

STOP No. 4 for the Drag Festival was at the well-known Yorkshire sprint venue at R.A.F., Church Fenton, run as usual by the Yorkshire Centre of the B.A.R.C. under the genial and ultra-efficient leadership of that great enthusiast Mike Wilson, this time working in conjunction with the B.D.R.A.

Comparisons are odious, but really everything about this meeting was magnificent, the

GARLITS AGAIN!

Fourth fastest time overall by Don Garlits in Round 4 of the Drag Festival at Church Fenton

By BRIAN SPARROW

runs being the slickest so far and the officials most helpful and pleasant, which made the long trek north most worth while.

It was the turn of world record holder George Brown to make best bike time with a machine that now appears almost fully sorted after its Monza bothers, a time of 10.72 secs. being such an indication.

As the cars were intelligently paired off and pushed through for their timed runs as fast as possible (together with the fact that the British competitors were making times that were better than at the previous three venues—in most cases, at any rate—everything and everyone were on top form, auguring well for the after lunch races.

The only true amateur team over here from the States ran first for the U.S. during the morning "warm-up" runs with the Dos Palmos 6,075 c.c. Chevy-powered rail driven by Bob Keith. Bob made a run of 9.24 secs. at 165 m.p.h. with the front wheels hardly touching the deck—whew! Dodge driver Dave Strickler was this time faster than Ronnie Sox in his Mercury Comet, the aluminium-bodied machine taking 11.77 secs. to 12.31 secs. for the glassfibre-panelled factory experimental "sedan".

Tommy Ivo kept everyone happy with a searing run of 8.98 secs. at 161 m.p.h., his foot being hard down all the way even though, after the smoke had cleared, the rubber marks

were seen to be hardly in a straight line. What an appetizer!

As a digestive after lunch Garlits was fired up and sent off to a run of 8.37 secs. at another 195 m.p.h. Very interesting after Woodvale, as the identical fantastic speed had a fractionally slower elapsed time for a far safer-looking run (though somehow the word safer seems inappropriate for these cars, even though they have been proved to be such).

Bob Keith made his best run yet in the U.K. in 9.32 secs. at 158 m.p.h. and Strickler and Sox made a matched run in the mid-120s, Strickler coming out on top in the eliminator between these two, which is always a crowd pleaser.

The fantastic crowd present was treated to some close eliminator races due to the previously mentioned pairings. For once Tony Kinch did not have the smallest saloon and G.T. class his own way, as Ken Lee's very hot Mini-Cooper saw him off with a run of 16.23 secs., only to be beaten by Mike Wheatley's M.G.B in the class final run-off.

Peter Westbury in the Lotus-B.R.M. 23 beat Walton in his Walton-Bristol for his sports class eliminator final and Ken Wilson in his Lister-Jaguar beat the lightweight E-type of Phil Scragg, only to lose out to Brian Ropner's Shelby Cobra in their class final eliminator.

The Deep Sanderson "twin-Mini", with Chris Lawrence driving on this occasion, won the up to 3,000 c.c. class eliminator, as Peter Westbury retired the Ferguson after pipping Ken Wilson's B.R.M.

Not surprisingly, the Dragon dragster with Allan Allard driving won the smaller dragster class with another over 120 m.p.h. run (despite a missed gearchange) and then went on to push the larger Allard device with 5.7-litre Chrysler motor to a best Festival performance of 11.25 secs. at 141 m.p.h., gaining valuable experience with the brute on every run.

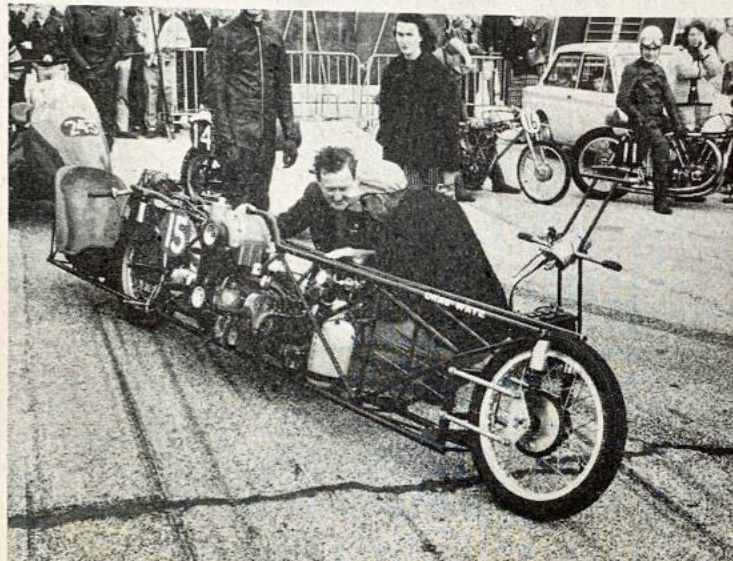
An interesting innovation of this meeting was the matching of a motor-cycle against a car. George Brown challenged Moonbeam driver Dante Duce, to allow Duce to record his first win of the Festival with a nicely judged run, just reaching the line before George. Alfie Hagon came against the Dragon dragster, and this time two wheels beat four.

Doug Church in the Porsche dragster ran away from Peter Westbury after the Lotus-B.R.M. gave trouble on leaving the start line.

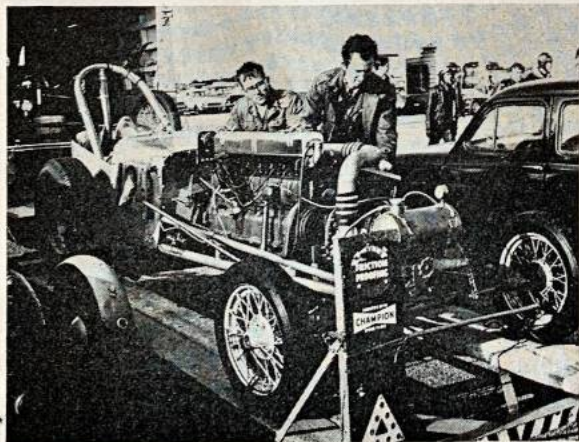
Tony Nancy looked all set for a fantastic run after his 171 m.p.h. run on the Saturday, but after a brilliant start was mortified to blow a hole in the sump of the Plymouth, thus putting paid to any more runs at Church Fenton.

As the course was excellent Garlits and Ivo were able to run together, as at the first two events, and this time it was Tommy Ivo who reached the finish first in 8.65 secs. at 192 m.p.h.—his fastest terminal speed so far in Britain, but not his best time. Garlits's time was 8.88 secs. at 149 m.p.h., and this after splitting his fuel tank along the course—just before the finish, it was said.

So Garlits did 195 m.p.h. after 8.37 for B.T.D., but Ivo beat Garlits after a fine race later on. Roll on next weekend, and may the fine weather hold out just a little longer.



WALLY PARKS examines the 1,450 c.c. Volkswagen engine of the Drag Wagon, ridden by Howard German (above). **ALAN HERRIDGE** with the D.D.-Buick Straight 8 dragster (below, left). **WORLD'S WILDEST WILLYS** in the hands of George Montgomery (below, right).



THE International Drag Festival circus moved on to R.A.F. Kemble, near Cirencester, last Saturday for the fifth round of the British series of events. The Cheltenham M.C. and the R.A.F.M.S.A. had the responsibility for the organization on this occasion.

The mixture was much as before, with the welcome appearance of several more hill-climb exponents who came along to compete and see what this drag racing is all about.

A standing quarter-mile time of 10.30 secs. backed up with a 10.37 secs. run with both terminal velocities around the 150 m.p.h. mark were quite enough to prove to all that George Brown was in cracking form, the previous rounds' bother being diagnosed as a bent magneto shaft which had l'equipe Brown foxed. The afternoon duel between Alfie Hagon and George eventually went to Alfie with 10.85 secs. to Brown's 10.88, but with the latter having a terminal velocity some 9 m.p.h. more than that of the winner.

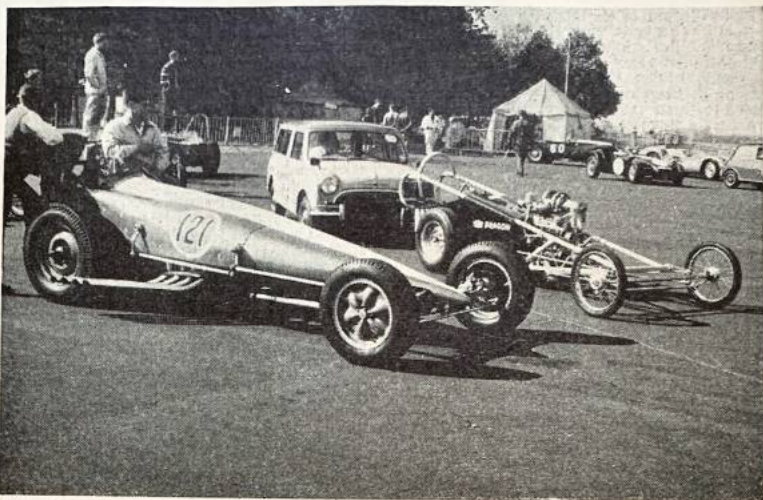
In the smaller saloon and G.T. class morning time trials Nick Porter in his Mini-Cooper S, managed a 15.92 secs. quarter-mile time with a speed over the line of 87 m.p.h.—really moving for a Mini, however well modded!

Peter Westbury did his best to date quarter-mile time for the Lotus-B.R.M. in 12.01 secs. at 122 m.p.h. and Ken Wilson required 12.21 secs. for his single-seater 24-litre B.R.M. Tony Marsh in his Marsh-Climax, however, made times to break the 12 secs. bracket on all his three runs, starting off with a cool 11.96 secs. in the morning.

