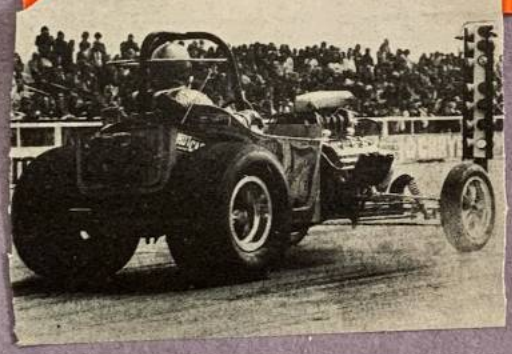
T-Rat is the most in comp altered – Dave Stone here powers 7300cc

Clive Skilton bleaches out his new rail

The King – Dennis Priddle's new A/A fueller

Go pro-stock – Gary Goggins' fabulous Clunk-Click Camaro on the bleach

Sneaky! Phil Elson wrinkles his Comp Alt to the finals



● The biggest-ever gathering of pro-fuel dragsters in Europe! That was the record notched up last month at Santa Pod Raceway, when seven big nitro-burning rails turned up to do battle at the **Hot Car Big Go**. Man who won in the outcome (a fortnight later, after last-minute rain washed out the final runs) was **Dennis Priddle**, running Mr Revell at 7-08 secs, 186-72 mph—not his best by a long way. Dennis had a bye, as Clive Skilton failed to make the re-run date, having been quicker all through the Big Go meet. In the Top Dragster stakes, **John Whitmore** blasted his little Drag-N-Fly supercharged BLMC 1300 to a 10-02, 123-61 run from M Locker's Volvo-powered Midi-Witch. **Dave "Showman" Stone** running the biggest mill at the Pod (7240 Chevrolet) and getting the biggest applause too in his immaculate Tee Rat Comp Altered pulled a really fast one at 8-75, 164-47 mph over Phil Elson's 6300 Chrysler Sneaky. Crowd-pleasers too were **Gary Goggin** and Kevin Pilling in their respective Camaros—Gary shaved the green light as close as anyone has ever done at the Pod to win with an 11-25 over Kami-Kazi-Kev's 11-23. Some match! Last **Hot Car** trophy, all of which were presented by Mrs Brian Taylor, went to **Adrian York** with his Glass Goddess Corvette in Top Street, just beating Roy Iram's Red 'E' Jaguar. And a final thanks to the bike boys—**Dave Clee** surprise winner of the Top Comp Bike on Double Barrelled Shot-gun and **Pat Butler** who took Top Street on his Esnecker took the **Motorcycle Mechanics** trophies.

PRIZE WINNERS!

Top fuel dragster: Dennis Priddle. Mr Revell (Chrysler 6900). **Top dragster:** John Whitmore. Drag-N-Fly (BLMC 1293). **Top comp altered:** Dave Stone. Tee Rat (Chevrolet 7240). **Pro Stock:** Gary Goggin. Clunk-Click (Chevrolet 7000). **Top street:** Adrian York. Glass Goddess (Chevrolet 5359). **Best street rod:** Cliff Jones. Devon Cream (Austin A40 Devon).

● **Hot Car wishes to acknowledge prizes presented and assistance given by:**
Hitachi (UK)
Revell (GB) Ltd
Ford Motor Company
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Grand Prix Models
Brighton Speed and Custom
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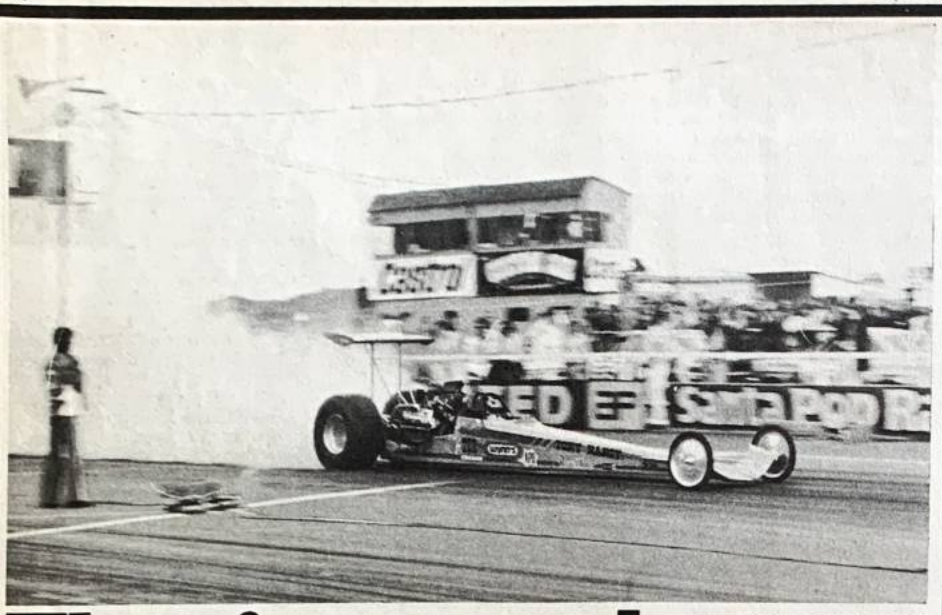
Honda (UK) Ltd
Suzuki (GB) Ltd
208 Radio Luxembourg
AE Auto Parts
Goodyear Tyre & Rubber Company
BDRHRA
Santa Pod Raceway
Brian Taylor
Motorcycle Mechanics
'Bootsie' Herridge Jnr
Bedfordshire Constabulary

Hold 'im down . . . Gary Goggin burns out Clunk-Click on bleach



The six-second strip-tease

From rest to well over 200 mph in six and a bit seconds and 440 yards. Ridiculous ! Is it brute force or science that makes the dragsters go so fast ? Mike McCarthy and Brian Hatton went to see Dennis Priddle to find out

The first attempt looks like a false start. All the drama is there. Engine noise builds up to peak decibels (so loud it is physically painful to those standing close by), the tyres suddenly spin as instant tractive effort outstrips grip, smoke fumes off the wheels and momentarily hides the driver and the back of the machine. The dragster scorches across the line, leaving sticky black tracks, wide as the huge rear tyres. Then suddenly, after some yards, the engine is cut, the drama subsides, the dragster rolls briefly and is brought to a halt. Mechanics push it back, the driver checking that the rear tyres are lined up exactly on the two black lines they have just put down. The car stops just short of the timing eye—and all is ready for the real thing.

This is all done deliberately, and the purpose is to lay those tracks. A compound (basically a rubber solvent, often bleach) poured on the tyres plus the rapid heat build-up as they spin melts the surface of the tyre, leaving a layer of soft sticky rubber, which is used in the actual run almost as a glue to get maximum grip. In dragging parlance this is a "bleach-out" or "burn-out." More spectacular, and achieving much the same thing as a "flame-out," where petrol (which ignites) is used. But that is only for extroverts.

The real thing is a lot more purposeful—just as dramatic but lasting longer and less panicky, so to speak. With the handbrake full on, the clutch is slipped enough to drag the car three or four inches so that the whole

driveline is as tight as a drumskin —no slack anywhere. A "Christmas tree"—a sort of traffic lights par excellence—starts the countdown through a sequential red-orange-green signal system. On the green the handbrake is freed, the accelerator pedal is floored and the clutch popped—instantly. The three sintered iron clutch plates slip viciously in spite of a 1250 lb static pressure, but still transmit enough torque to shoot the car off the line without pulling the engine "off the cam" below about 7000 rpm. Under the same massive torque the contact patch between tyre and road lengthens, the soft sidewalls wrinkle like tissue paper, and the tyre squats. The difference between a "bleach-out" and a genuine run is that, if the latter is perfect, there is no wheelspin. The footprint of soft rubber left during the "bleach-out" gives such grip that the elementary laws of friction are inapplicable. Up until fairly recently, too, the car would almost literally take off with front wheels waving a few feet up in the air. This is now unfashionable with the serious contenders and longer wheelbases, deflector plates or ballast at the front and if necessary small castor wheels at the back all help to keep the nose down.

By the time the first third to half of the track has been covered the engine is howling at 9000 rpm (it's all done by ear incidentally, there's no time to look at a tachometer) and centrifugal bobweights on the clutch have increased face pressure to lock-up point so full power is reaching the wheels. The tyre crowns are growing all the time (the tyre can increase in diameter by as much as nine inches at full whack), the sidewalls belly inwards and it is even possible for the beads to leave the rim, so soft is the tyre and so high the rotation at speed.

This sounds incredibly dangerous but is done quite deliberately. The tyre squat at the beginning of the run reduces the rolling radius, which has the same effect as gearing down. The tyre by growing and increasing the rolling radius acts as a fully automatic continuously variable gearbox !

The driver, meanwhile, strapped down tight into his seat by a six-web belt system is trying to steer the machine by peering down the side of the mass of machinery in front of him at guide lines painted along the edge of the strip. His vision becomes blurred as high frequency tyre vibrations ripple through the chassis unhindered by soft rubber bushes or suspension of any kind. There is still some degree of steering from the minuscule front wheels, but stability is more a function of rake on the chassis and aerodynamics than anything else. Strange things can happen at these speeds and accelerations: a front tyre can give under the strain, stretching like a huge rubber band before snapping : the flexible chassis can ground on a bump : the engine can blow (the dragster's nightmare) spraying hot oil everywhere (including onto the driver's goggles) and demolishing everything in a circular plane around it : or the final drive between the driver's legs can seize, and never mind what result that might have.

