

## Searching for Speed - Great Britain and Finland



**Fig. 187 John Marston, 1836-1918.**

In 1859, at 23, Marston bought two existing tinplate manufacturers and set up his own facility.

Marston, an avid cyclist, founded the Sunbeamland Cycle Factory in 1877. According to legend, when Marston's wife Ellen saw the first bicycle produced by the works, she remarked on how the black enamel frame reflected the sun. Thus the Sunbeam name was born. Sunbeam bicycles were the finest money could buy with a price tag to match.

The Marston companies prospered and, in 1899, Thomas Cureton persuaded him to manufacture cars. Henry

Dinsdale was lured from Wearwell Cycle Company to build a prototype.

The first Sunbeam was the 1901 Sunbeam-Mabley Voiturette which looked like a sofa on wheels. The Thomas Pullinger - designed models based on the French Berliet car were more useful, produced from 1902 to 1905.



**Fig. 188 The Sunbeam factory, 1899-1935.**



**Fig. 189 Louis Coatalen, 1879-1962.**

In 1909, Louis Coatalen designed a series of cars which came in 1-2-3 victory in the 1912 Coupe de l'Auto race. Coatalen, born in Brittany in 1879, worked for Panhard, Clement and De Dion-Bouton. On arriving in England, he worked for Humber and Hillman before joining Sunbeam.

John Marston died on 8 March, 1918 but, on 13 August, 1920, Sunbeam, Talbot and Darracq merged to form STD Motors Ltd with Sunbeam cars winning important races, including Henry Segrave's win in the

1923 French Grand Prix, the first British GP victory. Segrave was born

in Baltimore, Maryland in 1896 and died in June 1930 after having just set a new water speed record on Lake Windermere. His boat hit a submerged log and disintegrated.

In 1935, STD was taken over by Rootes which moved the Wolverhampton factory's work to London in 1938. There were no Sunbeams in 1938 as the name was combined with Talbot to create the Sunbeam-Talbot of 1939. Sunbeam-Talbots were luxury versions of Hillman and Humber models. In 1948 Sunbeam production moved to Ryton, near Coventry.

**Villiers Motorcycle Factory** Founded as Villiers Cycle Components Co. by John Marston in 1898 to make bicycle parts, Villiers soon started making other products such as wheels, turning to engines and motorcycles in 1911.

The company merged with JAP in 1957 and then was acquired in 1965 by Manganese Bronze Holdings which later took over AMC to form Norton Villiers. At this point, Villiers stopped supplying engines to outside companies. Production of the Villiers engine closed in the UK, but continued on in Madras, India.

**Woodbury** Southeast of Exeter.

**Nigel Mansell Museum and Golf Hotel** Near Woodbury castle, northeast of Woodbury.

With Prince Michael of Kent in attendance, Nigel Mansell opened Woodbury Park Hotel and Country Club, and his automobile museum, mostly devoted to F1, on 24 September, 1999.



**Fig. 190 Nigel Mansell in a Williams Renault, Hockenheim, 1992.**

Mansell was born in Upton-on-Servern on 8 August, 1953. First driving at seven, Mansell went from karting to Formula Ford, then F3 where he was slowed by a lack of cash and poor engines. When Colin Chapman was persuaded by his team manager Peter Collins to give Mansell a chance as test driver for Lotus, Mansell started two races for Lotus Ford in 1980 and became a regular driver in 1981.

In 1985, Mansell left Lotus for Williams and, on his 72nd F1 attempt, won at Brands Hatch. He came in second in 1986 and 1987 with Williams Honda then used a Williams Judd in 1988 before moving to Ferrari for two years in 1989 and 1990 when he placed 4th and 5th.

In 1990, he moved from Ferrari to Williams Renault with whom he placed 2nd in 1991 and won his only World Championship in 1992. In 1993, he won the CART PPG Indycar Championship at the first attempt and returned to Formula 1 only to retire after two starts in a McLaren-Mercedes in 1995.

When he retired, Mansell's 31 Grand Prix successes placed him behind only Alain Prost and Ayrton Senna in the all-time rankings, and only Michael Schumacher has overtaken him since.

Mansell was an aggressive driver who was not easily intimidated, earning the nickname Il Leone from the Italian fans, the *tifosi*.