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## Book Review: 'Races, Faces, Places'

18 February 2010 | Classic Driver



**I first met Mike Cooper in 2002. A highly talented photographer, he was also somewhat eccentric, very opinionated and huge fun to be with. This book, written with feeling by Paul Parker, is a superb tribute to one of British motor racing's great characters who died so unexpectedly in 2005.**

**Parker** had worked with **Mike** on the large-format, deluxe **Palawan Press** book, **Sixties Motor Racing** and had got to know him and his "wonderful family" well. **Races, Faces, Places'** continues the theme of life in and round the circuits of the 50s, 60s and 70s with **Cooper's** distinctive style of either life-threateningly close-to-the-track, short lens action or charmingly candid paddock shots of **Clark, Hill, Siffert, Surtees et al.**

The majority of the book's content is black and white although, as the years go by, colour becomes more prevalent, and shots such as **Bruce McLaren, Graham Hill** and **Jim Clark** on the grid at the

1964 Goodwood TT leap from the page.



As a 'proper' photographer, **Cooper** had a studio in London's **West End**, where he also worked on fashion, film and music business shoots. So, the chronology of the book tends to skip races and periods when he was working on other projects. In other words, if you're expecting the "...**Stewart's** season improved after **Jarama** with a win at **Spa**..." format, you don't get it.

Those in the know will, however, understand that here was a man at the top of his game, enjoying an intimate friendship with many of the 'stars' (in every sense, including **Steve McQueen** and **James Garner** as he worked on both **Le Mans** and **Grand Prix** as an extra/stills-photographer).

From **Jackie Stewart's** ridiculously tiny caravan (a mobile 'dressing room/refuge') to sponsors' activities 1970s style - **Yardley BRM's** laughable hospitality cabin - and a clearly worried **Nina Rindt** timing her husband at **Zandvoort** in 1970, the day **Piers Courage** died, page after page brings fascination.

In addition to **Sixties Motor Racing**, as a homage to Mike it's brilliant, and if photographs here do not define the meaning of '**Classic Driver**', I don't know what do.



*The book (hardback, 280 x 230mm, 352 pages, 100 colour and 300 b&w illustrations, ISBN: 9781844255085) is available by mail order direct from the publisher, Haynes, **HERE** at £40.00 plus carriage.*

**Text** - Steve Wakefield

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