At the end of the run the engine is developing an estimated 1500 bhp at 10,000 rpm (estimated because it is very difficult to measure this power at this speed—even if the engine stayed together long enough to take more than a flash reading), while the supercharger is providing 18 psi of boost and needing 300 bhp to do it.

Just before the quarter-mile timing light, with everything at full tilt, the driver snatches the handle that releases the drog chute which tugs the two main 12 ft plus cross type chutes out of their bag; these snap open and slow the dragster so quickly that the brakes are almost redundant. The whole process has taken some six and a half seconds from blast-off, the average acceleration from the distance has been about 2g (in practice the first third is well over 2g, falling off to "only" a little under this for the last two thirds), the speed at the trap can be over 220 mph, and about 2½ gallons of fuel have been consumed.

To give some comparisons, Dennis Priddle (Mr Six) has achieved a personal best of 6.59 sec, 215 mph in his old "Shellsport/Chrysler" Dragster. His new car, "Mr Revell" with American Norm Wilcox has done an unofficial run of 6.55 secs, 202 mph. (In this sport it's elapsed time that counts—and time and terminal speed can vary quite markedly.) *Motor's* league leader, the Danny Ford GT40 takes 12.4 sec and reaches about 112 mph. According to a contemporary advertisement a Formula I car takes 6.5 secs—but that's to reach 100 mph, not for the quarter. A Ford Cortina takes 21 sec. About the only thing faster than a dragster is a Phantom fighter taking off from a carrier with catapult assist. It reaches 145 knots (about 165 mph) in 200 FEET !

Pure power

In dragging, power and traction are everything. Never mind low speed torque curves or specific power outputs or low fuel con-

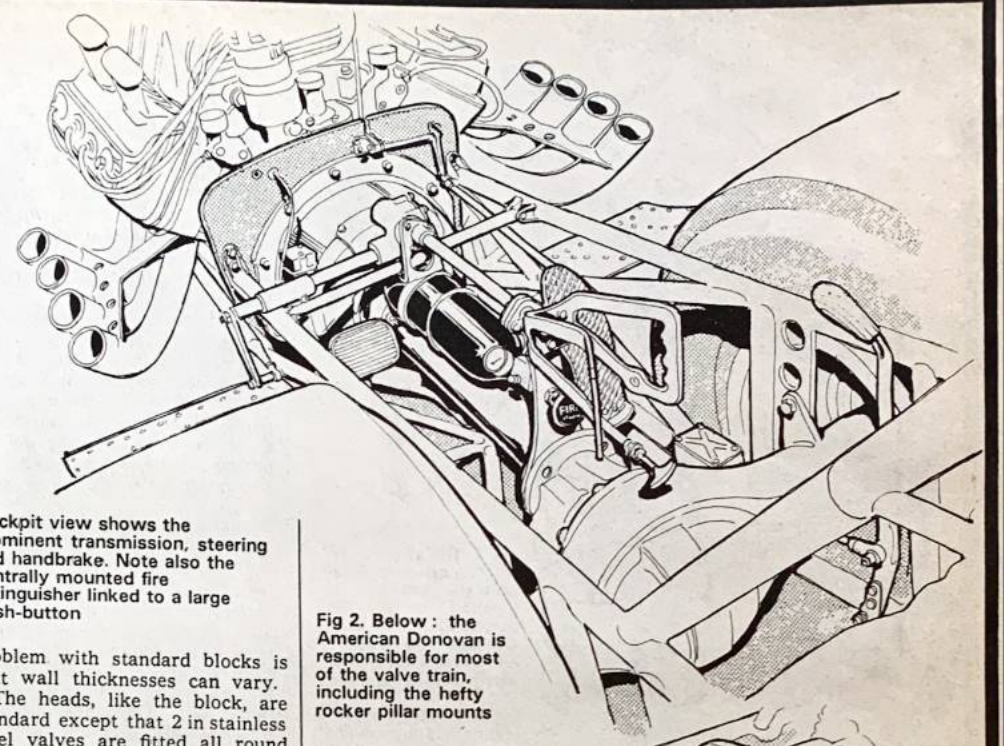
sumption. With a seven second (or thereabouts) "life" things like critical vibration periods (where extended running can cause an engine to shake itself to pieces in a very short time) are ignored. Horsepower generally increases with speed, so every rotating or moving component is lightened and balanced to get maximum possible revs. Friction is reduced to an absolute minimum. More air means more fuel can be burnt, so a supercharger is added. Gears mean a power loss so (with the exception of the final drive) they are eliminated. Huge tyres with a soft rubber surface give an almost mechanical grip between road and tread, like gears meshing, to transmit all the power.

For his two dragsters, Dennis Priddle has two engines, both based (very remotely) on the "Hemi-Head" Chrysler of '57-'58 vintage. The older engine is a nominal 392 cu in (6424 cc) in displacement but has been bored 30 thou oversize to 396 cu in (6490 cc). The 392 is a "stock block" unit, which, as the name implies, uses a standard cylinder block carefully (very carefully!) modified. After an acid dip to clean up the waterways and so on, the mating faces of the bearing caps are skimmed and the mains rebored to take standard shells with the "girdle"—the main bearing strengthening bridge—in place to preload the caps (fig 1). Then the block is, as they say, blue-printed. Although fairly meaty castings (the cylinders can take a 60 thou overbore) the big problem with standard blocks is that wall thicknesses can vary.

The heads, like the block, are standard except that 2 in stainless steel valves are fitted all round—stainless because of nitromethame fuel corrosion. The usual porting is carried and numbers two and three exhaust ports are de-siamesed. The combustion chamber—the size of a generous chamber pot—is unmodified. The valves are operated from the single camshaft via roller tappets and two diverging rows of pushrods per bank. Rockers running on two rocker shafts per bank give the classic V configuration necessary for the valves in a hemispherical head. All rockers are fitted with needle roller bearings, and the valve train (fig 2) is by Donovan (if he didn't make 'em he modified 'em), an American supplier of dragging equipment for whom Dennis has the highest regard.

The oil pump, standard on the 392, and the Cirello magneto are skew gear driven from the rear end of the camshaft which is by Engle, ground "the way we like it" as Dennis says.

The pistons (fig 3) are Forgetrue forged alloy units with very shallow skirts and three rings, the top one being very thin flat stainless steel rather like a large diameter shim—anything bigger or heavier could cause the piston ring grooves to open out under the tremendous thrust reversals. The skirt is held away from the bore by three "Teflon" buttons either side—so no touching. The gudgeon pin is held floating in the piston by pads on the ends—a circlip coming loose can cause one hell of a lot of damage, as Dennis knows to his cost! The Mickey Thompson forged alloy con rods, (fig 3) beautifully made, are available in varying lengths to alter the compression ratio—at present about 6.2:1—by changing the piston "down" height (the dif-



Cockpit view shows the prominent transmission, steering and handbrake. Note also the centrally mounted fire extinguisher linked to a large push-button

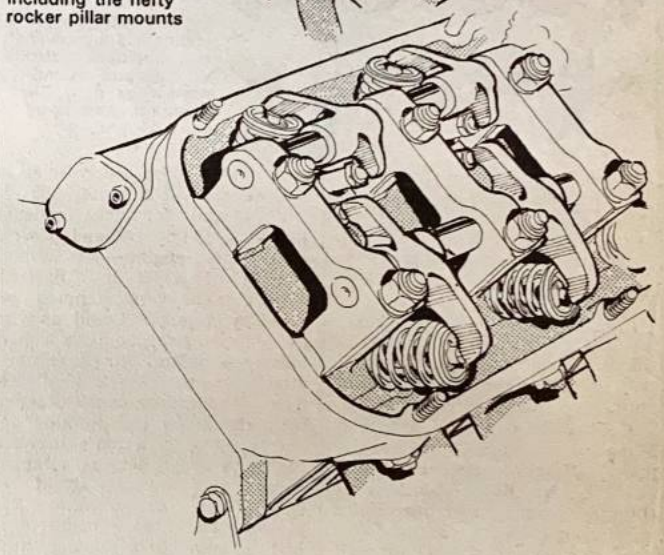
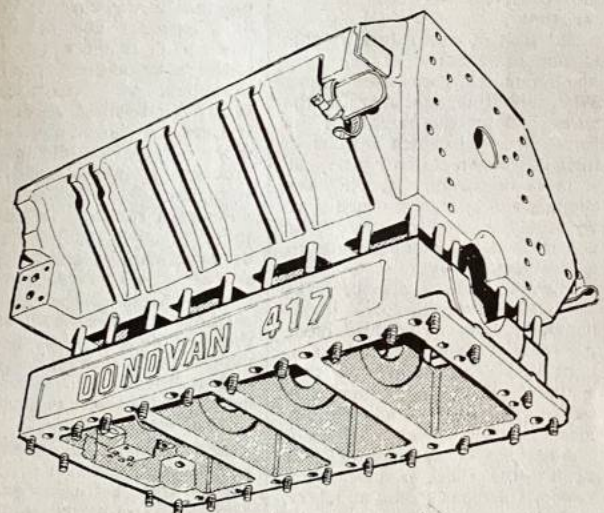


Fig 2. Below: the American Donovan is responsible for most of the valve train, including the hefty rocker pillar mounts



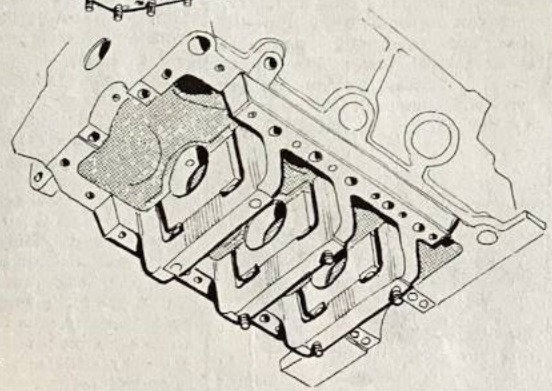


Fig 1: The Donovan engine has a massive but beautifully made bearing bridge; the "stock block" engine uses a less meaty "girdle"

The car-toons here and on the following pages were drawn by 15-year-old Julian Russell of Bembridge school on the Isle of Wight.

