP, but crashed into the Casino. In 1958 he managed places in the Grand Prix of Monaco, France and Great Britain with the F1 Cooper-Coventry Climax, and had a couple of victories in

the F2 machine. He also co-drove with Stirling Moss at Nürburgring to win the 1000 Kilometres with an Aston Martin.

However, 1959 was Jack Brabham's glorious year. Driving his Cooper-Coventry Climax he won the World Championship of Drivers. The series culminated in a dramatic finish at Sebring, when he ran out of fuel and pushed his car to the finish. Team-mate Bruce McLaren won, but Jack's fourth place was sufficient to take the title. His efforts gave Coventry Climax Ltd the coveted Ferodo Gold Trophy.

He was even more successful in 1960, winning no fewer than five *grandes épreuves*.

again to become World Champion and giving Coopers the constructors' championship.

In 1961 the Cooper star was winning, and the cars were outclassed by rivals. Nevertheless, Brabham put his name in the history books with a vengeance by finishing ninth at Indianapolis with his 2½-litre Cooper-Coventry Climax—the car which eventually led to the replacement of the traditional front-engined Offys by European-style, rear-engined machines.

For 1962 Jack reluctantly decided to break with Coopers and form his own concern. Until his F1 machine was completed he raced a Lotus, but apart from winning a minor race in Copenhagen this

JACK BRABHAM enters the *Karusell* during this year's German Grand Prix in the Brabham-Repco which has brought him his third World Championship (top). **DRIVING** the 2½-litre Cooper-Climax with which he won his first Championship in 1959 (below).

