



Ready to roar: Jim Clark in his Lotus ahead of the 1966 US Grand Prix at Watkins Glen, New York, which he went on to win

A life in the fast lane, on and off the track

Jim Clark's former manager and mentor recalls the rise to fame of the legendary racing driver who took over Formula One

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It was the Lotus 25 R6 that first caught the eye of Ian Scott-Watson. 'Jimmy Clark first used that in practice for the 1963 Italian Grand Prix,' said the 93-year-old as his face lights up. 'He was unbeatable in the Lotus, he was. Haven't seen that car for a while.'

We were due to meet at his house but one of the unsung heroes of Scottish racing — a man who managed and bankrolled the early career of one of the greatest drivers in the world, only to be cast aside when he made it big — thought a wander round the Jim Clark Museum in Duns would help jog his memory.

Didn't it just. Time in his company takes you back to the real glory days of Scottish motorsport.

Through the years, there have been various Scotsmen and women who have made their mark. David Coulthard and Johnny Dumfries in Formula One, Colin McRae in rallying, three-time winner of Le Mans Allan McNish and Dario Franchitti, a four-time winner of the Indy Car series.

Women like FIA Ladies World Rally champion Louise Aitken-Walker and Susie Wolff, who was a test driver for Williams in Formula One ten years ago.

But the real golden era for Scottish motorsport was back in the 1960s when Jim Clark, Jackie Stewart and the swashbuckling Innes Ireland, the first Scot to win a Grand Prix when he triumphed in 1961 at Watkins Glen in the USA, were chasing each other down.





that won the races. Not like nowadays when it's the quality of the cars.

Scott-Watson first came across Clark when they were both local racers addicted to cars.

'I was very proud of my MG,' he said. 'I could go really fast in it but, one day, a chap in a Sunbeam Talbot overtook me on a straight road on the way to a car club meeting. I tried to catch up with him but couldn't.

'That was the first time I encountered Jimmy. He was just 17 and I was six years older.

'Then, I was driving in a race up in Crimond in what was one of Jimmy's first. In the first five practise laps, he was three seconds quicker than me per lap. I was gutted he was so much faster but I could see his talent straight away.'

Based on that, and several other top-class performances in touring cars and sports cars, he put his own racing career on the backburner to help fund and guide Clark's early career.

'He was just a farmer from the Borders like me, driving in local races around 1956. But I knew right away, I just knew,' he said. 'It was hard to make him believe in himself to begin with but, once he did, there was no stopping him.'

Scott-Watson allowed him to race in the second-hand Porsche he purchased from Billy Cotton, the famous band leader, and estimates he put in around £60,000 in today's money into Clark's early career.

Clark rose through the ranks driving under the banner of the Border Reivers before catching the eye of Colin Chapman at Lotus. It was when he moved to Lotus in 1960 that Scott-Watson started to drift out of the picture.

'There was a lot of jealousy towards how well I got on with Jimmy,' he said.



Best of times: Clark's mentor and former manager Ian Scott-Watson with Innes Ireland and Clark at Snetterton in 1960

'I was his manager and we used to room together, like a lot of people did back then, to save money. From that, people started vicious rumours.'

Like? 'That we were gay,' he said. 'That was a big deal back then in the late 1950s, early 1960s and against the law. It wasn't true but our friendship was never the same once the rumours got back to his family. I got a call, not from Jimmy, to say I wasn't his manager any more but we stayed in touch.'

'He remained a friend but we never worked together again after the early 60s.'

Surely there was more to it than that for Scott-Watson to be cast aside? 'No, that was it. Some say I pushed Jimmy too much and he didn't like being dictated to, but that was rubbish as he was ambitious,' he said.

It is hard to argue with Scott-Watson. Clark lived for racing from the first moment he drove cars round the family farm.

Born in Kilmany in Fife in 1936, Clark made his name in local race meetings when his family moved to the Borders and became one of the best drivers in the UK in his teenage years.

He went from winning touring car races to taking his first steps into Formula One in 1960. Three years later, he won the 1963 World Championship. That was the start of his glory days. The highlight came in 1965 when he won the World Championship and the Indianapolis 500 in the same year.

The humble Borders farmer was the first person from outside the USA to win the Indy 500 since Italian-born Dario Resta in 1916.





winning the series of races that secured the Formula One World Championship the same year.

He made the gossip columns Stateside — which he hated — when he had a whirlwind romance after the race with Linda Vaughn, who was nicknamed the USA's First Lady of Motorsport. The most powerful men in the world wanted to meet him and he was invited to meet Henry Ford III at Ford HQ.