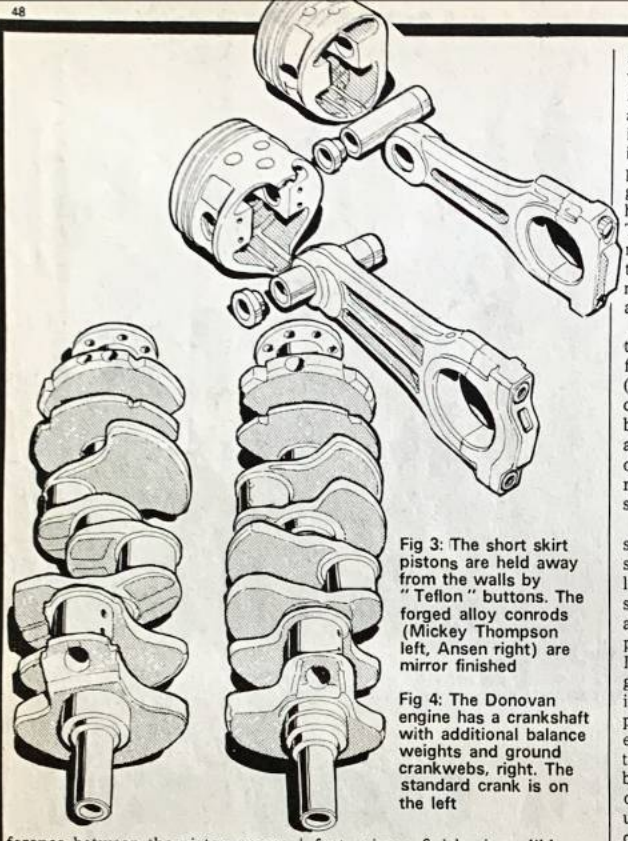


Fig 3: The short skirt pistons are held away from the walls by "Teflon" buttons. The forged alloy conrods (Mickey Thompson left, Ansen right) are mirror finished

Fig 4: The Donovan engine has a crankshaft with additional balance weights and ground crankwebs, right. The standard crank is on the left

ference between the piston crown at full stroke and the deck—terminologically simple these fellows!) by as much as $\frac{3}{8}$ in. The standard crankshaft (fig 4) is modified and fully balanced by Velasco.

The 392 can at least trace head, block and crankshaft back to its Chrysler parentage; the 417 engine only uses head and crankshaft and both are barely recognisable. The Donovan engine is a special size at 417 cu in (6835 cc) and the major difference between the two is the block. The 417 block is an admirably simple and beautifully finished aluminium casting with the 4 in stroke of the 392 but with a $4\frac{1}{8}$ in bore—and a $4\frac{1}{4}$ in bore can be had. The "girdle" is another hefty alloy casting with "DONOVAN 417" cast into the sides. The two castings, stitched together by a multitude of studs, from a massively stiff and visually handsome entity, suggesting brute strength with refinement. Very impressive—see fig 1.

The removable liners are held by flats on the top flange, and are made watertight by O rings at the bottom and straight "Sealastic" goo at the top—complex! The crankshaft has been taken a stage further, being not only balanced but with added counterweights and ground crankweds (fig 4). Plain rather than roller tappets are used, a dry sump oil system is built up from two Chrysler pumps on a common manifold, bearings are surprisingly plain white metal with 3 thou clearance on the big ends and $3\frac{1}{2}$-4 on the mains, the pistons are as on the 392 but are by Venolia and they and the Ansen forged alloy conrods have an almost perfect mirror finish—incredible.

Otherwise all is as the 392. One reason for the immense power sits on top and towers over the engine—the supercharger. This is a "Jimmy" (GMC) truck version much beloved by enthusiasts, and, as with the engine, bears only a superficial resemblance to those units attached to the two-stroke diesels from whence they came. Starting from the block and working upwards, there is a plate between the bank which acts as a tappet cover and as a shield in case of the odd crankcase explosion. The Cragar manifold is just a large cast alloy plenum chamber with carefully lined up ports to the intakes. The blower itself squats on top, the two separated by a rubber O ring seal—this prevents distortion as these units are very sensitive to overtightening.

This Rootes type supercharger uses two three-lobed rotors with a "Teflon" edge seal. The casing and rotors are aluminium, the gears are steel and the endplates take double thickness bearings. In America some builders are going to double-lobe rotors to get an even bigger swept volume. Drive is by a 3 in Gilmer glass reinforced toothed rubber belt at 26 per cent above engine speed (25 per cent on the Donovan which also has a slightly lower, 6.0:1, compression ratio). The blow-off valve in the manifold is set to 200 psi, just in case of a backfire.

The Enderley fuel injection system pours ("meters" sounds too exact when $2\frac{1}{2}$ gallons are used during a run) the fuel into a three-butterfly manifold atop the supercharger and through individual injectors into each port. It seems that fuel surge under acceleration can cause starvation in the front cylinders so the port injectors are flow graded to compensate. Roughly half the fuel goes through the manifold and half through the port injectors. The fuel in the 392 is an 88/12 nitro/methanol mixture, while the 417 uses a 95 per cent nitro mixture. Light blue touchpaper and stand aside. . . .

The injection system works on the principle of putting as much fuel as possible in at the start line (too much and the mixture becomes over-rich, preventing combustion) and then leaning out via a needle valve, during the run, otherwise again it becomes over-rich and the engine may eight-stroke.

The elemental transmission system is basically clutch, drive shaft, final drive and tyres. The light but massive Hays three plate sintered iron clutch and forged alloy flywheel needs to be big to provide the required friction area. It is not just an "on-off" device, giving a controlled but adjustable initial slip. Once the clutch is popped, static pressure allows the engine to keep revving coming off the line. As clutch speed increases, bob weights acting through levers on the thrust bearing fly out under centrifugal force and increase the pressure until (at about a third to a half of the way down the run) it is so high that lock-up occurs and drive is direct. The static pressure springs can be adjusted and weight added or removed to vary the clutch characteristics.

The idea of centrifugal weights is not new. Some of the non-diaphragm clutches used them. What sets this unit apart is the sheer bulk of the thing and the forces involved, which are phenomenal. A blown clutch is nasty, so it must be strong. Just in case, though, a $\frac{1}{4}$ in Hydraformed scatter shield is used (Hydraforming is a method of moulding metal by explosives).

The rear axle is also basically Chrysler but narrowed to $26\frac{1}{2}$ in flange to flange. The third member (the differential casing) is light alloy. The old dragster uses a limited slip "Positraction" diff, while the new one has no diff, just a straight spiral bevel drive, The half shafts taper from $1\frac{1}{2}$ in to $1\frac{1}{4}$ in at the wheel, and are hollow with a $\frac{3}{8}$ in hole up the middle so they can act as a torque tube—if they were solid they would just shear at the splines. The brakes are the Airheart four-pot caliper type with unventilated discs, but as the 'chutes do most of the work they are seldom used, except at the start to "wind up" the transmission.

The rear wheels have to be seen to be believed—they look as if they belong on road rollers. The Halibrand wheels are magnesium, 16 in in diameter and either 11 or 13 in across the rim. The tubeless outer tyres, inflated to $4\frac{1}{2}$ psi, can put $14\frac{1}{2}$ in of tread width on the ground, and are a huge 31 to 32 in in diameter (static). Inside this is a safety liner—another tyre at 30 psi to hold the outer one on, and as an additional safety measure. Makers are either Goodyear or M & H. The thought of those things spinning away furiously only inches from the drivers' ears is quite frightening—imagine a blow-out!

To keep the device pointing vaguely in the right direction, the steering handlebars (that's a steering-wheel) operate a worm and sector box above the driver's ankles. Incredibly long drag links lead to the front suspension, which is light—oh so light. To the technically minded it is of the leading link torsion bar type, is brakeless and is fitted with Avon 225 x 17 tyres—from a moped, would you believe? Like I said, a lot of parts are overstressed.

The phrase "outa sight, man" must have been coined by afficianados of dragging when referring to the view of the front suspension from the driver's seat. Not only is there the mass of the engine to look round, but the wheelbase is 212 in. Which is long. Tying all the bits and pieces together is the chassis. Using 14 or 17 gauge tube $1\frac{1}{8}$ or $1\frac{1}{4}$ in in diameter it is a simple skeletal space frame and can honestly be described as "very flexible." Why? "It seems to work better" is Dennis's studied opinion, "although if it's too flexible it can ground on bumps, of course." Hmmmm. . . . The forward and downward rake on the chassis is there to give high speed aerodynamic stability and a degree of self centring. Covering some parts of the chassis is the home-made 18 gauge alloy bodywork, although the nose piece is glass fibre. The paintwork, beautifully pin-striped and multi-coloured, is basically a colour called (of course) Passionate Purple.