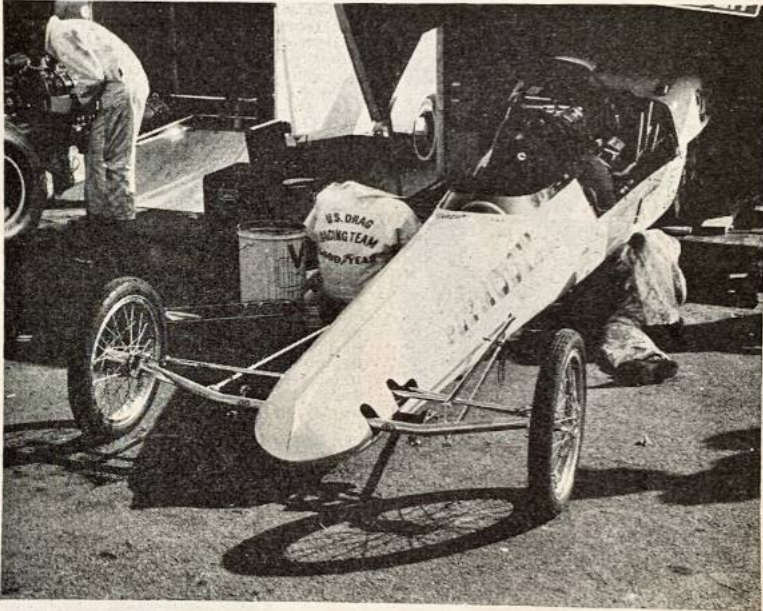
Tony Densham (Worden Dragster) at last received some much-needed encouragement after his wretched luck of late when he made a run in 11.32 secs., well up to the identically powered Allard Dragon's times—a super effort after so much blower bother.

During the morning runs the American Drag Racing Team made their runs singly, Garlits again being much the fastest with a 194 m.p.h. run in 8.46 secs. to Tommy Ivo's 184 m.p.h. Tony Nancy in the rear-engined 8-litre petrol-fuelled Plymouth Wedge 2 made a fabulous dead-straight run at 176 m.p.h. in 8.98 secs.—his best ever run anywhere in this car. Sox and Strickler in their Comet and Dodge factory experimental sedans both did 11.72 secs. runs to show us how close the opposition is back home. A full quarter-mile course was at last completed by K. S. Pittman in his Chrysler-powered '34 Willys, his time being 11.33 secs. after ending up at 130 m.p.h. following a "wobble" at about half distance. Not to be outdone, George Montgomery in his '34 Willys "gas" coupé replied with a 10.51 secs. run at 137 m.p.h., the hydromatic changing of the gears being a delight to hear. These high set (for weight transfer) "buggies" really are an eye-opener, many of the onlookers half expecting them to roll over at the least bit of snaking.

After lunch the class eliminations were run off and, not unexpectedly, after his fine morning runs, Nick Porter won the smaller saloon and G.T. class with an even swifter final run off time of 15.75 secs. The Diva of John Bloomfield won the smaller of the sports classes with a 14.03 secs. run-off against the off-tune Lotus-B.R.M. Brian Ropner in his Shelby Cobra beat Gibson's Jaguar C-type,



THE LARGE AND SMALL Allards, the Dragon and Chevrolet-powered machine (above). MEN AT WORK on the motor of the Wedge (below). AWAY goes John Harrison with the Atlantic in-line dragster (bottom).



DRAGGING AT KEMBLE

Cheltenham M.C.'s contribution to the Drag Festival

By BRIAN SPARROW

and Ken Wilson in the Lister-Jaguar beat Phil Chapman's Mercury-Chapman in the initial runs for the larger sports class. Ropner then went on to eliminate Wilson and then Don Farrell, who had been given a bye for the first round, the Cobra's time being 12.85 secs.

Tony Marsh won the racing car class, eliminating John Macklin and Ken Wilson in the process with times of 11.86 and 11.76 secs., showing that the 2-litre Marsh-Climax was getting quicker and quicker. The Ferguson had gear maladies after its morning run, necessitating a late session at the venue on Saturday evening.

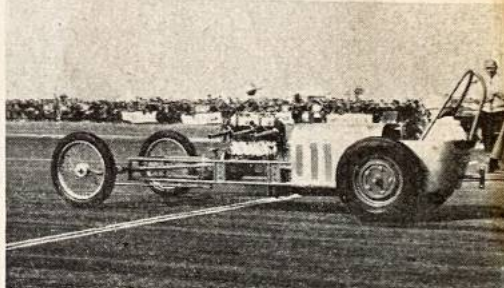
During the afternoon runs Montgomery in his spotless Willys supercharged "gas" coupé went even quicker at 139 m.p.h. in 10.37 secs., with K. S. Pittman coming closer with runs of 10.63 secs. at 144 m.p.h. and 10.57 secs. at

145 m.p.h., the latter time being accomplished when winning his match race against Dante Duce in the supercharged Moonbeam-Chevrolet sports car. Bob Keith, pictured previously in AUTOSPORT, rushed up to 171 m.p.h. in 9.11 secs., his best so far in England.

Surprisingly, Duce's time in the works Shelby Cobra was only a fraction slower than his time in Moonbeam, 11.26 against 11.21 secs., but with the Cobra crossing the finish line slightly faster.

Usually Garlits has merely made a single timed run in the morning and then waited for the end of the meeting match race against Ivo, but at Kemble we were treated to a second single run with a time of 8.32 secs. at 195 m.p.h.

For the match race to end this, the penultimate round of the Festival, the machines



were pushed up the course with their ignition off and fired up only on the run returning to the start for the minimum of running time—the engines having a life of about 30 mins.! Starter George Wells raised the flag and there they were gone out of the smoke. Garlits was again the first across the line at 195 in 8.34 secs. to Ivo's 189 at 8.47 secs.—and they call this a "demonstration"! Last stop Blackbushe. . .

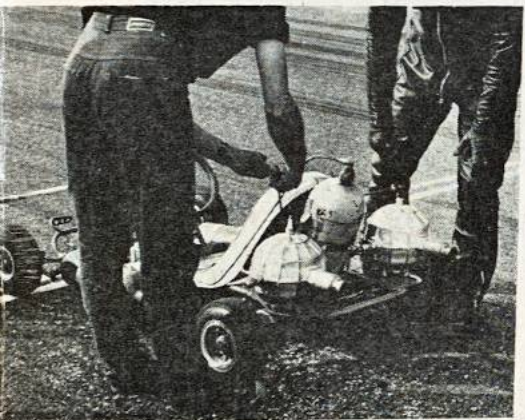
THE final round of the Drag Festival returned to Blackbushe Airport last Sunday for the Allard O.C. in conjunction with the Basingstoke Motor-Cycle Club to organize the event for the B.D.R.A. Even allowing for the free viewing at Brighton, the crowd was surely a record for a straight line event in Britain.

An early morning mist delayed the start for 15 mins. when the saloon and G.T. cars made their timed runs, to be followed by the sports classes which included several hairy Allard-based machines supporting their club. To comply with local byelaws for the Sabbath, the unsilenced racers on 2, 3 and 4 wheels were not allowed to warm up and make their runs until after noon.

FESTIVAL CLOSES

Don Garlits makes it six-out-of-six at Blackbushe

By BRIAN SPARROW



THE PEOPLE-sponsored Drag Festival is over, and it certainly brought forward some strange machinery—like the ram jet-powered kart driven by Allan Burgess (above). TEN runs to a drag slick (tyre)—and no wonder. Tommy Ivo and Don Garlits set fire to their Goodyears.

Again a Mini-Cooper S was quickest in the smaller saloon and G.T. class, this time an example driven by A. P. Locke in 16.25 secs. Both the Lawrence-Tune drivers, Tony Kinch and John Gavin in Group 2 Cortina G.T. and hybrid 1,650 c.c. Ford-engined Dauphine respectively, broke the 17 secs. barrier for the first time as a result of consistent improvement throughout the series.

Not unexpectedly, John Turner in the Iso Grifo made quickest time in the larger saloon and G.T. class in 14.25 secs. at 103 m.p.h.

Most of the larger sports cars, it transpired, were exceeding the magic ton over the line after about 13 to 14 secs., the fastest being the Farrellac at 111 m.p.h., driven on this occasion by Stella Farrell, Don having had his go the previous day.

Peter Westbury had the Ferguson going again in 11.42 secs. at 123 m.p.h., the take-offs from this four-wheel-drive machine being very sharp indeed as were the take-offs of the other four-wheel-drive entry in the class, the Deep Sanderson in the hands of Tony Kinch, making his and the machine's best quarter-mile time of 12.62 secs. at 111 m.p.h.

Interesting entries in the racing class were Nobby Spero's Maserati 250F, in showroom condition, Dudley Gahagan's E.R.A. (R7B) and Eckersley's Type 35 Bugatti; the Maserati was the quickest in 14.34 secs. at 102 m.p.h.

Just before lunch Don Garlits made what was to remain his fastest run in England at 197 m.p.h. in 8.12 secs. Tommy Ivo followed this with a magnificent run at 194 m.p.h. in 8.21 secs., which again was to be his best in England. A speed of 165 m.p.h. in 9.35 secs. was recorded by Bob Keith in the only amateur crewed car in the American team, Bob using 100 octane fuel unlike Garlits and Ivo, who blend nitro with alcohol.

Doug Church made a nicely judged run in 11.37 secs.—quicker, in fact, than the times made earlier that day by Alan Allard and Tony Densham in the Dragon and Worden Shorrock-blown Cortina-engined devices. An interesting point is that Church's terminal speed was 10 m.p.h. down on Densham's and a full 15 m.p.h. on Allard's.

An interesting demonstration started the proceedings off after a foreshortened lunch break, brought about by another ruling that the meeting must cease at 5 p.m., when Allan Burgess, Editor of *Karting*, drove a Fox kart propelled by a pair of ram jets to a time of 15.26 secs. for the quarter-mile, the firework explosion on taking-off being quite startling. A brave man—especially so if the jets are *au point*, when 150 m.p.h. in under 10 secs. is possible with such a machine. The driver had not driven the thing before last Sunday, and didn't even know what to expect!

The class elimination saw wins by Ken Ayres in his Mini-Cooper S, John Turner in the Iso Grifo, Westbury in the Lotus-B.R.M., Ken Wilson in his B.R.M. single-seater and Soans in his Cooper-Buick.

