



NATIONALITY: British
DATE OF BIRTH: 29/12/35
DECEASED: 05/02/01
MOTOR SPORT: Circuit Racing, Marathon Rallies
YEARS: 1967-1970
ACHIEVEMENTS:
 1967/1968: Twice British Women Racing Drivers' Champion; Only sports car to finish London to Sydney Marathon - 1969; 18th out of 96 starters in the 1970 Mexico World Cup Rally; BWRDC Lord Wakefield Trophy - 1984; Fellow of the Institute of Motor Industry; Female Executive of the Year; Honoured with CBE in 1990; Life peer in 1991; Freeman of the City of London; Minister in Northern Ireland

Office 1995-97; Opposition spokesman on Trade & Industry in the House of Lords

Baroness Denton of Wakefield CBE, known to followers of motor sport as Jean Denton, died on 5th February 2001 after a long illness. Latterly, she was opposition spokesman on Trade & Industry in the House of Lords and had been a minister in the Northern Ireland Office from 1994 to 1997, with responsibility for the Economy.

Born *Jean Moss* in 1935, her father was a hospital clerical worker and her mother a school cook. She showed early promise when, at eight years of age, represented Yorkshire in the young peoples' edition of the Round Britain Quiz. Attending Rothwell Grammar School she gained a scholarship to the London School of Economics. After graduating Jean had a number of top jobs including a spell as marketing consultant for IPC magazines. Strangely, Jean was 26 before she ever drove a car, but once through the test she made very

rapid progress and in less than a year had started racing. Her first car was a Mini Cooper, then a Lawrencetune Morgan and onto a F3 Cooper, but funds were drying up in a very competitive scene, where money really made the difference. For 1968 an MGB was acquired to use at club meetings and production car events. Jean was so successful that she won the BWRDC Championship for two years running. The next step was to storm the continent and although the MGB was somewhat outclassed, she was to prove a worthy adversary. Jean's MGB entry in the 1969 London-Sydney Marathon received much publicity and after many adventures was the only sportscar to complete the event. In 1970 it was the World Cup Rally to Mexico with a Morris 1800 and co-drivers *Pat Wright* and *Liz Crellin*. Once again, the intrepid Jean was to finish the event, which in itself was no mean feat in an event of more than 16,000 miles, but 18th out of 96 starters was another wonderful achievement.

Jean was a strong supporter of greater opportunities for women and held important positions in a number of empathetic organisations. Motor sport played its part in her career, as in 1972, she became Managing Director of the Huxford Garage Group, then in succession to the Heron Motor Group, Herondrive leasing specialists and in 1985, External Affairs Director in charge of public relations for the Austin Rover Group. She was, by then, the most senior woman in the British Motor Industry.

Jean Denton had shown her ability to be a high achiever, and it was almost certainly her success in business directions, which prevented her from becoming a race and rally driver of the highest calibre. She made a significant impact on the participation of women in motorsport, was multi-talented and extremely accomplished. Anyone who knew Jean would have instantly felt her genuine warmth. An absolutely lovely lady, who is sadly missed.



Jean en route in the 1969 London to Sydney Marathon in her MGB