All safety equipment such as parachutes, driver's suit, fire extinguishers and seat belts is by Simpson (most of the stuff comes from America, somewhat naturally—but Dennis is scathing about British parts and suppliers. He can get faster, cheaper service from the States!). And dragging has an enviable safety record.

When studying Dennis's machines there is one overriding impression. Flawless workmanship combined with a strong sense of showmanship. Finish even on parts that are hidden is superb. Even the coke (or beer?) tins placed over the ends of the exhaust pipes to stop young children chucking stones down are neatly painted black. Tender, loving care just isn't in it. . . .

STRIP RUN DOWN

Latest news on the British Drag racing scene.

The second of the three International events held at HMS Daedalus near Gosport was yet another event to suffer the worst of English weather. With rain from the first run up till around two o'clock, there was no qualifying at all, and only a half hour or so in which to try out the short 1,000 foot track.

With some 10,000 wet enthusiasts loyally turning out to watch, they had to be given something to see, so the BDR&HRA decided to run match races based solely on times although it would have been better if the pairs had also been picked by class as well. So from a racer's point of view, with Stockers against Dragster etc, the meet was a bit of a waste of time, none being keen to risk valuable engines against cars that could not really be considered a fair match.

The one real exception was the Pro-Fuel field, with Nancy and Priddle, Herridge and Hutcherson and Norm Wilcox against Dave Stone in the 'Tee-Rat' altered, the next fastest car apart from the two funnies.

When Wilcox ran a 5.8 (1,000 feet remember) it looked as if the car was really starting to move at last, and then Nancy ran a similar time. Priddle was not far behind at 6.2, with Mike Hutcherson also getting into the sixes ahead of Herridge in the ill-handling 'Firefly'.

Wilcox understandably put Stone away on two runs, whilst Herridge's chances were spoilt by the big car getting out of shape particularly on the second run when he was almost broadside-on just off the line as Hutcherson shot through to win.

Tony Nancy took the first run against Dennis when some debris flew up in his face making him shut off, but at that point Nancy was starting to open up the big late model Hemi and it remained for Dennis to have another go in the second run, the last of the day.

This time, Dennis was out of the hole first as Nancy went up in smoke with an excess of horsepower, but really came steaming up after the flying Shellsport/Chrysler rail as Dennis dropped the chute early to record a 5.9 at 167. Nancy, slingshotting through just a few feet late hit a phenomenal 210 in 6.9, stunning everyone and promising to really go the following weekend back at the Pod, but more of that later.

Allan Herridge also had a crack at driving the Schumacher funny car, Don having returned home, and his replacement not having turned up. After his first burn-out, he couldn't get the car into reverse, so after struggling for a few moments, he charged off anyway to try and get the hang of it.

Paula Murphy in the STP car had already put on her usual professional show once, and then came out to run Allan, who again had trouble getting into reverse, and ended up driving the thing round in a U-turn and restaging from behind. Predictably enough, Paula was away first to another six, but Allan did very well to run a 7.9 in the car on only his second run, and the first one under full power all the way.

Running well at the meeting on its second outing was the Benbow/Fullerton Pontiac dragster. Some years ago the pair ran a Buick-powered altered with some success, and later switched to a Pontiac 421 in a new longer chassis. After four or five meetings which saw the car running in the mid-tens, a very good time in those days, the team ran out of clutches and money and decided to switch to a digger and sell the car. The chassis went to the Stones who are still using it with their Chevy engine as 'Tee-Rat'.

But they kept the engine and spent some more money on rods, pistons etc, and look like having a real challenger to Ray Hoare's Chevy rail with times in the 8's over the short distance.

A sobering fact concerning the short distance is that in the same time as Dennis Priddle went through the 1,000 foot mark, Don Moody, currently the world's quickest driver, went through another 320 feet to record his 5.91 last year at the Supernationals, admittedly with far better traction than is available elsewhere.

After completing (and winning) but one meet with his big truck block, Gary Coggin was back to the Corvette motor for the meeting after finding the crank thrust bearing had gone following his 10.8 run. Considering this, he did well to match the 9.5 that Kevin Pilling did with his 'Satan's Toy' Pro Stocker.

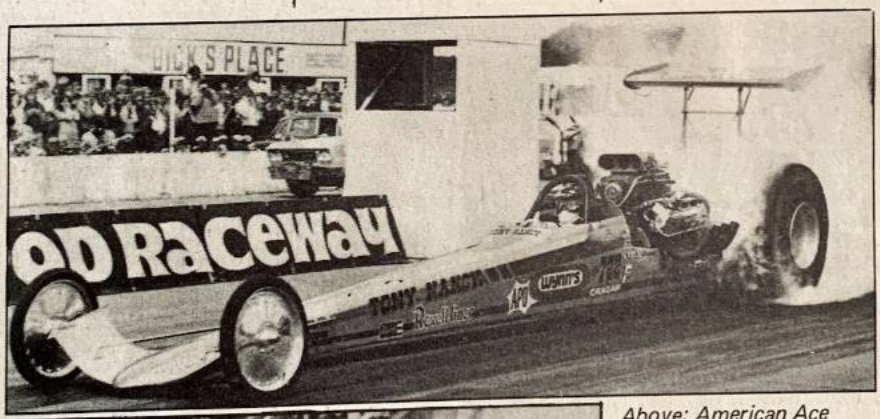
Pete Crane and Ray Edmundson had again hoped to debut their car with its new engine, but a gearbox problem delayed them for a day or two, and then, when all looked as if they would be ready, the starter motor burnt out on the eve of the event.

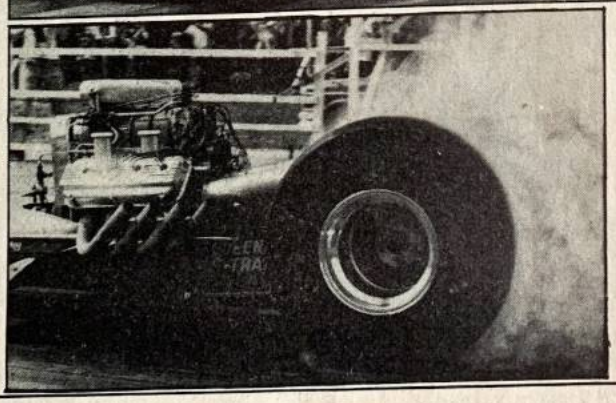
SANTA POD

The last of the three part international festival, run again at Santa Pod had as many upsets as the first drama-packed event.

The run that will probably be remembered longest was Allan Herridge's tremendous pass in the Schumacher funny. Despite rumours that Don would be back again to drive the car, he didn't in the end make it, so it was down to Allan to master the car and race Paula Murphy in the STP car.

Paula had already broken the strip record for funny cars set by Schumacher two weeks before with a 7.19





Above: American Ace pilot—Tony Nacy, puts down too much power leaving a trail of burning rubber from the start

Left: Wheels smoke as Denis Priddle leaves the lights with Mr Revell; in this run he recorded 5.9 at 167 mph

STRIP RUN DOWN

blast, and looked set to go even quicker. On Sunday, Allan made a full power run that netted a 7.7, much to the delight of the crowd, and later, the two cars arrived at the start line to race.

With both the burn-outs carried out simultaneously, the first two hundred feet of the strip once again disappeared from view from the top end, and after reversing back through the thick rubber tracks, both did second short burns and then staged in a series of hops, a dab of the throttle literally lifting the cars sideways to get lined up properly!

On the green, Paula was just away first, but this was going to be no walkover, and the big 'Stardust' car was thundering after her at full bore, Allan totally in control of the car and determined to catch up. But at around 1,000 feet out, there was a bang from his car and the roof came clean off, flying high into the air. This dropped the chute out as it parted company, but despite this, he still went through the traps at 199 in 9.3, just behind Murphy's 7.2. For what was only his fourth run in the car, it was a staggering achievement, and left everyone wondering what the times would have been if he had got right through. The explosion was the blower letting go as the motor ran out of fuel, leaning the mixture with disastrous results.

The showdown in the Pro-Fuel class was just as exciting, though as Dennis Priddle had already won two rounds, he could only be equalled on points.

Driving Priddle's new car, Norm Wilcox set low e.t. on Saturday with a 6.97, whilst Tony Nancy was second at 7.3. This had been a red light run, and his 219 top end indicated that he would have been well down in the sixes if he hadn't rolled forward and tripped the beam early.

Dennis Priddle in the ShellSport/Chrysler trail was next with 7.37, with Clive Skilton at 7.7 with his new Donovan engine. Mike Watcherson was last at 8.13, then Allan Berridge came out in 'Firefly' and got ahead of Clive with a 7.6 that ended up with him crossing lanes again and hitting the finish mirrors in the middle of the track.

On Sunday morning, Clive improved to a 7.3, so Dennis came out with a 6.8, but broke the rear end and had to withdraw from the competition. This left Norm Wilcox as No 1 with the bye run, which he took at 7.90. This was equalled by Mike Watcherson as he ran Nancy, who failed to get a time, but won convincingly with a record 222mph top end.

The last pairing was Allan and Clive, but once again, the big 428 in Allan's mount let him down on the line, and Clive took the run with a 7.35 at 200 as Allan watched him disappear from sight.

Nancy then paired off against Wilcox, and with two Americans facing each other, some good times were expected. Using one amber and green to start instead of the troublesome 'instant green' used on the first round, a close start was expected. Unfortunately, this time Wilcox red-lit, but had the Donovan motor really screwed on hard as he rocketed off the mark, Nancy thundering after him, and smoking his tyres in the mid range as he remained every one of his 450 cubic inches. The result was the quickest ever race in this country, with Wilcox losing with a 6.55 at 187, and Nancy hitting a 6.59 at 221!