The Worden Dragster was again well on song, but was narrowly beaten by the Dragon of Alan Allard, who was 0.01 sec. quicker and 5 m.p.h. faster through the lights.

Allan Herridge just managed to keep the supercharged Buick 8 rail ahead of Hills's Jaguar Spl., which disappeared after the first Blackbushe meeting for "developments".

An interesting small-engined dragster making its debut was Metcalf's TR3-based machine with solid front axle mounting on rubber blocks, but with provision for rear suspension, which was locked on this occasion. The whole machine is beautifully constructed and with the winter to sort things out it should be a real goer in the unblown 2-litre class for dragsters next season.

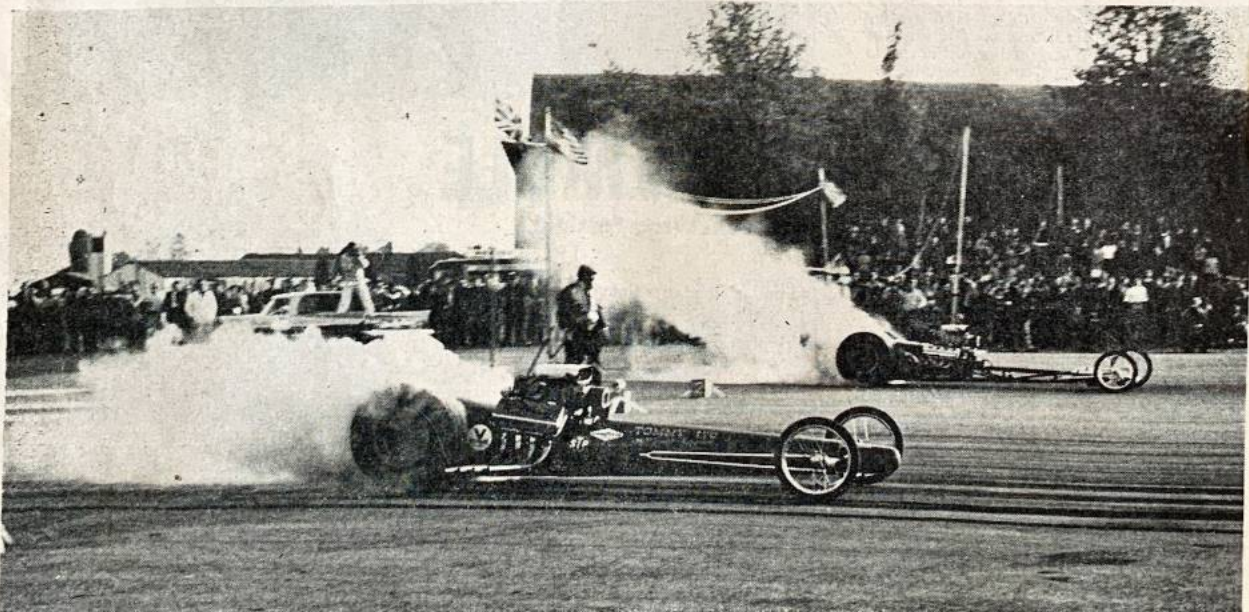
Alan Allard drove the larger Allard slingshot against Duce in Moonbeam and, with encouragement from Dad on the line to keep the take-off revs high, managed a best-ever run for the machine in 10.28 secs. Perhaps the threat of Moonbeam helped matters also!

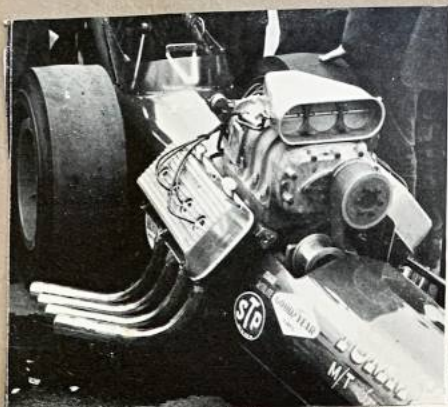
The late afternoon runs for the American Drag Racing Team can certainly be classed as "final flings"!

Bob Keith in the gas-fuelled 6-litre Chevy slingshot rail ran against Tony Nancy's Wedge 2 with 8-litre Plymouth motor. Well, Nancy reached the end of the quarter-mile first, but at some cost, as yet a third block was ventilated, while Bob broke a half-shaft on his machine—the first time his team has suffered a transmission failure. Dave Strickler in the Dodge sedan managed two runs in the mid-11s after a gearbox change during the lunch break. Dave was rewarded for his efforts by keeping ahead of Ronnie Sox in the Galaxie-powered Comet sedan.

To end the meeting and the series of events the Garlits-Ivo match race was run off. Ivo certainly reached the far end first after an 8.27 secs. run at 191 m.p.h. to Garlits's quicker run and faster speed of 8.19 secs. at 196 m.p.h., but the question was: did Tony anticipate the start? The writer thought so, but unfortunately, being a demonstration run, the foul start switch was not brought into operation by the starter. Nevertheless Garlits took the series in his Wynns-Jammer, and that start will keep people talking until the next time—roll on next year!

By the way, the fog covering the southern counties on Sunday evening cannot be attributed to the rubber fog made by the Goodyears being burnt away at the rate of 10 runs to a slick tyre!





POWER UNIT.—The supercharged Chrysler engine in Tommy Ivo's car, showing the vast air intake to the G.M.C. supercharger, the belt drive and the profiled rear tyres that become flat at high speed.

EXPERIMENTAL.—The Ford V8-powered Comet of Ronnie Sox spins its wheels away from the line to record 11.72 sec. for the $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile. The front suspension has been jacked up to give more rearward weight transfer.



PUSH-START.—With a single high gear dragsters need to be doing about 20 m.p.h. before the engine can be started, and the system is to push them from the rear; Don Garlits is about to be started. Note the wind-deflector on the front axle.

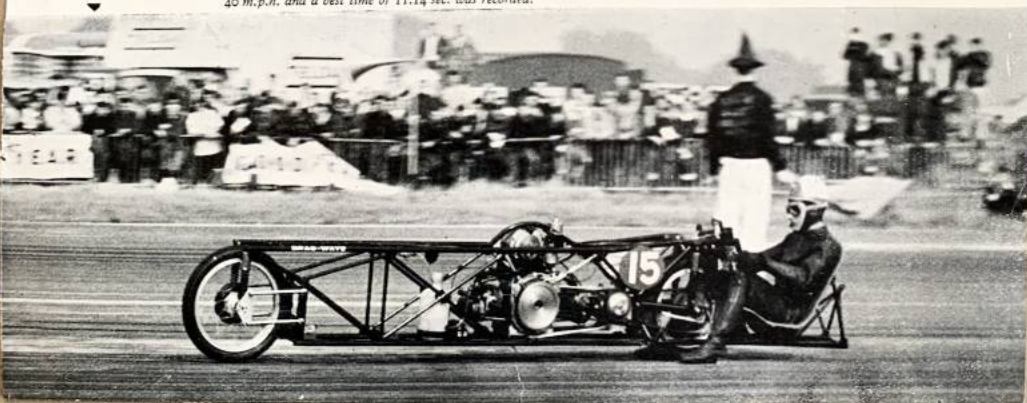
NO JOKE.—The incredible supercharged Chevrolet 6-litre V8-powered coupe of George Montgomery that made a best time of 10.37 sec. The finish of this car suggested "show, not go," but the performance was equally impressive.



BRITISH MOTORCYCLE?—The ingenious Drag-Way built by Clive Wayne and ridden by Howard German is designed on "slingshot" principles and uses a Shorrock supercharged 1,500-c.c. Volkswagen engine, devoid of cooling fan. Motorcycles of over 1,000-c.c. were allowed for the Drag Festival. The rider picks his feet up at about 40 m.p.h. and a best time of 11.14 sec. was recorded.



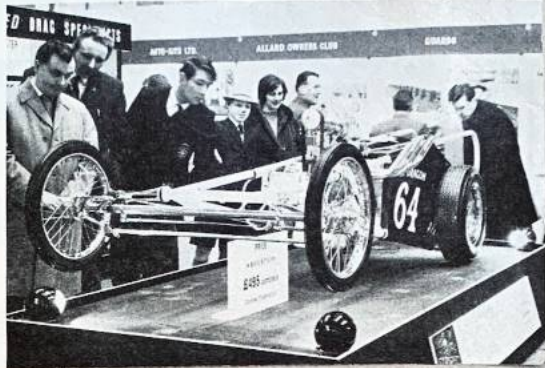
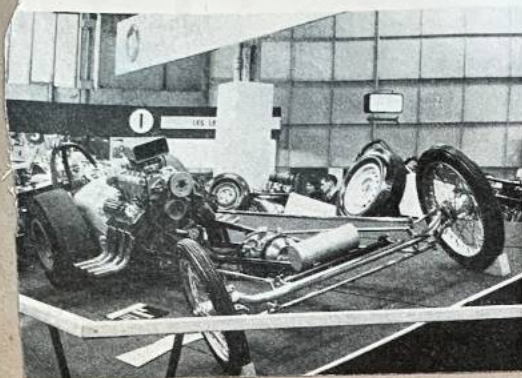
INTERNATIONAL DRAG FESTIVAL



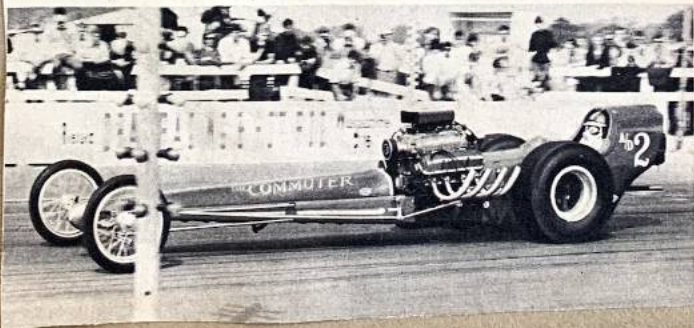
FIRST British dragster to visit America is the Allard Dragon, seen here receiving final touches before departing for California for a series of shows and demonstrations sponsored by the Ford Motor Co. Top U.S. dragster driver Tommy Ivo will handle the car, which broke the Class F international $\frac{1}{2}$ kilometre record in 11.11 secs.