He took part in a photo shoot with top model Jean Shrimpton, one of the icons of the sixties. He also took part in a race of milk floats that had a top speed of 18mph round Ingliston race track, near Edinburgh. Even then, he won. Such was his standing at the time, it's fair to surmise he was paid in thousands of pounds by the Milk Marketing Board for his appearance, and not in free milk.

Did all that success — he was also on Desert Island Discs — change Clark? What kind of man was he away from the track?

'Quiet, didn't suffer fools and absolutely hated smoking — all that never changed,' said Scott-Watson. 'He had lots of girlfriends, knew his worth and his wealth bought him nice homes, an aircraft he could use and a big tax bill. He made so much money he had to go into tax exile — first, for a while, in Paris and then in Bermuda. But he missed home. He was a Borders farmer at heart.'



Savour the memories: Scott-Watson has encouraged fans to take in the Jim Clark Museum in Duns and learn about the career of one of Scotland's greatest ever sportsmen

'Off the track, he was indecisive but, obviously, never on it. Used to chew his fingernails when he had to make a decision. Worried he was making the right call.'

'Jackie Stewart used to tell the story of when he was due to go to the cinema with Jimmy in London. Problem was Jimmy took so long to decide what film to go to that they were so late arriving that the picture had already started.'

He puts Clark's decision never to marry partly down to that indecision but more down to his fears he may be killed on the race track and would leave a grieving widow and possibly children behind. His concerns were to prove sadly prophetic.

'It was an understandable fear as so many of his friends died on the track back then,' said Scott-

Watson. 'Formula One was in its infancy then and safety wasn't big.

'If you look at the Lotus in front of us, it is just like a big cigar in shape with no real safety aspects, which is why so many drivers died back in Jimmy's day.

'He certainly had lots of women who he could have married, got engaged to, as he was one of the best-known men in Britain.'



The high life: Clark with fashion model Sally Stokes at the Daily Mail Race of Champions Ball at London's Park Lane hotel in 1965

Clark lost friends and rivals out on the track and there was one incident that haunted him until his own untimely death.

On the second lap of the 1961 Italian Grand Prix, Wolfgang von Trips moved across and clipped Clark's car as they jostled for position. Von Trips lost control of his Ferrari, which veered off the track at 140mph, up a high bank, demolishing a chain fence between the track and the fans before landing in the crowd, killing Von Trips and 15 spectators.

The Italian authorities tried for years to press charges against Clark for the accident. Indeed, when he won the 1965 Italian Grand Prix, to clinch the World Championship, they were after him again but he got out of the country before they could take him in for questioning.

'It was a travesty as I remember that race well and have researched the incident,' said Scott-Watson. 'It was a coming together after Von Trips cut across Jimmy. Jimmy wasn't at fault there

but the Italians were trying to find a scapegoat. It was a witch-hunt against him that upset him.'

Although Scott-Watson stepped down as Clark's manager in the early 1960s, he remained his point of contact in the Borders for the worldwide media.

When the Scottish racing legend died in an accident at Hockenheim in 1968 at the age of just 32 — his Lotus 48 leaving the track at over 150mph and colliding with a tree — Scott-Watson was among the first to be told.

'It wasn't like today when news like that would be broadcast within minutes,' said the Borderer. 'I couldn't believe it when I got a call from a journalist that he had died. He wanted me to pass on the news to his family but I got somebody else to do it.'

'They say Jimmy's rear tyre went down and that can be the only reason for the accident as Jim didn't make errors. I know that's a big thing to say but he just didn't.'

His funeral at Chirside on April 10, 1968 — three days after his accident — was attended by more than 6,000 people. Among the mourners were close pals and fellow drivers Jackie Stewart and Graham Hill.



Bond of brothers: Clark (right) chats with Graham Hill and Jackie Stewart at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway in 1966, a year after his Indy triumph

'His gravestone mentions his occupation was a farmer at the top then a world champion racing driver second,' said Scott-Watson. 'That is how it was. Jimmy's story is a remarkable one. A Scottish farmer who became one of the greatest drivers in motor racing history. A humble genius.'

And does he have a message for those — and there will be many — who will have been unfamiliar with his story until now, as next year is the 60th anniversary of his first World Championship?

'Go and discover Jimmy Clark's career as he should be remembered and honoured as one of the greatest Scottish sportsmen of all time,' he said. 'He is someone I miss every day.'