So Skilton had only to take a bye to get to the final, and this he did with a flat-sounding 7.8. Still getting the new engine set-up, even he didn't fancy his chances too much against Nancy, but after two glorious burn-outs, Nancy was in trouble, and couldn't get back to the line, despite nearly a dozen helpers trying to pull him.

His clutch had packed up, and he had to shut down and let Clive run by himself, a bitter disappointment for the man who had not been too lucky in the previous weeks, and desperately wanted to go out on a high spot. Clive's 6.9 showed that the Donovan in his car is starting to respond and should soon be pushing the car down to low sixes.

Although Clive had won the battle, Priddle had won the war, and retained his International title for the second year.

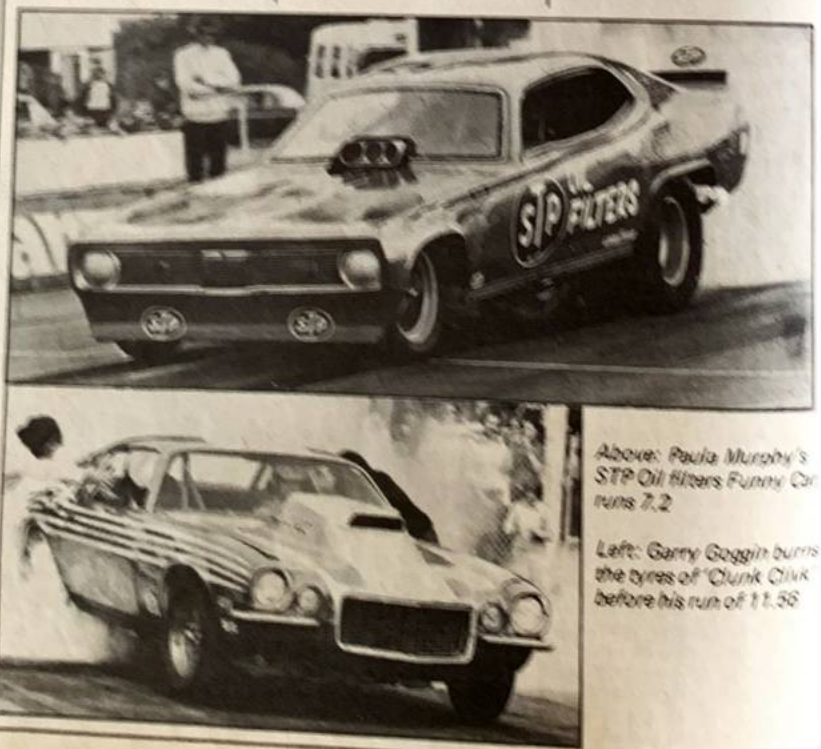
Dave Stone took the Top Comp title with a clean sweep, although Phil Elson at last looked like providing a challenge with an 8.7 in qualifying, and looks like improving on it in the future.

The Pro Stock class had six entries, two English altereds, and four Camaros, and each 'side' lost one member in qualifying. Gerry Andrews, in the Stone Racing Escort, blew a head gasket and damaged the block and head, whilst Pete Crane broke the prop in his Camaro. This he managed to repair, only to blow both head gaskets the following day. This left Gary Goggin at the top with 11.56, Kevin at 11.8, Tony Dickson at 12.7 on a new engine, and Geoff Hauser in Mike Aitken's Capri/Chev at 12.8.

Tony's new motor didn't perform too well against Gary, who ran an 11.2 to his 12.2, whilst Kevin took his round with an 11.5 to 13.1 for the Capri.

If Kevin won the final the two would have tied for the championship. This is what happened with Kevin on 11.14 to 11.26, although Gary was only running his Corvette motor. So the rerun had a lot hanging on it. After doing their best to match the funny car burn-outs, the two fastest street cars in England crept to the line, taking great care to stage just right. But Kevin over did the start and got a red, handing the title to Gary, but still racing him all the way to a super close finish with both cars crossing together. As Gary got the automatic win, who actually got there first was impossible to say.

In Top Street, the Rose brothers took their Barracuda to its first ever win, running through the usual high class field to meet Pete Andrews' Corvette in the final. Andrews had just pipped Dick Smith's Chevelle 12.2 to 12.3 in the Semi, whilst Dave Rose had downed John Ledster's Mustang 12.4 to 13.7. Andrews missed a shift in the final, and that was all Dave needed to win with 12.4 against the favoured cars 13.0.



Above: Paula Murphy's STP Oil filters Funny Car runs 7.2

Left: Garry Goggin burns the tyres of 'Clunk Click' before his run of 11.56

NOT SO FUNNY

● *It's not often that you see British drag fans watching open-mouthed—but when US stars Paula Murphy and Don Schumacher ran their Plymouth funnies at Santa Pod last month in the Petersen Publishing Internationals they left most of the record crowd gaping astounded! Paula, who is Miss STP, running in the 220-mph bracket, was matching Don's Stardust 7.7s at the Pod in a display of professionalism which showed just what American drag racing is all about. The sight of the high-backed 8 litre Dusters hurtling up the strip, rocking from side to side, was something else—and the Schumacher car will be seen more: Santa Pod have bought it!*

DRAG RACING—HOW GOOD?

Dear Sir

I am normally a circuit racing enthusiast, marshalling at Thruxton, but I was persuaded to go to the NDRC meeting at RAF Wroughton early in April and encouraged by this and by the coverage on drag racing given recently by two of the popular weekly motoring journals, I made the decision to go to Santa Pod at Whitsun.

Upon arriving at Santa Pod, I was somewhat surprised at the apparent scruffiness of what I had presumed to be a professional set-up. Am I correct in thinking that Santa Pod has been going for nearly ten years? To spend £2-50 for the weekend, one would be forgiven for expecting a few more permanent facilities and even hygienic facilities such as proper catering and clean-smelling toilets. There were virtually no seating arrangements except for a small stand.

The matter about which I was most concerned, was a situation between some of the bigger-named competitors. A lot of the time at Santa Pod I spent walking through the 'paddock' (there is absolutely no cover here for competitors or their cars) with some friends, talking to or listening to the competitors and their mechanics. In general it did seem as though there is a good atmosphere between fellow-competitors, as there should be in any sport. However, the big AA Dragsters seemed to be a different matter altogether. Here there seemed to be an intense atmosphere of jealous rivalry and, in particular, the cards seemed to be stacked heavily against the Castrol-sponsored car of Clive Skilton. Skilton appeared to be shunned by the other AA drivers and their crews (except, of course, Roland Pratt in Clive's other car) but on the other hand Clive and his mechanics were by far the easiest to chat to. The apparently deliberate lack of notice of the Castrol cars was even taken up by the commentator who went into great ecstacies whenever 'Mr. Revell' or 'Mr. Six', 'Firefly' or 'Hound Dog' came down the fire-up road and on to the Strip.

On the face of it, it looks as though anyone who dares to compete anywhere but at Santa Pod, is 'blacked' by the organisation even if they do have the fastest cars around. The public pay enough for the privilege of attending Santa Pod and I believe that they have the right to expect to see the very best cars competing. This whole situation seems to be very unhealthy and I challenge the Santa Pod organisation or the BDR & HRD to answer my points, in public.

Tim Walton, 214 Fleet Road, Fleet, Hants.

SMOKY MIN

Everybody's gone burnout mad this year. Sure, those fuelers have always put on a smoky show and the pro-stocks have been turning everyone on with those line-lock burnouts since the beginning of the year, but now even the street classes are joining in. Take a look at Robin Tallis for example. He's decided that what those Yank pro-stockers do with there back wheels, his true-blue British BLMC Mini can do with its fronts! Oh, and who needs one of those fancy line-locks when you've got a couple of mates just busting to break an arm? Keep it up Robin. **Roger Phillips**

DRAG RACING

● Will the real **Dennis** please stand up . . . D. Hulme, roundy-round racer meets D. Priddle, drag exponent

at a recent gathering in Luxembourg. Denny looks amused about something in Mister Revell's cockpit—perhaps it's to do with that dirty great diff casing stuck between his knees!

Driving this boss kart is Ed Shaver

SILVERSTONE INTERNATIONAL

The big question in everyone's mind at the NDRC Silverstone meet was whether or not the Swedish and German teams would once again walk off with most of the prizes, and although they did well the legendary Gunne Back was stopped by hard-charging Kevin Pilling, who had him sufficiently worried to red-light the final away.

Gunne had turned up with his '71 Camaro looking remarkably like his Corvette, but this time he had injection bolted on top of the mill and it was only once the engine was really working hard that it sounded right. But his 11.3 was second to Kev's 11.1 qualifying blast, with Tony Dickson third at 12sec on a misfiring motor. Keith Harvie showed up again, but had selector trouble and made a one-gear run in a 13, while poor Gary Goggin, trying out his truck-block motor, had the engine die on the line and failed to qualify. But he did come out later to show what it could do, and ripped of an easy looking 11sec at 127mph despite losing the motor twice when the rev-limiter cut in at 8100rpm.

The first pairing of the four pitted Kev against Tony, who had trouble with the light beams as he torqued the car up on the line. After staging twice they were off, but Kev had to shut down with an overheated engine, Tony going on to an 11.68. By common consent they re-ran it, with Kev coming out on top this time. Meanwhile Keith's bad luck struck again and Gunne took a bye as the Fire Brewed Camaro was pushed away with two rods sticking out the sump.