DRAGSTERS BOTH. Mickey Thompson's Harvey Aluminium Special dragster (left) is powered by a supercharged Ford Galaxie engine said to develop something in the region of 1,000 h.p. SYDNEY ALLARD's Dragster Dragon is available in kit form for £495 (right). It uses a 1½-litre Ford engine. Show organizer Ian Smith has purchased the first model.



Some Commuter: Tony Densham blasts off in his 7.9-litre Ford-powered rail to clock an unofficial British record of 9.16 sec during time trials. The car will be making an official attempt on the absolute world record at the records weekend being held at Elvington Airfield, near York, on 21 and 22 October





Wild Bill Shrewsbury in action with his Plymouth, which is rear engine! Small castors at the rear keep the body intact while the tyres do incredible things.

The eight-second corrido

Better believe it, The Dynamic Drag Racing Cult has a Dramatic Past and an Assured Future

by Allen Friedrich

SINCE the first organized meeting at Goleta Airport, California, in 1948—actually a thinly-disguised ruse to get the speed crazy hot rodders off the highways—drag racing has mushroomed into being America's second biggest spectator sport. In 1966 nearly four million people flocked through the turnstiles at the 2,000 meetings held at the 143 drag strips officially sanctioned by the National Hot Rod Association. Add to this the attendance figures at strips not supported by the NHRA and the total will more than double, making it a very big deal indeed, bigger than all other forms of auto sport combined.

Apart from its undeniable dramatic appeal drag racing claims to do more for the private motorist than any other type of racing, since the action stresses the factors most vital to the ordinary driver. The items most important and therefore most likely to be developed and improved are engine toughness, brakes, tyres, and the only sort of power performance left by crowded highways and traffic laws—acceleration. Comfort and road-holding may play little part in the quarter-mile saga but a vast amount of knowledge has been gained about adhesion and traction. The clutch has also been given a lot of attention since, in this sort of split-second competition, it was found to be the item most likely to leave a driver sitting at the start with silly grin on his face.

Engine and clutch explosions still happen

but less often, and at far higher speeds than a few years ago. George Hurst, who has built up the mammoth performance equipment business, developed many of his products through dragstrip experience. His company recently took over the famed Airheart Brake firm which may well lead to an end of the old story of indifferent brakes on American passenger cars.

Go, baby, go!

As the size and performance of production cars have increased, so has the public adulation of brute performance, and herein may lie the secret to the success of the strange power syndrome where a huge purse may be won, or a life lost, within the space of a few heart-beats.

Almost half the population of the United States is under the age of 25, indoctrinated from childhood with the banzai power ethic in an atmosphere of advanced technology and violence. And no matter what anybody may say against drag racing it's a spectacle that really grabs you by the throat and shakes you.

Speed equipment manufacturer and ex-record holder Mickey Thompson is generally credited with being the first to drive a slingshot driver-behind-the-axle machine at more than 150 m.p.h. over the quarter-mile. Art Arfons graduated from the dragstrips to the Bonneville Salt Flats world record

course, while his brother Walt owns a pair of thunderous jet-engined dragsters which he sends out on pilgrimages of the strips to give awesome exhibition match races.

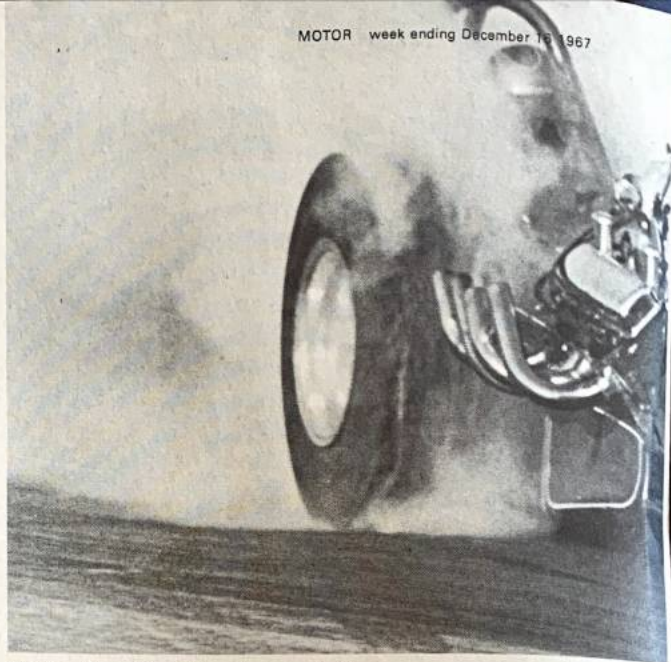
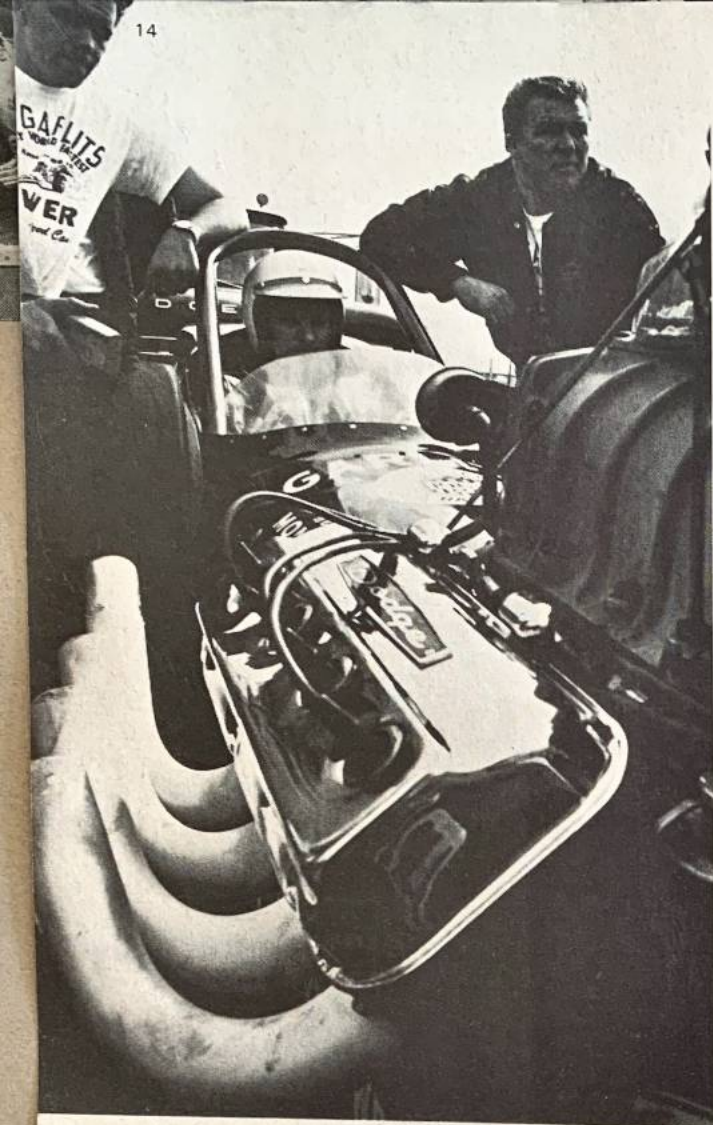
Another well-known crowd-pleaser is Tommy Ivo's Showboat, a fearsome, beautifully-engineered monster powered by four Buick V-8 engines and billed as "The Biggest Earth Tremor Since The San Francisco Earthquake". It also spends its working life touring the drag strips and auto shows. Ivo himself, a TV actor and dragster driver of some renown, visited England in 1964 as a member of the American Drag Racing Team which came over for the first International Drag Racing Festival organized by the late Sydney Allard.

That's all part of the show biz element in the game which brightens the meetings and helps swell gate receipts.

Tradewise, it's good

In Detroit the top brass of the automobile industry smile benevolently down on the scene, and so they might with a nation-wide string of free showcases for their products. The vast weekly audience ensures wide publicity for their cars before the most valuable people, the lower age-group section, all potential buyers of new cars, and a great deal of industry money is now involved in the form of factory-backed entries or privately-owned cars sponsored by dealer groups or accessory manufacturers.

Continued on the next page



Left: Don Big Daddy Garlits, who has probably collected more quarter-mile records and awards than anyone else. Two serious accidents haven't deterred him.

Below: The Mustang body on this car is a glass-fibre replica and the engine a Chevy V-8. The front suspension is minimal.



The eight-second corrida *continued*

As in other forms of auto sport, drag meetings have always contained a high percentage of stock classes; there are literally scores of different classes listed, covering everything from the production model straight off the showroom floor to the high performance semi-racing job.

Through the years the cars in the sharper end of the stock classes became more and more potent until in the 'sixties there emerged the new power elite, the absolute ultimate in so-called stock models. This was the FX, Factory Exhibition Class, fantastic one-off ultra-lightweight replicas of stock models, built or sponsored by the manufacturers. Bearing only a token resemblance to normal production models their unbelievable performances had the crowds on their toes right from the start.

Lurching off the line in giant wheelstands, the rear end kept from scraping the

ground by small castor wheels, these glass-fibre-and-horsepower packages running on a 90 per cent nitro fuel mix represent the absolute maximum effort for "conventionally" bodied cars. They were promptly dubbed Funny Cars—though the only people laughing were the FX drivers who received top billing and appearance money.

As more and more factory encouragement was turned on, the whole deal began to look like a struggle for supremacy between the rival factions backed by the Ford and Chrysler organizations. It became Dodges and Plymouths versus the Mercurys and Mustangs. The Ramchargers' Team, an ostensibly private group of engineers and drivers, all Chrysler Corporation employees using Dodge Division facilities, fielded purpose-built machines which brought fame and riches to them and their backers.

