

Peter Harper – Ace yumper!

Richard Sozanski,

I was recently given the opportunity to look into somebody's Imp scrapbook which mainly consists of newspaper cuttings but there are two or three colour pics of which I enclose one of Peter Harper. I'm sure you'll agree it's a brilliant photo. The date and venue are unknown but it is from Peter Harper's rallycross days.

The following will be of interest to accompany the photo. It's taken from Franka Steenhuis' excellent website, www.imps4ever.info ...

Peter Harper did his first rally in 1947. He became one of Britain's leading rally drivers.

Then he took to the circuits and made quite an impact there, too. The first time Harper drove for the Fraser team was in 1967. In the final qualifying event for the British Saloon Car Championship, he drove a Fraser Sunbeam Imp. Officially he was a Rootes rally driver at the time.

Then he combined both these talents in rallycross to become the recognised ace in this Saturday afternoon telly sport.

His rallycross Imp was an ex-works rally car (in Group 5 trim), specially converted for rallycross. It had a front-mounted radiator – the bottom of the spare wheel well was cut out to provide a draught. The front compartment was stiffened up with cross struts running below and alongside the petrol tank. The basic suspension was lowered and set up rally style. The sump sat in a small cradle mounted in great chunks of foam rubber and the cradle formed a part of a sump guard/skid plate. There were creases and kinks in the arches above each rear wheel, due to yumping. There were struts over the arches in the boot.

The twin Weber engine was Fraser-tuned. The rear chassis member was chopped and reshaped to provide room for the special exhaust manifold. The engine produced well over 100 bhp but with not much happening below 5,000 rpm. In soggy conditions a torquey engine that produces power at lower revs is much better.

