For Your Bookshelf – “What happened to the class of 1955?”

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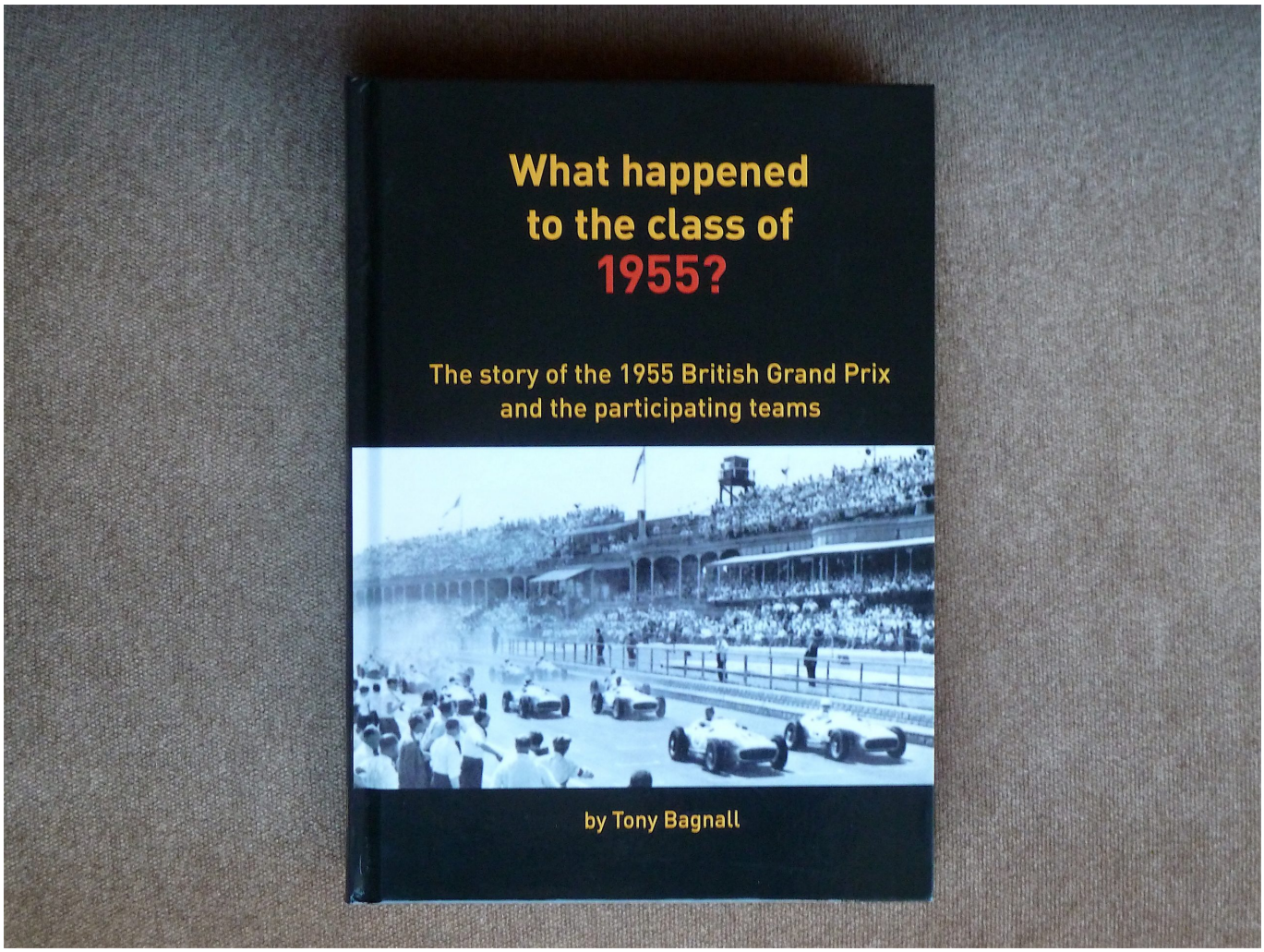

The story of the 1955 British Grand Prix and participating teams…

Reviewed by Kim Henson

Author: Tony Bagnall

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The starting point for this book is 1946 and the fresh basis for Grand Prix racing (known ever since as ‘Formula One’) introduced by the Fédération Internationale de l’Automobile (F.I.A.).

The text traces the history of Formula One over the next few years, including the tragic events of the 1955 motor racing year and the resulting cancellation of the French Grand Prix. The author Tony Bagnall, a life-long enthusiast of motor racing, then moves on to cover in detail the RAC British Grand Prix held at Aintree, Liverpool, after the circuit had been declared safe.

This comprehensive volume, lavishly illustrated with wonderful period photographs, covers in detail the cars and drivers of that era, and I liked the way in which each driver’s life story is told, albeit necessarily briefly in each case, giving the reader an insight into their motor racing careers in the 1950s.

After the main text is a series of informative appendices, including sections covering the starting grid at the 1955 RAC British Grand Prix, the results for the main and supporting races, the technical specifications of the Grand Prix entries, and the fascinating story of the Aintree circuit.

There’s also a comprehensive bibliography plus an index for ‘Drivers and personalities’, and

another separate one specifically including ‘Teams and events’.

VERDICT

I found this book (which incidentally has been produced in a limited run of just 200) to be an entertaining and interesting read.

The author’s enthusiasm for, and knowledge of, motor racing is clear, and I feel it is terrific that his passion for the sport was started when his father, the late Reginald W Bagnall, took Tony Bagnall and his brother to the Aintree circuit in 16th July 1955 to witness that RAC British Grand Prix.

To sum up, a lovely book telling a great story.