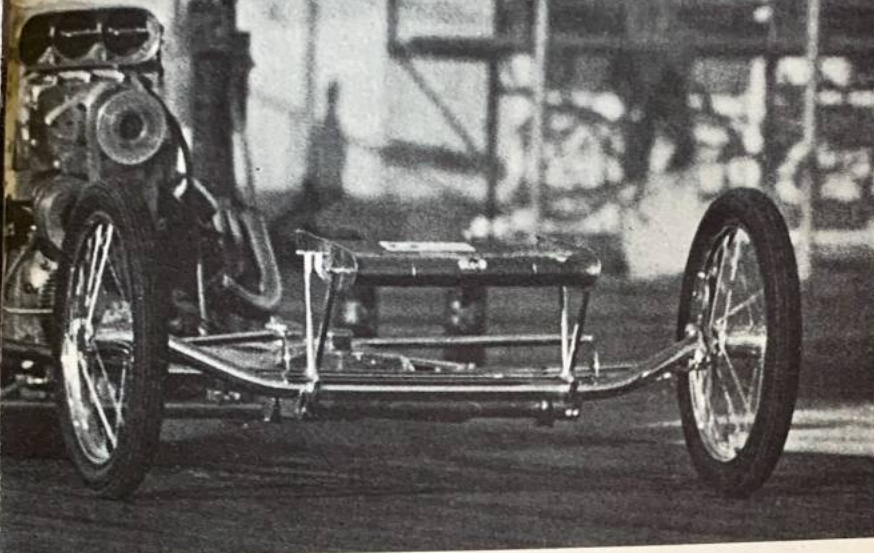
Drivers of Chrysler Corporation models mostly opted for the virtually unbeatable 426 cubic inch hemi-head engine and Ford, quickly realizing the danger of being eclipsed in this new field, released supplies of their 427 cubic inch o.h.c. engine, at that time in

limited production and reserved for the championship stock car racing cars at \$5,000 a copy.

This gave the Comet and Mustang-based cars fresh vigour and the battle raged back and forth at meetings all over the country, bringing vibrant shock waves of publicity for the manufacturers and much gold for the drivers. General Motors have since joined the battle with their hot o.h.c. Pontiacs and Camaros.

Many non-factory drivers also received lavish aid in building special exhibition models, speeds climbed higher and higher and both public and Press lauded the efforts of the free-booting Tiger People. Soon the names of Dandy Dick Landy with his out-of-sight Dodge Coronet, Dyno Don Nicholson and Jack Chrisman with their Cyclone Comets, and Wild Bill Shrewsbury in the Hemi-Under-Glass Barracuda were as widely acclaimed as those of pop stars.

There was parallel activity in the slingshot dragster field too; purses grew along with the bigger crowds, and competition became really fierce among the professional drivers.

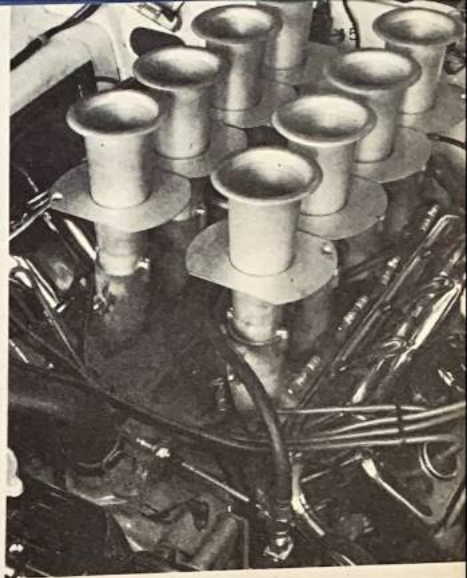


The Carpenter-McCrammer Oldsmobile-engined slingshot—note the aerofoil between the front wheels.

Below: Flame suit and mask to combat nitro fumes—the car is typical of the Funny Car class. It has a blown 426 Chrysler engine.



Stacks to suit all furnaces. Those at the top are used with manual gearboxes while the longer ones go on automatic transmission cars.



Up, up, and away

In 1955 Jack Chrisman caused a sensation with his speed of 145 m.p.h. in a blown Chrysler machine but in 1958 Don Garlits clocked a sizzling 165 m.p.h./8.89 second run and Bobby Langley soon topped this with a winning speed of 166 m.p.h. at the Bakersfield Championships. In 1959 Jack Chrisman's brother, Art, set up the first 180 m.p.h. timed quarter-mile speed but the following year Don Garlits raised this to 190.27 m.p.h. and for a time the speeds hovered around this mark until Garlits, then at the very peak of his career, broke the 200 m.p.h. barrier at Detroit Dragway, the high spot of the 1964 season.

These runs were all in the fuel-burning dragster class, speeds of the Super Stock saloons then being in the 130 m.p.h. bracket, but the advent of the Funny Cars brought fresh interest to the scene; in August 1965 Dick Brantner turned 173.9 m.p.h. in a blown Dodge Dart.

During this period there were some interesting technical developments. Goodyear began manufacturing special drag racing

tyres—welcome news to the drivers of the SS and FX cars, running at pressures as low as 7 p.s.i., who had been forced to resort to bolting the tyres to the rims to avoid having them wrenched off during the violent take-off. Use of nitro-methane fuel became universal, port injection was introduced, and the Detroit manufacturers began openly contracting outside specialists to construct their drag racing cars. The Torq-Master transmission appeared, a specially designed lightweight skeleton form of automatic transmission as an alternative to the traditional single gear usage. Roland Leong, owner of the famous Hawaiian dragster driven by Don Prodhomme, announced that they had won a total of \$67,000 during the 1965 season.

In 1966 the first tubular-framed Ford and Mercury Funny Cars weighing a scant 1,700 lb. came on the scene, NASCAR announced their offer of \$225,000 for a new Grand Stock and Fuel Championship Series, new lower-end supports, clutch protection scatter shields and roll bars became mandatory, the rogue fuel additive Hydrazine was banned following a number

of serious engine explosions, and Connie Kalitta posted the first officially credited speed over 200 m.p.h. with a 221.12 m.p.h./7.55 seconds pass in an o.h.c. Ford-engined dragster.

Advanced items such as forged-aluminium needle bearing rocker arms, chrome-plated valves, hydroformed bell-housings, and "zoomies"—short exhaust stacks blowing directly on the tyres to soften them and give better adhesion—have no immediate value for street use but it's all progress in the right direction.

Meanwhile two problems have become acute. Stopping the cars at the end of the short but tremendously fast run is being handled by improved brakes and dual-pack braking "chutes, but longer strips will inevitably be needed and this will add to the cost and maintenance of them.

And with elapsed times rapidly shrinking to the seven-second mark the big question is how much farther they can push it. With only this slim operating margin how long will it be before they accelerate themselves out of business?

DRAGSTERS BOTH. Mickey Thompson's Harvey Aluminium Special dragster (left) is powered by a supercharged Ford Galaxie engine said to develop something in the region of 1,000 h.p. SYDNEY ALLARD's Dragster Dragon is available in kit form for £495 (right). It uses a 1½-litre Ford engine. Show organizer Ian Smith has purchased the first model.



Time and motion

A study of acceleration

DID you realize that a standing start quarter mile in 7 seconds represents a mean acceleration of 1.68g? That is the sort of figure that the best American dragsters are turning these days; in fact their best current claim is 6.88s. with a terminal speed around 230 m.p.h. I say "claim" advisedly, because these figures are not FIA ratified which is why the "world" records are considerably slower; Tony Densham is the current holder at 8.91s. which is of course a mean of opposite runs rather than a one-way best. Why then the difference?

First, Densham's car is not as fast as the Americans anyway, but second there is a considerable difference in timing accuracy, not in the equipment itself but in its positioning, particularly at the start. It can be taken for granted that the distance itself is accurate; it is measured to the nearest 10,000th part of a quarter—1½ inches—which a 220 m.p.h.

dragster covers in 0.0004s.; this isn't going to make a measurable difference to the fast guys but the odd inch at the beginning takes a long time to cover; in other words this so-called standing quarter is really a flying quarter and the length of the flying start is critical (fig. 1).

For FIA record attempts the car must start within 10cm. (4 in.) of the start timing lights; this is not just a question of lining up on a beam and a ruler. There is, in fact, a pair of photoelectric beam/cells which can be adjusted to give the required distance apart; the apparatus is only set when the first beam is broken—actually when the beam brilliance is reduced by half. In fact it is a bit fiddly and timewasting to creep into position to the nearest 4 inches so 8 inches is sometimes used over here to speed the organization up a bit although this method doesn't qualify for records. In America these beams may be up

to 2 feet apart, so a cunningly placed dragster can, unbelievably, gain over a quarter of a second start on the apparatus; however, most of their systems use either 10 or 18 inches between beams.

We will examine shortly what the effect of these flying starts can be but the slower the initial acceleration the greater gain the car can make over its ideal quarter mile. The competition is thus not just man, his feet and the car versus the clock, but his alignment at the start is almost the most significant factor in the search for those extra hundredths; it is still very much a sprint competition capable of being timed to any accuracy that can be devised for the machines but as a measure of the best attainable times over a standing start quarter mile, the accuracy leaves something to be desired.

It has been shown that a top dragster reaches its peak acceleration of 2.3g some

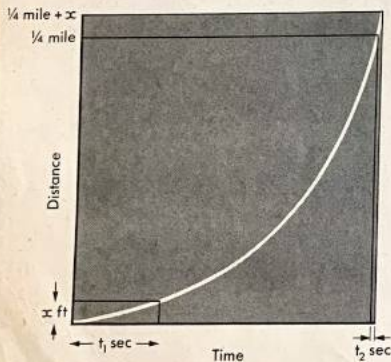
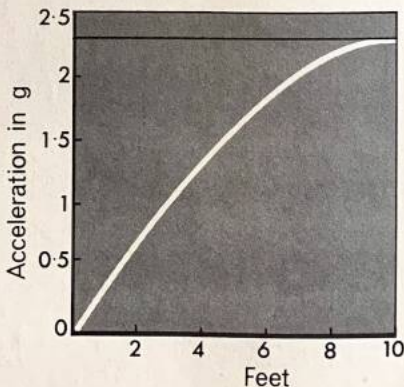


Fig. 1
This graph (left) shows why a short flying start is so much more critical than the same error in quarter mile distance. An x ft. start reduces the ideal time by t_1 second, whereas x ft. at the end only adds t_2 s. Although this is not to scale, t_1 is obviously much greater than t_2 up to a difference of ¼ s. for 2 ft. with 2g acceleration.

