

## FRW 303C

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Most of you will have read Dr Beatty Crawford's story in September's *Impressions* of his eventful 1968 Monte Carlo Rally; the final act being played out as Adrian Boyd's co-driver in FRW 303C. The car obviously has a before and after that particular Monte Carlo story, I don't know it all but here are a few of the bits I do know...

By way of background, in November 1965 the Competition Department had six cars allocated to it, which would be numbered FRW 303C-FRW 308C. The first three cars in the sequence became 'recce' (i.e. reconnaissance) cars and retained their

original paint colour (Tartan Red in the case of 303C); the rest were treated to the new (as of the RAC Rally 1965) Oxford Blue/Polar White scheme and designated as team cars.

For the Monte of 1966 (their first event) 306C was prepared as a Gp1 car for Rosemary Smith where it was disqualified for the same reason as the BMC team and 307C was prepared to Gp2 for Tiny Lewis and won its class. 303C was used by Rosemary as a recce car and 305C was used by Tiny for the same purpose. The team also ran Tigers on the event.



303C was also a recce car for the Tulip and Alpine in 1966. It was then used as Cowan's recce car for the Monte in 1967 and on the event by Hassel and Millen (it features very briefly in its original Red

**FRW 303C's engine bay and front compartment, note bespoke fuel tank**  
Photos: John Edmund



Yet another testament to restorer Clark Dawson's expertise, FRW 303C looks as it did when it left the Competition Department. Correct in every detail, the car retains as many original parts as possible  
*Photo: John Edmund*







This isn't FRW 303C, but rather 305C, but does illustrate how Works cars' identities can change. This photo is after the car's Canadian reincarnation, as mentioned in the article  
 Photo: [www.imps4ever.info/racing/rallies/compete.html](http://www.imps4ever.info/racing/rallies/compete.html)

paint in the Stanley Schofield film of the event). It was also used by Colin Malkin on the Circuit of Ireland

in 1967, to the detriment of its offside front corner, and by him and others on various events.

While 303C was being thrashed around Europe Robin Eyre-Maunsell was rallying a Singer Chamois Rally/Rallye (*Both spellings are used in official Rootes literature, you choose! GP*), 6572 OZ, "failing to finish 14 times the first 13 events he started" – a direct quote from Robin! It was this car he used for his recce on the 1968 Monte and which took flight as Beatty described. An interesting conclusion to Beatty's tale with regard to this car is what happened to the Works supplied pre-RR close-ratio gearbox, suffice it to say it has been sitting in my garage for a very long time.

Beatty has told the story of the car on the event; at its conclusion it was returned to Coventry and then, before the Circuit of Ireland in 1968, a brand new car *carrying the same registration*, in the aforementioned Works colour scheme and prepared to Gp3 rules arrived in Belfast for Robin. During this build the car ceased officially to be a Hillman and became a Sunbeam.

Robin used 303C very hard indeed – it was re-roofed and/or re-shelled many times according to an interview that Robin gave to *Autosport* many years ago. Through 1968 and 1969 Robin used the car on most of the British championship events; I have photographs of the car on some of these in various states of disrepair. In 1969 he acquired LWK 700F while 303C was being rebuilt and this left it surplus to requirements so it was eventually sold to another driver in Northern Ireland who in due course built up a Gp2 car to replace it.

303C continued to be rallied for a period by a friend from university before it passed into other local hands (perhaps foolishly I made that connection) for a rebuild that never happened; I then acquired what was left of it. Eventually I had Clark Dawson rebuild it to the Gp3 specification it started out with. Incidentally, the choice of restorer was easy – Clark is not only the owner of FRW 308C and one of the best restorers in the UK but also the only man still working to have actually rebuilt two (unmolested) ex-Works Imps.

In case you're wondering about the history of the rest of this particular FRW series of cars (there were two other Works cars outside the scope of this article – both Supers and therefore probably built in Jimmy Ashworth's 998 shop – with an FRW prefix but numbered 948C and 949C)...

- 304C became Andrew Cowan's test and practice car and lived for many years at his farm in Scotland (now owned by an Imp Club member I understand and in the process of being rebuilt),





- 305C was exported to Canada where it was re-registered with an Ontario number (50898K) to tackle the Shell 4000 with Rosemary Smith behind the wheel (8th overall, 1st in class and *Coupe de Dames*),
- 306C had a relatively short Works life, the last event known being the 1966 Scottish (Lewis),
- 307C was rallied by the team until it became Peter Harper's rallycross car in 1967 (subsequently restored by Clark for Andrew Cowan who rallycrossed alongside Peter at the time),
- 308C's last event with the team was as a recce car on the 1967 Alpine (Smith) before it was sold to France from which Clark retrieved it in 2000.

*P.S. Having submitted this article to the Editor, Grahame subsequently e-mailed me to ask why the car was/is fitted with two tachometers, seemingly in common with other Works Imp. My reply may be of interest...*

The factory always (from Rapier days at least) put the rev-counter on the dash top – line of sight – and disconnected or blanked-off the in-dash rev counter – nothing strange then in 1964 with the standard dash or for the later Gp2 cars that didn't have a rev-counter as standard. When they changed over to a multi-instrument binnacle for the Rally/Rallye Imp which needed a rev-counter to meet customer expectations they could just have stuck with that but because it was the norm and seen as a beneficial thing to do, they continued to fit one on the dash top and disconnected the in-dash version (I don't think the rules would have allowed them to physically remove it). When Group 6 took over in 1967 they blanked out the dash-mounted rev-counter, threw away the dash 'mouldings' either side of the binnacle and built a little box for switches with a rev-counter on top which they mounted about the centre line of the car attached to the dash rail.