The final was a real showdown, and all eyes were on the two big stockers as they laid down their burnout smoke screens. But as they leapt away, wheels just hanging, the red was on in Gunne's lane, and despite a super-strong 10.99, Kev took it with an 11.09 to become the hero of the day.

Bob Oram, who usually runs in top street, ended up in Senior, where he met Gerry Marshall in the final, and after fixing a broken rotor-arm in the last seconds of the burnout and stage time, leapt out to a 12.9, his best ever. Marshall, who had already got down to 13sec in the Firenza, broke second gear and trailed to a 14 after an impressive and enjoyable appearance.

In the competition classes, the circuit was host to a great field of cars, with Bjorn Anderson running his Opel Manta funny to a powerful 8.5 at 177mph after looking very threatening all day. This was against Freddie Whittle, who managed 9sec after earlier beating Willie Hesterman in the famous Maffia Mouse Fiat which managed a 9.3 from its injected motor. Ed Shaver had hoped to be running with them in Mark Stratton's newie, but as it was still without a body, the novel rear-engined funny-car ran in top dragster and came up against Ray Hoare in the final after some promising mid-nines en route. But he lost fire on the line with injector trouble, and Ray soloed to a 9.6sec win.

With the top fuel field limited to three cars because of the absence of the Sant[illegible] of cars includi[illegible] and Priddle, [illegible] nowhere near [illegible] might have be[illegible] lacked in quanti[illegible] for in quality. Ru[illegible] stroked motor, Clive [illegible] a stunning 6.77 to qua[illegible] John Anderson going [illegible] hit a good 7.7 in the fa[illegible] Valkyrian rear-engined rail [illegible] looked as if it had just roll[illegible] out of a show. Roly Pratt blew the front of the blower off the Accles and Pollock car, so the other two cars decided to run a best of three, the side-by-side qualifying runs to count as the first. Anderson took the second when Clive shut down early, making for a cliff-hanger final. In this one, Clive laid down a great 6.6 at 217mph that left the other car straining to keep him in view with an 8.7. Any doubts about the potential of the Castrol car were certainly dispelled by this performance, and with the Donovan engine fitted, low sixes could have happened by the time you read this.

The meeting was obviously a success from most points of view, although the crowd control round the start-area is one point that needs improving, both from a safety angle and to enable the packed grandstands to get a better view.

John Dickson

QUICK TRICK CUSTOM VETTES

Top: A Doren's late model car has a 350 Chevvy engine, but times for the car have been disappointing, and he is said to be working on the car in preparation for a return to the strips next year.

Bottom: Pete Andrew's Corvette "Maxine's toy" is currently the most feared competitor in Top Street, and started the year in basically stock form. Pete was going to buy a Pro Stock Camaro, but when he ran a 12 with the original 427, he decided to stick with the car for the time being and had Colin Mullen fit an aluminium block ZL1 with tunnel-ram manifold and two Holleys. Best time to date is 11.5 at 124, and if the independent rear suspension could cope with the horsepower, it would probably be in the low 11's. Pete plans to fit a solid axle over the winter to help this.

Inset: Mike Yun's "Fantastic Plastic" see next page.

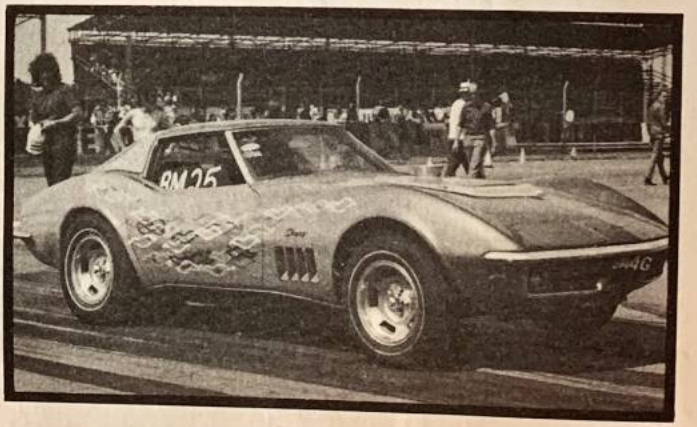
QUICK TRICK CUSTOM VETTES

Top: Mike Yun "Fantastic Plastic" started the year as favourite with his 427, and was the first Top Street car into the 11's. The car has been around for a long time, and regular followers may remember it in green over the past three years at various meetings. It was owned then by Jim 'Crazy' Krejcki, one of the fastest shifters ever to be seen at the strips in this country. Jim ran mid-13's with it when it had a hydraulic-lifter street engine. He sold it to fellow American Mike over the winter. Most of the parts came from Gary Goggin's famous 'Supervette', and the car has been driven by Ed Shaver and Krejcki at different times this year. Fitted with a new block, ally heads and a big Dominator carb, it has now unfortunately been sold back to the street as Mike has returned to the States.

Right: Adrian Yorke's car has an illustrious history stretching back two seasons, being one of the fastest small block cars to run at the strip. With a basically stock engine, the car ran low 13's last year, and earlier this season, just after Colin Mullen broke the front end of his 'Invader' altered with a wheelie, and sold the car less engine, they installed the 350in engine in the 'Vette. This engine had originally powered Joe Copp's legendary '57 Chevy about four years ago, although little remained of the major hardware save the tunnel ram and carburation. With this set-up, the car ran a best of 12.1, and was a strong contender in the early rounds of the STP Top Street championship, retiring when the engine finally came apart in protest at 'Yogi's' hard driving. Since then, the car has returned to the street, the efforts of the entire Yorke-Mullen-Andrews-Smith team going towards outright competition cars for next year.

Left: Rod Arkinstall's car was another early contender for STP money, running low 13's with its 327 motor, but recently the car has been absent from the strips.

Right: Maurice Morley's late model 427 is well known for its Auto Art paint job, but it has run some low 14's to date. The stock 427 has an Edelbrock Tarantula manifold and Holley carb, but next year, finance permitting, Maurice hopes to have an engine built up for him by Colin Mullen to campaign the car more seriously.



Ratcatchin Russo

Ken Goddard meets the man behind a fast movin' Chevelle

Just who is this guy "Russo" and what's his "rat" doing here anyway? It's a big orange Chevelle driven by a guy called Smith, the "rat" could be the big block Chevy mill but where does Russo come from?

If you followed drag racing very closely on the other side of the ocean you may have seen the name, but with so many drivers to choose from, only the better known ones mean anything over here. Frank Russo is a carpenter who spends his spare time appearing at the strips around the north-east states of America.

He had the "rat" built in '69 and was successful enough over the next couple of seasons to go out and spend £16,000 on a Pro Stock Duster from Herb McLandless. That gives you an idea of the sort of money that can be won in the States if you have a car capable of holding off the competition, but with all the cars about, a winner today may not even be a qualifier in a couple of months time.

It happened that at the time he came to sell the car, the present owner had just decided to look for a car to race on the strips over here. Richard is a partner in an advertising agency in the West End of London and had been living in America for about seven years, where he became interested in drag racing as a spectator but had never thought of competing.

On his return to England he was looking around for a road car and as he fancied a Yank, he came into contact with Tom Marshall at John Woolfe Racing. This was where he first heard about British drag racing and as he had enough contacts in the States to get hold of a car plus all the goodies he needed, decided to get involved.

Continued

A trip to the States led to his being put on to Frank Russo and the Rat was bought along with a host of spares. The car was shipped back to England where it has been running just as it did in the States with very few changes, even keeping the same paintwork that had been done so well by A & S of Danbury, Connecticut.

The Rat motor is a closed chamber, cast iron 427cu in that was prepared by Truppi-Kling, who are reputed to have built more record-holding Chevies than any other engine builder in America.

It uses a standard bottom end with L88 rods and TRW pistons. An L88 cam drives the GM SHP rocker arms via GM 7/16 push rods and guide plates. Stahl headers take care of the exhaust and the inlet manifold is an aluminium GM one which was reworked by Truppi-Kling.

The Holley 850cfm double pumper that sits on top is one of the things that has been changed. In the States the car was regularly running 11.1s and 11.2s with a 780cfm Holley, but due to the atmospheric difference they had to go up seven sizes in jets before they could get out of the 13s and the change to the larger carb brought them down into the low 12s.

The best time to date has been 12.18/119mph and Richard puts this down partly to the carburation and partly to his lack of experience, as this is still his first season of racing.

Inside the car the floor has been cut away to make it easy to get the gearbox in and out. Richard says this was done by Russo for a good reason. Apparently he used to make a bit of money off the strip by competing in illegal street races.

Two guys would meet on a lonely road at night and run their cars against each other for so many dollars. Of course the rules governing this aren't so strict and a change in gearbox was made for these runs to one that couldn't be used in NHRA meetings.

The box that is now used in the car is a Muncie M20 with Doug Nash gears with a 2.20 first. The Weber clutch sits inside a Lakewood bell housing and at the rear a GM 5.53 ring and pinion is mated to a Moroso posi unit and axles from Summers Brothers. Fenton wheels are used all round with 15x3½in fronts carrying Moroso Drag Special tyres and 15x8in at the rear shod with M&H Racemaster slicks.

Since its arrival in England the car has been housed at Sunbury in the workshop of Colin Mullan who has been doing all the work on this as well as many other Chevies. Colin and Richard intend to keep running the car in Top Street just as it is, without any changes to the cam, number of carbs etc but they intend to try and trim off a bit of weight (from the car) in an effort to get the times down into the mid-to low-11s. When this happens they will rebuild completely for Pro Stock.