Fig. 2.
Right: One proposal is that acceleration builds up gradually following a sine curve with distance—acceleration $(f) = 2.3g \sin 9x$ where x = distance. This converts to the speed time curve on the right of fig. 3.





by Michael Bowler

10 feet from the start and eventually tails off towards the end of the run when it is still accelerating at about 1g. Can we conjecture what happens in the first 10 feet? One proposal is that acceleration builds up with distance following the curve in fig. 2 (which is actually a sine curve). From this equation we can derive another for speed against distance, and then speed against time (fig. 3). If the acceleration curve really follows the suggested curve it would take $1\frac{1}{2}$ seconds for the first 10 feet and even $4/5$ th of a second for the first foot.

Since our 7-litre Cobra reached 30 m.p.h. in 1.8s. and the dragster following our curve would only reach 21 m.p.h. in 1.5s. this is obviously wrong. One would expect a dragster to reach 30 m.p.h. in about 1s., a mean acceleration of 1.38g over the necessary 22 ft. However, if we assume that acceleration increases exponentially with time and not distance, we get rather more fruitful results: the car reaches 24 $\frac{1}{2}$ m.p.h. in 10 ft. or 0.75s. On this basis it takes 0.24s. to cover 4 in., 0.34s. for 1 ft. and 0.43s. for 2 ft.; indicating the errors from each distance of flying start.

Why should the acceleration build up gradually and the car not just set off at 2g like the sling-shots from which the slang derives? It's a question of analysing the start technique and the inertia of the various parts of the whole system. The revs are kept up, but obviously on a small throttle opening, gas speeds in the ports are fairly low; as the clutch is let in it cannot take up the drive instantly, there is some drive transmitted to the rear wheels which must move the car forward while the clutch is in the process of gripping. Even if clutch grip was instantaneous the drive line is elastic and has to be wound up—twist in the prop shaft, half shafts and tyres. The driver can't floor the accelerator until the drive is taken up, and since the inlet gases have some inertia the engine can't suddenly produce full power from a fast tickover, so there is a time lag during which only a proportion of power gets to the rear wheels which probably don't start to spin until the car has moved a

few inches. Then, of course, you cannot get maximum acceleration until the car has finally settled in its tail down attitude with nearly all the weight on the driving wheels.

All of which suggests that acceleration builds up gradually and we have to take some observer's word for it that 2.3g is reached 10 feet from the line. However, even if we were to assume that the car could set off at 2g instantly, the error from a 4-inch flying start is still 0.10s., 0.174s. for 1 ft. and 0.24s. for 2 ft., which is still considerable. At 1g, the figures are 0.145, 0.25 and 0.35 seconds respectively.

It seems fairly safe to say then that an accelerating dragster sets off on a path somewhere between that predicted by our acceleration/time exponential and a 2g straight line which means that even FIA ratified attempts on the standing start quarter-mile are likely to be between 0.10 and 0.24 seconds

out if you get a full 4-in. start, or slightly more than half this if you get a 2-in. lead on the lights.

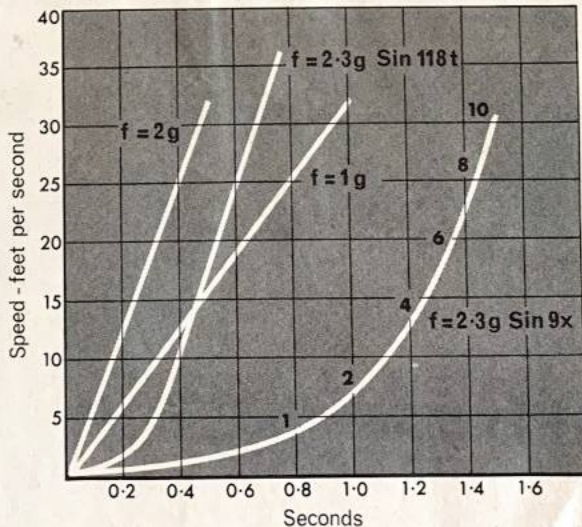
The other point is to how many decimal places is it reasonable to quote times. In theory even with a 2g initial acceleration you must get the car lined up to the nearest millimetre (0.040 in.) for it to be meaningful to quote times to 0.01s. This is obviously impossible; not only is it difficult to align anything to the nearest millimetre but a dragster usually only has enough water in the block for one run and can't waste time shuffling around on the grid; the engines only run for about 30 seconds at a time. It may not matter in straight competition if the times are not dead accurate for a quarter-mile as long as the error is the same for everyone, but it should mean that they must all start with the same error whether it be 1 foot or 8 inches to the nearest millimetre. In a straight eliminator competition with two identical dragsters one starting 4 in. from the lights and the other starting a foot back, the first car is going to finish 8 in. ahead but the second car will be 0.07-0.10s. quicker so far as the timing lights are concerned.

This is not intended as a criticism of time-keepers but just to point out that we shouldn't consider the times as absolute gospel for a quarter mile, but it does seem that cunning starting can produce rather greater improvements than the finer points of new techniques—apparently they are now slipping their clutches to get the best times rather than using the spinning tyre as a rubber torque converter, and big soft tyres running at 7 p.s.i. act more like caterpillar tracks than conventional wheels.

But until some great research has shown exactly what a dragster does in the first two feet I am going to stick my neck out and say that American dragsters have yet to beat 7 seconds for the true standing start quarter mile.

M

A series of graphs of speed against time for different accelerations. The two straight lines assume constant acceleration of 2g and 1g, while the curves show the speed reached in 10 ft. if acceleration builds up gradually with time ($2.3g \sin 118t$) or with distance ($2.3g \sin 9x$).





Hustler's BSA origins are most evident from the front with the innocent grille concealing much of the motor. The natty looking gent in the sports coat on the left is John Woolfe.



I LEARNED to drive in a BSA—a nice docile 10 h.p. saloon with a preselector gearbox and a side-valve engine which could just about wind it up to 50 m.p.h. with a following wind. I remember it well and couldn't resist a twinge of sentiment when John Woolfe, whose activities include the Le Mans entered Chevron-Reppo-Brabham, telephoned to say that he had recently acquired an interest in a drag racing outfit and would we be interested in trying out their star turn—a device called "Hustler"? After saying that we would, he told me that Hustler was brought about by the unlikely marriage of a BSA Scout and a 7-litre Chevrolet engine. It was built by a small group of enthusiasts led by Mark Stratton in the Towcester area of Northants, and last year won the Competition Altered Category of the National Drag Championship.

John Woolfe saw possibilities for the keen but impecunious team when his 7-litre Cobra was runner-up to Hustler at a meeting at Santa Pod last year. Applying the philosophy that if you can't beat 'em, buy 'em, he purchased a share in Stratton's efforts and a re-engined and extensively modified Hustler, a twin-engined slingshot dragster and a third car, a modified stocker, will this year campaign under the banner of John Woolfe Racing.

Mark Stratton suggested the Club Straight at Silverstone as being the most suitable site and after a long telephone conversation to try to allay the misgivings of the circuit manager—who pointed out that Bruce McLaren and others would be using the outer circuit on the appointed day, Roger Bell and I went up to the track, crossing fingers that the bright sunny weather would hold. The Club Straight looked shorter than it had ever

looked before when a cloud of dust on the bridge signalled the arrival of John Woolfe's huge Fiat transporter, once used by Lance Reventlow for the Scarabs and then by Alan Mann, until somebody noticed that it wasn't a Ford. Now it contained Hustler, the twin-mill rail, and the Chevron, looking very fragile beside such agricultural companions. There was a mixture of disappointment and perhaps a little relief at Mark Stratton's announcement that after working to nearly 4 a.m. the bizarre rail was a virtual non-runner as a special twin-plate clutch ordered from America had not arrived and it ate standard single plates faster than he could fit them. This was also to be Hustler's first outing with the new engine John Woolfe had bought for it and a higher final drive ratio which should raise its speed at the end of the standing 1/4-mile from

about 120 m.p.h. last year to nearly 150. Not wanting to take part in the world's fastest T-junction accident, I suggested that we might verify this some other time.

The rules for the Competition Altered Category are fairly loose but the body must have had origins in a series production car of any era. This one was certainly recognizable as a BSA Scout, though the rear half of the body had rather gone to seed and been replaced by a varnished wood pick-up platform. This serves no functional purpose as, unlike the FIA, the British Drag Racing Federation make no stipulations about luggage capacity. Also original is the radiator grille although there is no radiator, the block being filled with cold



prior to each run. Hearing of the existence of a Scout in the Midlands, the SA Owners' Club wrote requesting details but on being told that it had been converted from front to rear drive, developed about 600 b.h.p. instead of the original 16 and covered about ½ mile to the gallon of "AV-gas" they rather lost interest. John Woolfe wrote to BSA to see if they would be interested in sponsoring the car but was told, quite politely, that they stopped making cars in 1934 and were unlikely to assist them commercially now.

Hustler's simple box section frame was originally laid out with two engines in mind, since it is cheaper to get a given power output from two small stock V-8s than one big hairy one. Recently the rules have been changed, restricting the engine to the first 25% of the wheelbase so it has a single Chevrolet L88 engine which puts it comfortably inside class B for 5 to 8 litres capacity. In view of the large number of different categories possible in drag racing and the comparatively small number of cars in this country, every effort is made to group as many as possible together. Supercharging is commonly used and considered to increase capacity by only 40%, which seems quite generous as the L88 will produce nearly 1,200 b.h.p. on petrol with a suitable blower. Dragsters may run on either "gas" (petrol base) or "fuel" (dope base) burners, the latter being capable of giving up 1,600 b.h.p. from one blown 7-litre engine. But "fuel" is actively discouraged over here, partly because of the classification problems but mainly because of the risks with nitromethane/hydrazine mixtures, the most potent of all but said to have a life of only 40 minutes before blowing up.

