



'Sputnik' passes away

HARRY 'Sputnik' Kallstrom, an official VW, Mini, Lancia and Datsun rally driver, died from a heart attack on 13 July 2009, a fortnight after his 70th birthday.

He is particularly remembered for winning the European rally title for Lancia in 1969, then the equivalent of rallying's world title at the time, as well as the RAC Rally on two successive occasions (once despite extensive damage caused by a road accident) in Lancias, the 1976 Acropolis in a Datsun, losing the 1973 Safari Rally through a tie-deciding rule and retiring on the same event five years later when leading on the final day.

His father drove for the national Swedish VW rally team, a seat that he later took over.

Harry started rallying as a teenager. He soon attracted a cult following among fans, who nicknamed him 'Sputnik' from the way he suddenly shot to fame. His first major result was finishing second on the 1964 RAC Rally in Britain in a

VW 1500S, behind Tom Trana and ahead of Erik Carlsson, both fellow Swedes.

Harry personally developed a heel and toe driving system and for many years he drove single handed because his original rally cars always used to jump out of gear. That habit only stopped when he had to drive front-wheel drive Fulvias, which had no power steering!

The success which he claimed gave him greatest satisfaction was winning the asphalt Spanish rally in 1969, conditions which were foreign to the man from the north of Sweden. He rallied in days before big money came to the sport.

"Me and my co-driver (Gunnar Haggborn) had quite ordinary wages," he once said.

"The most valuable prize I won was a Fiat 500, which I immediately sold to the mother of my team boss!"

He lived and died at Stromsund, where in later years he worked as a driver for the local community.