One thing that Richard and Colin found, like so many others in this country, was that the cost of parts, especially performance parts, is out of all proportion to the cost in the States making any form of competition using American engines an expensive pastime.

With his ties to a speed shop in Connecticut called the House of Speed, Richard could get parts shipped over without too much trouble but found he was supplying parts for other drivers on an informal basis as well as filling his own needs.

This has led to the opening of a speed shop in Sunbury that also bears the name House of Speed. All standard and performance parts for Chevies are stocked and special orders for parts not in stock or for other makes can be filled quickly and cheaply.

While he was over in the States making some of the arrangements for opening the speed shop Richard also purchased another car, which should be over here by the time you read this but had been caught up in a docks dispute which delayed its departure from New York.

This is a '57 Chevy known as 'Super Pumpkin' which had been sponsored by Fred's Speed Shop of Yonkers, New York. Again this car will be run just as it was in the States and it promises to be a real winner. With the 306cu in motor at present fitted it has run 11.02secs so when the carburation has been sorted out for this country we can look forward some good times.

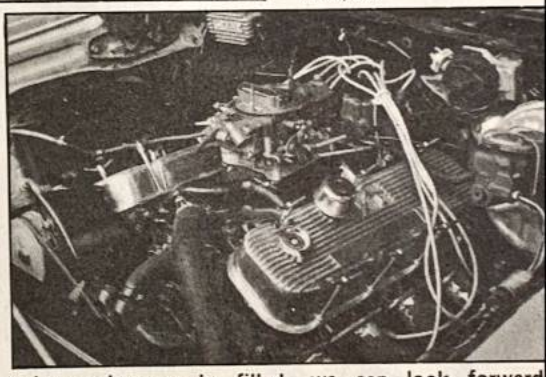
It seems that like a l people Richard S started something off personal interest and ha more and more involve the extent where he w running two cars financing a speed though his advertising ness doesn't leave hi much time to get inv with the running o shop.

It would seem to good thing for sports as drag racing that the people around wh interested enough to this much time and eff it as it helps more pe compete by bringing down, as well as pro some interesting cars spectators.

Above: Final work on the Chevelle goes on into the night before race day

Left: The latest acquisition is a '57 Chevy with a 306cu in motor, 'Super Pumpkin' and will be stabled with the Rat

Below: All 427 cubes and reworked alloy inlet manifold with a double pumper Holley sitting on top. The shiny engin covers are by courtesy of Mick Thompson



Stop Run Down

The August 11th Big Street meet at the Pod was not one that lived up to its name, as a surprisingly sma'l Top Street entry made up only an eight car eliminator. With Dave Stone and a few others in Sweden, Dennis Priddle at the Brands 208 day, and all the other big fuelers and funnies laid up with various rebuilds, the action was not as fast and furious as it had been three weeks before, but nevertheless, many cars broke personal and strip records.

Ray Hoare was one to do this as he took Top dragster with his beautiful rear-engined Chev rail with an 8.98, fastest ever injected rail, and second only to Stone's 440 altered which is over 130 cubic inches larger in capacity. John Fullerton took the equally immaculate Pontiac rail to a 10.7 in the semi-final, and shows great promise of challenging Ray and the other leaders in the class after a few more meetings to develop the car.

In Top Comp Phil Elson ran a good 9.1 to take the class over Freeman Rodgers' very impressive 10.4 in the near-stock 427 Ford car. Both the other qualifiers improved on their best times, Jeff Morris taking a dip into a 10.9 in the smart 'Oblivion' Avenger Chev, and Dick Sharp running an 11.3 in the Pontiac/A35 'Dorset Horn'.

But in Pro Stock, it was once again Kevin Pilling who hit back at the recent threats of Gary Goggin by coming out and running a staggering 10.6 with his new slick-shift gearbox. Gary responded with an 11.11 with his Camaro, still running the old but very potent Corvette motor.

Pete Crane then ran a commendable 11.5 in the Hunter Plastics car, his first full power run of the year without a failure of some sort. But even so, the car apparently lost oil pressure, but by the time this was traced to a blocked line to the gauge, he had missed his round against Tony Dickson.

Dickson was back to his old engine and just qualified in the last minutes after a couple of days frantic work fitting a tunnel-ram manifold and fixing a string of minor problems. His 12.3 was just behind Gerry Andrews 12.2 in the Chev Escort. With Kevin running a bye at 10.8, it was obvious that his times had been no fluke, then Tony was lucky with a 12.0 when Pete Crane didn't make it. Gary shut down the Escort with an 11.05, then faced Kevin in the final after an 11.1 bye. Kevin disposed easily of Tony with an 11.0 to 12.3 then faced Gary. Running their usual super-close race, Kevin's power told in the end as he blasted through the lights at 131 mph in 10.8 to Gary's game 11.1 at 126.

Pete Andrews set the Top Street class alight with an 11.5 qualifier, then threw it away in the final to Dick Smith's Chevelle by red-lighting to the half-second slower car with an 11.8 to 12.2 Bob Oram broke his E-type crank on Saturday whilst practising, whilst Mike Yun had sold his Corvette prior to returning to the States, taking two of the leading contenders out of the class, whilst several others were repairing their cars after the Internationals

SWEDISH MEET

Meanwhile, in Sweden at the International meeting held at Mantorp Park Racetrack, Dave Stone was wishing that he had never gone despite running several low 8's on Saturday, including a great 8.07. But on the first run of Sunday's elimination, run on a handicap basis, Dave ran out of stopping room on the short track, and after trying to get round a tight harpin bend ran out of room and went down an embankment, writing off the front of the car. Luckily, Dave was not hurt, and the damage to the car was confined to the front, but it was a sorry end to a promising day.

Gunne Back emerged as Top Eliminator after all the class winners had run under a handicap, whilst the 'Second Invention' Opel funny that was seen at Silverstone ran a terrific 7.9 to take the funny car class.

BUYING AND SELLING

Mustapha Errol, who was reputed to be buying Keith Harvie's Camaro, has decided to stick with his Hemi Cuda for the time being, and is rebuilding the engine and fitting a new high-stall torque converter to help launch the car.

The Camaro meanwhile, has gone to Steve Osment-Petrie, who will campaign it in Pro Stock after some exploratory runs to get the hang of it. Harvie meanwhile will run his '60 Corvette with a big block until he has his next season's Vauxhall/Chev finished.

Meanwhile, Pete Bennet, having sold the legendary Rat-motored fueler to the Stones has just taken possession of a Chevy Nova 427 Pro Stock. Equipped with a clutch-turbo transmission similar to Pete Crane's, the car has recorded high nines in the States, and should be running by the time you read this.

Pete Andrews is another who will probably go the import route over the winter, having put off his earlier intentions of this when his Corvette started to go so well. That will probably have a solid rear end fitted to cope with the power of his aluminium block motor that at present is proving too much for the independent rear end.

Top: Dick Sharp runs an impressive 11.5 in the Pontiac-powered little A35 Dorset Horn Bottom: Tyres crinkle as Tony Dickson in Money Hungry takes up transmission slack ready for the 'Go' light

STOP PRESS

As we go to press thought we'd whet your appetite with some pix of the action up at the International at Santa Pod on 7/8 July. Just look out for our full-colour report next month. Re-live the thrills or make up for missing all that drag fun. Here are three of the Yanks, reading top to bottom:
On his third visit to this country Tony Nancy brought over his brand-new, streamlined, rear-engined digger to face our top stars in pro fuel.
Side-by-side funnies in the shape of Paula Murphy's STP special and Don 'The Shoe' Schumacher's Stardust.

WHO PUTS THE PRO INTO STOCKS

It started in the USA and now it's going strong over here; there's just a handful of guys who drive the ultimate in street strip stock machinery.

Bursting on to the scene in force this year have been the Pro Stocks, ultimate street machines with upwards of 600hp, and performances better than many altereds and dragsters.

The Pro Stock class started in America around five years ago, when the Super Stock class had grown so fast and become so popular that the name drivers really wanted a class of their own. They got it, with the 'Pro' meaning professional in every sense of the word, the 'Stock' meaning production-type cars of no more than three years vintage.

Certain limitations on weight per cubic inch, size, etc were made, whilst the cars had to run carburetted, petrol-burning production engines. Starting in the tens, the cars got faster and faster as the years went by, dipping into the mid-nines at around 140mph. At this point the factories were starting to push their compact cars, and Don Nicholson turned up in a Maverick with a single OHC Ford 427 that soon terrorised the strips.

Instead of outlawing such admittedly spectacularly fast cars, the organising bodies opened the flood gates to the current Chev Vegas and Ford Pintos, all fitted with small block motors that can only be bought in medium and full size cars. These cars, with tube frames and every trick part in the book are now running in the 8.9-9.0 range, cost some $40,000 plus to build, and although still retaining the petrol/carb rule, are virtually gas funny cars far removed from the original concept.

It was this progression that led to the present funny cars, only it started around ten years ago with injected, then blown, the fuel motors being put into production bodies with ever more modifications.

The class started in England only this year, but its roots go back further. Over the years several outstanding saloons have appeared at the strip, but it was only in 1971 that one name emerged far ahead of the others, and that was Gary Goggin, who took his legendary 427 Corvette to many wins.