Hustler's engine is fairly standard apart from being polished and balanced and has a four-barrel Holley carburettor and aluminium cylinder heads. The flywheel is increased in weight from 18 to 30 lb. to maintain inertia leaving the line. Power is transmitted to a long-suffering Schiefelr 11-in. single-plate clutch and stock Chevrolet three-speed gearbox. The rear axle is also Chev, 1955 vintage, (with 18-in. cut out of it) a popular unit, as final drive ratios between 2.9 and 6.4 : 1 are available. A ratio of 3.7 : 1 is currently fitted, giving about 24 m.p.h. per 1,000 r.p.m. so the car leaves the quarter comfortably within its 7,000 r.p.m. rev limit.

Suspension is very simple and since most drag strips are now mercifully much smoother, it is often dispensed with altogether at the back. Hustler has very long inclined trailing links and massive coil springs and a short, stiff transverse Panhard rod, total deflection being negligible. The live axle tube separating the front wheels is hung on rather spindly square-section tubes which contrive to depress a single central transverse coil spring. It will be noticed that the pivots are only 6-in. apart so that, unlike a suspension that has to cope with corners, front roll stiffness is virtually nil. This is intentional to assist traction. Any normal car with a live back axle tries to lift the offside rear wheel on acceleration because of torque reaction which (looking from the back) twists the back axle anti-clockwise and the rest of the car clockwise, thus increasing the weight on the offside front wheel. If, however, you have a three wheeler (with the single wheel at the front) or a front suspension with zero roll stiffness (which is virtually the same thing) then this front lateral weight transfer cannot happen and neither, therefore, can that at the rear except in a transient way as the torque reacts against car inertia.

Limited slip or locked diffs are frowned upon and rarely used as the mind boggles at the consequences of the spin that would inevitably occur if a drive shaft let go at full bore. The theory seems to have borne out fairly well in practice as the 10-in. wide black lines which Mark left up the hill from the approach to Woodcote in his first demonstration runs were quite uniform in shade. The reaction of the next club dices to use on the track on encountering these 100-yard-long marks curving gently to the right just before the lift-off point for the corner should be amusing to behold!

After assurances that it really was safer than it looked, Roger Bell made a run next, disappearing over the brow of the hill in a cloud of smoke and a slightly more acrid smell of burning as he had opted to start in top gear to save changing up at the 200-yard mark. There doesn't seem to be any noticeable decline in the rate of blast-off with the higher gear but it is more detrimental to the clutch. After cooling the engine by pouring water through each block in turn with a watering can, and replenishing the tiny one-gallon fuel tank, which holds enough for only there and back, I clambered in through the hole in the side provided for the purpose and prepared to visit Becketts.

Visibility is not outstanding, the carburettor projecting well into view and the Perspex windscreen is soon coated with an emulsion of fuel, oil and water.

A rudimentary seat is screwed to the wooden floor and there are two pedals—huge, liberally-drilled plate in the shape of a size 14 boot for Go, with the clutch close beside it. Right over on the left two levers project from the floor, one attached to the first and reverse selector rods in the gearbox and the other to second and top. I was to start in second and reach over and haul back the nearer lever when the rather pessimistic instrument laughingly described as a rev-counter, read 6,000 r.p.m. Beside it was the push-off engine cut-out which seemed to be a marginally better life preserver than the brakes, actually fitted to all four wheels with twin master cylinders operated by a central hand lever, but rather out of adjustment. They should have been reset the night before but somehow got forgotten in the rush to get the slingshot ready. Remembering that the track manager had advised us to aim for the car-field if we had trouble at the other end, and not the Becketts bank I lined up downhill and engaged top gear prior to the push start.

There isn't much you can tell a prospective dragster driver prior to his first run but Mark said that the clutch should be released as quickly as possible with about 5,000 r.p.m. on the clock. Since the needle never seemed to go over a hesitant 1,000 r.p.m. this seemed difficult but the clutch part was easy enough as it was taking a force of about 2-cwt. to hold it out and nearly tearing the muscles out of my left leg. Fortunately the engine fired immediately and burst into life with an ear-shattering bellow from the four huge and separate pipes which terminate down each side. With about 6-in. of free play the taped, home-made steering wheel attached to a Standard Vanguard steering box did not inspire confidence and less so when on applying lock, the wheels flop over out of sight below the scuttle, the consequence of about 30° castor which helps to keep the car straight even when the loading at the front is reduced to negligible proportions. Straightening up I heaved down the clutch pedal once more and pushed the gear lever into second and came to rest. I began to see what was

meant by torque reaction as every blip of the throttle twists the whole car over several degrees. With about 540 lb.ft something has got to give. The momentum builds up as you blip faster, raising the revs each time; let go the clutch and suddenly you are deaf and doing about 80 m.p.h., the seat harness anchorage pressing hard into the back of your neck. I had no idea of what the revs were; in fact they stay pretty constant, even with the clutch fully home, as the spinning tyres serve as a "torque converter". But after a few hundred yards I thought that a shift was as good an excuse as any to lift off without losing face. Down with the clutch, haul back the lever and then let it go once more and the whole thing starts all over again the surge only slightly reduced by the higher gear and momentum already achieved. As far as I could see the tyres never actually stop spinning, and examination of the marks afterwards showed only a slight pause where the shift was made. A few seconds more and I lifted off again somewhat gratefully; we had no measured distance or timing gear and the end of the straight was looming up ominously. Then came near panic as a pull at the brake lever produced no reaction, a second tug did very little more and then at the fourth or fifth stab pressure and my composure were restored as the car began to slow. I turned round and tried another start only to switch off almost immediately when a puff of steam indicated that the water in the blocks was beginning to boil.

I don't know how long it lasted, probably no more than six seconds and as drag times go it was abysmally slow but they were the most hectic six seconds I have spent for a long time. I was told that the fastest quarter so far was achieved by an Arfons device with a steam boiler and a solenoid to trip the trigger at the right moment. This reached over 260 m.p.h. and the only man to drive it has sworn never to do so again. The fastest official quarter by a piston engine so far is 6.68 sec. with a terminal speed of 234 m.p.h.

While Hustler cooled down, once more, attention was turned to the slingshot. Out of kindness to the clutch it was shot with standard tyres cannibalised from the touring car of an understanding American called Tex. Even so, the clutch was on fire after one run, with clouds of smoke pouring from the steel plate surrounding it and we could thereafter do no more than rolling starts, feeding the power in

very slowly. You sit right in the tail with knees tucked well up on either side of the steering handles (you can't really call it a wheel) thighs at a steep angle to clear the axle and differential, which is also reassuringly armoured-plated. The layout is orthodox rail with the long frame of four tubes curving up the back to form the cockpit and roll bar. The rear end is solid, the axle identical to Hustler, only narrower, and the front suspension is similar in design but the execution shows even greater inventiveness as the front axle tube is actually a gate post; you can see where the hinges have been hacksawed off. Motorbike wheels are grafted on to Ford E93A stub axles and some 8ft of very floppy gas pipe extend rearwards to a Hillman Minx steering box, its gearing reversed after it was found that turning to the left moved the wheels to the right. Try coping with that at 150 plus.

The engines fitted at present are individually tame: two standard 4.7-litre Chevs complete with hydraulic lifters and producing about 200 b.h.p. apiece. But they are coupled the hard way to give separate instead of simultaneous firing of two cylinders, the more common approach to twin engines. Mark Stratton grappled with different phasings for days, some of which produced up to four successive firing strokes on one bank without reply from the other. He finally decided on 180° minus 45° or 135° apart which gives the firing order he is shown drawing out in the dust on the side of the transporter. It works out to 1, 14, 8, 13, 4, 15, 3, 10, 6, 9, 5, 16, 7, 12, 2, 11 and sounds marvellous. There isn't a proprietary fuel pump to cope with that lot, particularly as the Holley carburettor takes its nourishment at 6 p.s.i. against the more normal 2½ p.s.i. So a Ford 100E oil pump is driven at engine speed from the nose of the forward crankshaft with a relief valve to maintain the correct pressure and return the excess to the tank.

All three cars won their respective classes at the Santa Pod meeting on Whit Monday though the clutch prevented a really fast time by the slingshot. Hustler with a 3.54:1 axle turned in 11.186 sec. and 129.53 m.p.h. to establish a new British Competition Altered record and then it was running without slicks tyres, changing gear rather slowly at 8,200 r.p.m. and pulling well below peak in top. It's not quite up to that 150 m.p.h. mark yet but not bad for a B.S.A. Scout with a mere 600 b.h.p.

M

Not the sort of fleet that the majority of people have—or anyone else in the whole wide world, come to that.



Come DRAG RACING

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Santa Pod Raceway.

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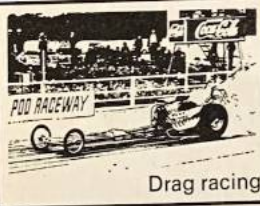
Sunday, August 4

DENSHAM "COMMUTER" v. SLUGGETT "TUDOR ROSE"

Both racing to run the first 8 second quarter
AND XK JAGUARS ELIMINATION

Santa Pod records

The Santa Pod track record for dragsters fell three times on June 28 and may well have fallen again by the time you read this. Current holder is Dennis Priddle in a new AA Fuel Dragster at 8.54sec. for the 1/4-mile, with a terminal speed of 193 mph. He took the record on his third run at 8.9sec. and 183.9 mph, which Tony Densham beat with 185 mph. So the 200-mph barrier looks like wilting under the assault.



Drag racing

Saturday August 17's night drags saw the addition of the final ingredient required for the "Santa Pod Spectacular" cocktail, as Tudor Rose and Commuter blasted through the quarter leaving a 30-foot wall of tyre smoke that was so thick you couldn't see the other side of the strip.

Tony Densham was first out with a promise of things to come as he stormed through on an out-of-shape blast that left smoke for the first hundred yards, turning 176 mph in 8.685 s. With Tudor Rose driver



Tony Densham shoes Commuter off the line on his second run of 8.459 s, unofficially breaking his own world record.

BD & HRA

SANTA POD DRAGS

THOUSANDS of fans stood and cheered as World Record Holder Tony Densham completely obliterated his record with a smokeless blast that found him covering the quarter mile in 8.459 s at over 180 miles an hour, to become the quickest Englishman in the world. Earlier, when it was announced that Sluggett and Skilton had gone over to Sweden only two days before, it seemed as if the BD & HRA would once again have to disappoint the fans with solo blasts from the Ford. Happily Mike Tickner stepped in with his junior fueller "Geronimo" and offered to race Densham—on the first run "Tik" got over-anxious and left before the green, Tony waited that split second longer and was gone—five feet out the huge slicks started to smoke and it was obvious that this was a "go run" for the 427 Ford; at the 1/4-mile mark Commuter got out of shape and Tony had to lift off, snaking through the traps at 173.61 mph in 8.891 s. At last Tony had rid his rail of the bugs that have plagued it for so long, and the crowd went wild as he rode back down the strip to receive the £50 award from strip promoter John Bennett for being the first man to make an 8-secs run at Santa Pod.

Forty-five minutes later, Commuter started to roll down the fire-up road, ready to back up its first run. This time Densham staged in the blue lane, for when Commuter goes out of shape it always pulls

to the left. Running on the right hand side of the strip Tony promised to keep his boot all the way home, and kept his word, as he shoed Commuter straight and true to stop the clocks in 8.459 secs; once again the crowd stood and cheered.

Backing up these fantastic displays of power was some really exciting racing. Alan Blount got his Chevy-powered rail Weekend Warrior II through to the final of Top Eliminator to find himself sitting next to Alan Herridge with his nitro burning Mota-vation. On the green, Blount was gone with a two-car hole shot on Herridge which he held through the quarter to take the Top Eliminator title at 10.71 s and 123.61 mph to Herridge's losing 10.46 s (141.44 mph).

Fete Atkins rode the Watford Motor Accessories Cobra-powered T Slo-Mo-Shun to the Super Eliminator title over Gerry Cookson (Trouble Shooter rail), and Virginian Doug Harler came up from behind with his Big Daddy Maverick Charger to down Rod Alonso's Cyclone GT. For the Competition Eliminator Title Tim Dawson Collins managed to hold his handicap lead over Jom Wanberg's Black Bandit Chevrolet to take the Street Eliminator title with his twin-cam Ford-powered Austin A40.

Roy Phelps seems to have got over his trouble with the FGR wheelstanding Stingray and managed to keep the wheels up for nearly 130 yds—this is one car that the crowd loves to see, as Roy has at last got the hang of it and can pull the front wheels a good ten feet off the ground!

MIKE COLLINS.

AUTOSPORT, AUGUST 16, 1968

Night drags: Densham quickest

Rex Sluggett still needing a crutch following his mishap in Sweden, ace wrench Dennis Priddle opted to drive the big Chrysler; with the engine cold Dennis eased through the quarter in 9.3 s, and returned 10 mins later to smoke the whole 1320 feet in nine seconds flat. The stage was set for the race we'd been waiting for—Commuter versus Tudor Rose.

Both cars sat ready with flames shooting from their exhausts; with the green they moved as one, and about five feet out they started to smoke, leaving a solid wall over the strip; Commuter got so much out of shape that Tony Densham had to lift off at the eighth-mile mark. Priddle was obviously hurting for the win as he kept it to the wood all the way, clearing the traps with his parachute out in 8.871 s. With Tony Densham having upped his nitro percentage and Sluggett and Priddle having promised to run 35 per cent nitro, the Drag Racing Championship at Santa Pod on September 1/2 should see the first-ever English 7-sec drag race.

"Tik" Tickner took the No. 1 Eliminator spot, powering his Junior fueller Geronimo to the win over Reg Sommer's MAB dragster; Mick Wheeler made the No 2 win as he stormed through with his little Scorpion rail over Doug Harler's big Dodge Charger. For the No 3 bracket win the Jaguar-powered Renault Juggernaut 2 gave Keith Sales an easy win in his injected Jag, SS Draguar, when the Juggernaut fouled on the line. And for the No 4 spot Mike Cunningham took the title with his Leprechaun rail.

On Sunday morning Dennis Priddle brought out the Chrysler in an attempt to take Tony Densham's strip record of 8.459 s—once again it was a wild smoky run, with Dennis having to lift off at the 1000-ft mark as Tudor Rose tried to change lanes. It was not quite on the record, but a storming 173 mph blast in 8.8 s.

MIKE COLLINS.

● The two-day Drag Racing Championship at Santa Pod, which is near Wellingborough in Northamptonshire, is organized by the BD&HRA and begins at 11 am on both days.

1968

DRAG RACING CHAMPIONSHIP



SANTA POD RACEWAY

Podington Airfield, Nr. Wollaston, 5 miles south of Wellingborough, Northants

SUNDAY & MONDAY 1st & 2nd SEPT.

RACING 12 NOON TO 6 P.M. BOTH DAYS

Special Attractions

ROY PHELPS WHEELSTANDING STINGRAY

"BEST OF FIVE" MATCH RACE

TONY DENSHAM 8.4 secs. 180 mph "COMMUTER"

REX SLUGGETT 8.5 secs. 180 mph "TUDOR ROSE"

Admission 10/- each day includes Programme, car parking, Children under 12 free Pit Pass 5/-

RECORDS WEEKEND '68

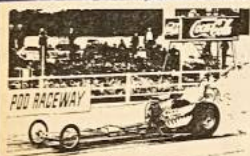
ELVINGTON YORKS
5/6th October.

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Drag racing

Herridge is champion at last

DESPITE much competition from the circuits, and the threat of a wet weekend, 8000 fans turned out for the BDR&HRA's two-day Drag Racing Championship meet at Santa Pod Raceway. The Sunday was hampered by rain, with much exciting racing—Monday, however, was the big day. With so much water about, Tudor Rose and Commuter had only made a couple of gentle warm-up runs the day before. On Monday they came out again. At the second amber Tudor Rose moved, and Rex Sluggett was seen to shake his fist as he roared off leaving a big red foul light burning. Red light win or not, Tony Densham put his boot all

the way in to go storming round the Chrysler, crossing the line first in 8.52 s at 167.79 mph; Sluggett was right behind at 8.69, 160.77 mph. The crowd went wild at the first double "8." Half an hour later they were back, this time with Dennis Priddle in the driver's seat of the Rose promising to avenge the first round defeat. Sluggett had run straight methanol for the first run, but this time they had tipped the can and were running 30 per cent nitro. This time Priddle made sure as he rolled easily into the staging beam. The lights ran as the revs grew, then Tudor Rose seemed to leap off the line leaving Commuter two car lengths behind as he smoked the whole quarter to win at 8.88 (148.81 mph)—the Ford trailed at 8.83 (166.78 mph).

The nitro load was 38 for the next run, and this time it was Densham, hurrying for the win, who rolled the beam to foul out: Tudor Rose moved, faltered, then Dennis Priddle put the boot to the bellhousing and was gone. Fifty feet out, he passed the Ford, yet he was still smoking—at the 1000 ft mark the rear end on the hieze rail twitched and Dennis had to lift off, and that split second without power cost him a seven, but from the smoke screen that covered the whole quarter mile all knew he was capable of it. Priddle's winning time was 8.46 (171.23 mph), Densham coasting through at 149.93 mph in 9.05 s.

As was expected, eliminations for the Championship titles was fast and furious; the fight for the title of Drag Racing Champion 1968 was fraught with drama. Tik

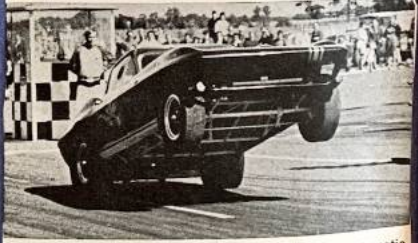
Tickner swung to the line in his Olds-powered junior fueler Geronimo as a safe bet for the title. Allan Herridge had blown the timing gear on his Chevy-powered junior fueler Motovation the day before, rebuilt it with old parts overnight, and although he had made his way to the final against Tickner wasn't running at all well. Suddenly it was realised that something was wrong—the Motovation push car was stuck in the pits, and track marshals leapt forward and tried to bump start the Chevy, but with 50 per cent nitro you need more than willing hands to fire the engine. Tik was told to go and it looked as if the Champion's title was to be won on a bye run. Herridge was almost crying; for six years he has got as close to the title as you can without winning, and it looked as if it had happened again. But no—Tickner sportingly offered to re-run the race. On the green it was Tickner who moved first, and a split second later Herridge dropped the clutch and Motovation stormed off the line with smoke billowing, charging all the way round Geronimo in 9.90 s at 141.64 mph to Tickner's 10.07, 144.09.

The Super Eliminator Title was won by Mark Stratton with the John Woolfe Racing Chevy-powered Hustler, at 11.8, 116.96 mph. For the Competition Title, US Serviceman Joe Copp drove his '57 Chevy Colt 45 Maverick to the limit, taking the trophy at 13.5 and 103 mph—for a machine that weighs 3750 lbs this is moving! The Street title went to Keith Elliott's Red Witch at 16.5, 84.25 mph. MIKE COLLINS.

DON BEADLE
builder of "Motovation"
(British Drag Racing Champion 1968)



EUROPE'S FIRST REAL "WHEELIE"... The British have "wheeled" car. Roy Phelps, of Bromley, Kent, has constructed a Sting Ray body that rests on a Tensile tubing frame. The power comes from a 317 Oldsmobile, but this will soon be replaced by a 427 'Vette, and the word is that the big-block



Chevy will feed into a Rolls-Royce four-speed automatic. (Things are pretty tough all over, huh?) An eighty-yard wheelie with an e.t. for the quarter of 13.6 is the best run to date, but this will be improved upon once that 'Vette mill resides in the engine compartment.