Tired of losing time after time, for 1972, Tony Dickson decided to import a car to beat him, and located a car in the States. This was in fact a 'B Gas' car, originally fitted with a 302, but he had a 427 sent with it, and dominated the Top Street class for the first half of the year, by which time two more cars had arrived, whilst Goggin had found some more power and regained his edge by season's end.

It was generally agreed though, that the cars should no longer run in Top Street to be fair to the more standard vehicles, and some Pro Stock rules were formulated. At this stage, one faction already wanted to allow many modifications, including engine swops not only from large to small cars, but to European ones as well. In view of the fact that not many genuine Pro Stocks would be around initially, the rules did include these cars, though to date only the Stone's Escort/Chev and Aitken's Capri/Chev have made it onto the strips. As we write, the decision still has to be made about the future, but it looks like the two types of cars will run for '74 together, with hopefully a split in '75. This would not exclude highly modified production cars such as RS Capris and possibly XJ12's, though to be honest, they would probably find it hard to be competitive, the whole point of issue being whether or not you can buy the car from a dealer in quantity, with the same engine.

Photos Michael Key

GARY GOGGIN

Looking at the cars then, we'll start with the current king, Gary Goggin. Deciding that the writing was on the wall as far as his Corvette was concerned, Gary went to the States last year and looked around for a while before coming across his car. This was run by a lawyer called Don Wolfson, and had recorded several 10.0 times.

After selling his Corvette with a stock street engine, Gary kept the 427 from that, whilst also bringing in a Wally Booth 427 and another spare truck block motor. As well as three engines, several boxes of spares gave Gary a good start to the first serious season of racing.

Trying to pinpoint what makes the engine tick is hard for all the Pro cars, as nearly all the drivers are constantly changing various parts, either to gain a few horses or to repair damage. But basically, the Booth motor is 439cu in, with a blueprinted bottom end running in the usual four bolt high-perf Chevy block with a General Kinetics 332B cam, generally reckoned 'the' cam to use.

After trying both Tex Collins and Harland Sharp roller rockers, Gary has reverted to standard Chevy stamped steel units with 7/16 pushrods, with General Kinetics valve springs. A Mallory Mini-Mag fires Champion plugs, whilst the induction is via an Edelbrock TRX2 tunnel ram with dual Holley 660's. Gary also has a pair of Dominators, but hasn't tried them yet. A Holley fuel pressure regulator and filter is monitored by a fuel pressure gauge mounted in front of the windscreen.

Transmission is a Chrysler 4-speed with Doug Nash gears and modifications to give instant shifting, accomplished via a modified MG Gasket vertical gate shifter. A Lakewood bellhousing contains the Booth modded clutch with Hays Glasslock disc, whilst the rear end is also a Chrysler unit, carrying 5.38 Scheiffer gears.

Instead of the usual leaf springs, the axle is located with coil springs, Logghe shocks and adjustable ladder bars. The case has been narrowed two inches to get the giant Goodyear

STRIP SNIPS

Santa Pod raceway is negotiating with the American Hot Rod Association about the possibility of becoming an AHRA sanctioned strip.

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It seems to be the time of year for a bit of secondhand dragster dealing. Colin Mullan, who has sold his Invader competition altered to Mike Hall of Guildford, is to buy and race Pete Andrews' 12sec top street 'Vette. So Pete Andrews is to import a '69 Camaro pro-stock called the All American Rat which is reputed to have the greatest paint that you ever did see. Plus news that the Stones have bought the Bennet/Herridge rail which will join Tee-Rat as part of the Stones' racing stable. The phantom rail lives after all!

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On top of all that, rumour has it that Keith Harvie is building a Firenza pro-stock car and Robert Oram, of Red E fame, is to build an E-type pro-stock.

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Remember the rumour about Mark Stratton's Nova-bodied rear-engined funny car? The saga continues. Mark decided against the Nova body and started thinking about a Jago Jeep, but then a glass fibre Capri body happened along which had him tempted for a while. But no, Mark wanted something completely different so now folks he's finally made up his mind. Yes, now it can be told, Mark Stratton's back-motor funny car body is definitely gonna be a Clan Crusader. How the hell does he expect to get Ed 'Layer Cake' Shaver in there?

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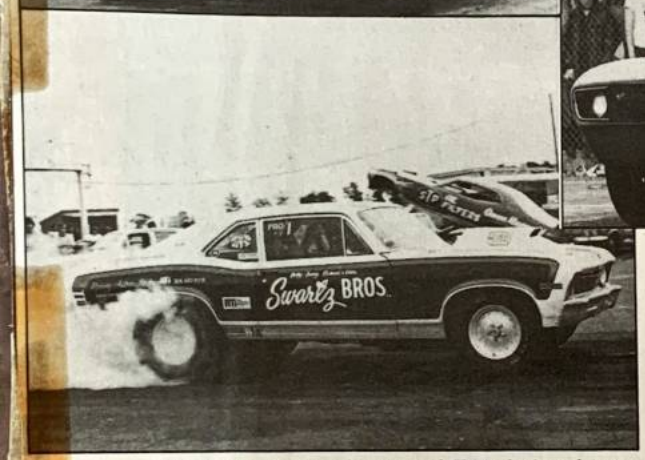
Seen on the side of the Custom Car Econorail at the Pod recently — "Transverse-tite". Could there be a joke in there somewhere?

slicks, mounted on Cragar Supertrick wheels, inside the acid-dipped bodywork. Yes, they dip the whole car to reduce the thickness of the body to around 25 thou, whilst the front end is glassfibre.

Brakes all round are discs by Strange Engineering, whilst the stock steering has been replaced by NSU rack and pinion. With a current best of 10.5 at 136mph, Gary is the man to beat, and even when things are not quite right, he still seems able to come up with a trump card when it matters most.

KEVIN PILLING

Very, very close though, is Kevin Pilling, hard charging driver of 'Satan's Toy', the all black '67 Camaro that started life as the 'Keilbashi Kid' imported by Dave Riswick and Pete Stanford last year, and bought by Kevin at the latter part of the year. Over the winter, Kev started planning his act, starting with a change of identity for the car.



Using the usual Chevy bottom end, Kev substituted Ansen aluminium rods for the Chevy ones, doing most of the work himself apart from machining. The heads he sent down to Harry Weslake, though unlike the other runners, they are cast iron instead of aluminium.

The cam is again from General Kinetics, with roller rockers instead of the stamped ones, whilst a recent addition is a Jomar rocker stud girdle, which ties the valve train together to reduce the chance of studs or rockers failing. This requires an extra spacer under the rocker covers to give the necessary height. Kevin also uses a Mallory distributor, but instead of the smaller Holleys, he has two big Dominators on an individual runner manifold from Edelbrock.

Kevin's engine is one of the few that has stayed virtually unmarked through the season, but the same cannot be said of his gearboxes. After using up a couple of Chevy boxes and a secondhand Chrysler one, he went to the top and bought a complete slick-shifted box from Joe Liberty, which gave an immediate three-tenths gain. Even so, this gave trouble for a couple of meets, but seems to have settled in now.

A special prop was fabricated to meet the challenge after two standard ones had broken in half, whilst the rear end is a 12-bolt Chev with 5.13 gears. Wheels are Cragar spokes all round with Firestone Drag 500 slicks. Lakewood bars and drag shocks with extended spring shackles look after the traction, whilst up front are tall Moroso tyres, while the anti-roll bar has been removed to aid weight transfer.

The inner fender panels have been removed, whilst a glass bonnet with tall 'scoop rounds out the bodywork. Otherwise the car is pretty stock inside, retaining most of the trim, and to date has run a 10.6 at 134.

PETER BENNET

Newest car on the scene is Peter Bennet's Nova, already up for sale if anyone is looking for an 'in' to Pro Stock. Formally run by the Swartz brothers, and capable of 9.7's, Pete bought the car after a prolonged stay in the States this summer. Arriving just before the 'Nationals', the car ran an 11.03 on its third run with a 127 top end, and with Kevin Pilling driving, has since gone down to 10.6.

Superlight, the car has been extensively lightened in the acid bath, and even has glass bumpers to get the weight down. Cragar Supertricks all round further reduce the weight, the front tyres being Firestone, the rear Goodyear.

The engine is a 440 with Howerd aluminum rods, though the current block has Chevy rods in it, whilst the cam is another 332B with Chevy pushrods and Isky roller rockers.

Air-Research ally heads nestle under the Edelbrock low ram manifold with two 4500 Holleys. A Vertex mag fires the mixture, unusual in this class.

The transmission is an ATL clutch-auto with a Weber flywheel and metallic disc hooked into the 3-speed auto box, with a Winters shifter. Another home-made prop made of 3½in steel tube, and 12-bolt Chev rear end with 5.38 gears completes the transmission side, whilst stock drums and Strange Eng discs stop the car. Long traction bars snub right up on the floor pan to control axle movement, whilst the springs have been moved in to get the tyres under the arches. Definitely a well-raced car, it does not have the finish of the others, but is certainly a competitive vehicle.

TONY DICKSON

Tony Dickson's 'Money Hungry' being the first into the country, has fallen a bit behind the others this year with a couple of cam failures keeping the new engine out of commission for most of the season. The original engine was a near stock 427 with street cam and single 4-barrel carb, and at its best this ran an 11.8, but with a new motor with some special piston and rod work, together with a pair of Booth heads, tens were expected.

Unfortunately, the very strong valve springs wiped the lobes off the cam, a General Kinetics 320, and it was back to the old engine. This did extensive damage to the engine, and only recently has it been possible to get the good engine back in the car. Meantime, a secondhand General Kinetics cam had