

been used, but that has also failed now, so to finish the year the Chevrolet 299 cam has gone back in.

Carburation is now an Edelbrock TRX2 with two 660's, bought from Pete Crane, though a Weind tunnel ram was tried for a couple of meetings with the single 850, this being lent by Dick Smith of 'Russo's Rat' fame. A stock GM distributor with Accel points and SuperCoil is good enough for 8,500rpm, though with the weaker springs the engine now has, 8,000 is around the limit. Plugs are Champion N9Y.

At present the car is the only one using a fully automatic gearbox, this being a B&M competition Turbo-Hydro with 4,000 stall speed converter. With the 332 cam, this did not really work well at the start, the cam not working until over 5,000, whilst the present 299, although better off the line, has not so much top end. The original 320 should have been right everywhere, but that will have to wait till next year now.

The rear axle is a Pontiac with 5.11 gears. Wheels are 10in ET's, with 13.50 Firestones, whilst the fronts are Cragars with Moroso tyres. Lakewood traction bars, AirLift airbags and Hurst shocks are used at the back, whilst the front has Koni shocks in softer 6-cylinder springs, with the anti-roll bar removed as in Pilling's car.

The front is a hinged one-piece glassfibre moulding, otherwise the body is stock, although the doors and boot have been stripped out of inner metal. Best time to date is 11.2 at 130mph, the time showing up the poor bottom end. Osbourne & Son Insurance, and Duckhams help out with the running costs.

KEITH HARVIE

The last of the big American stockers is still one of the favourites, Harvie's Camaro, 'Firebrewed'. This came on the scene last year, blew up its first engine before getting onto the strip, but finally got down to a terrific 11.2 at the last meeting of the year.

But this year, after fitting an all aluminium block and throwing a rod at the first outing it retired for a while before appearing again at Silverstone with a new iron block. This also dropped a rod, and the car has now changed hands with another new engine, and is currently owned by Steve Osmond-Petrie, who plans to come out with it next year.

Exactly what trim it will be in is unsure, but initially it had a Crane cammed 440 with two 660's on an Edelbrock tunnel ram, with Doug's headers. A Muncie 4-speed and 5.38 Chev rear axle with 11.50 Firestones on Woolferace wheels with Lakewood bars and drag shocks rounded out the power train, with similar front end mods to Pilling's having been done. The hood scoop by the way, had a mould taken from it, and some of the other cars are using copies of it.

You can see that a lot of the parts used are virtually the same regarding suspension and basic engine blocks, the differences come in the finer points of tuning, both chassis and motor wise—Goggin's having the most sophisticated suspension of them all, and showing it with consistently faster times.

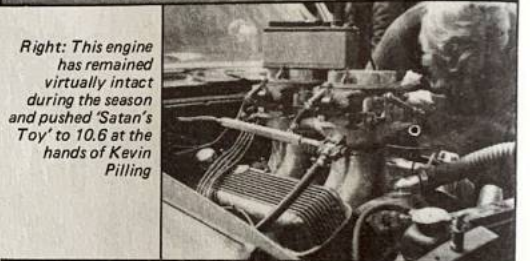
With a couple more cars likely to arrive in the winter, next year could see an eight car field with any luck, and there is a good chance that at least one of them will be a Chrysler product. The hemi is without doubt the more powerful engine to have, but to date, its expense and rarity have put people off running one, when so much good big block Chevy equipment is around at reasonable prices.

The first one to get sorted out could have a real edge in what looks like an even better season, and we could see the first nine by the end of the year.

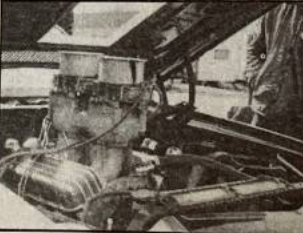
PETE CRANE

But if Tony has had trouble, Pete Crane and Ray Edmundson have had it in spades with their 'Eazy Ridin' 71 Camaro. Now virtually a new car mechanically, the car ran a 12.8 at the first practice meet on a gentle run, then broke its gearbox at the first meeting. Duly repaired, the car then threw a rod, leading to a long rebuild and a decision to switch to a B&M Clutch-Turbo.

Eventually coming out after missing another meet with a burnt-out starter, the clutch, one of the few things that hadn't been changed, started to slip, and the engine went again when the pushrods fouled on their guideplates, sending metal shavings all round the engine.



Right: This engine has remained virtually intact during the season and pushed 'Satan's Toy' to 10.6 at the hands of Kevin Pilling



Left: Yet to do a sustained ¼-mile run, the Chevrolet engine of Pete Crane's 'Eazy Ridin'
Photos: Mike Key

So at present, the car has yet to make a full run, though it did run 11.5 with the clutch gone. One of the smartest cars around, the body is very close to stock, with just the inner fenders removed, and the bonnet made of glassfibre. The rear axle is a Chev with 5.38 gears, with wheels being Cragar all round wearing M&H slicks.

The engine has been rebuilt by Chris Steele, and apart from the usual, has a Crane roller cam and kit, with roller rockers on the ally heads. A regular distributor fires Beru platinum plugs, and the induction is shortly to be Crower injection. A new Weber 40lb flywheel and clutch, together with the new trans should do the trick when the car does get back in action though the team are now looking to next year for any serious effort.

Watch out next month when we feature some of Britain's low cost strip machines... the econorails.

Paula's
**NO-
 JOKE**
Funny

Photos by
 Mike Key

One of the biggest hits of the International series (and the drag racing season for that matter) was the STP Funny car driven by Miss STP, Paula Murphy. Hers was the first of the visiting cars to run, and after that first

stunning burn-out and full quarter pass, British drag racing could never be quite the same again.

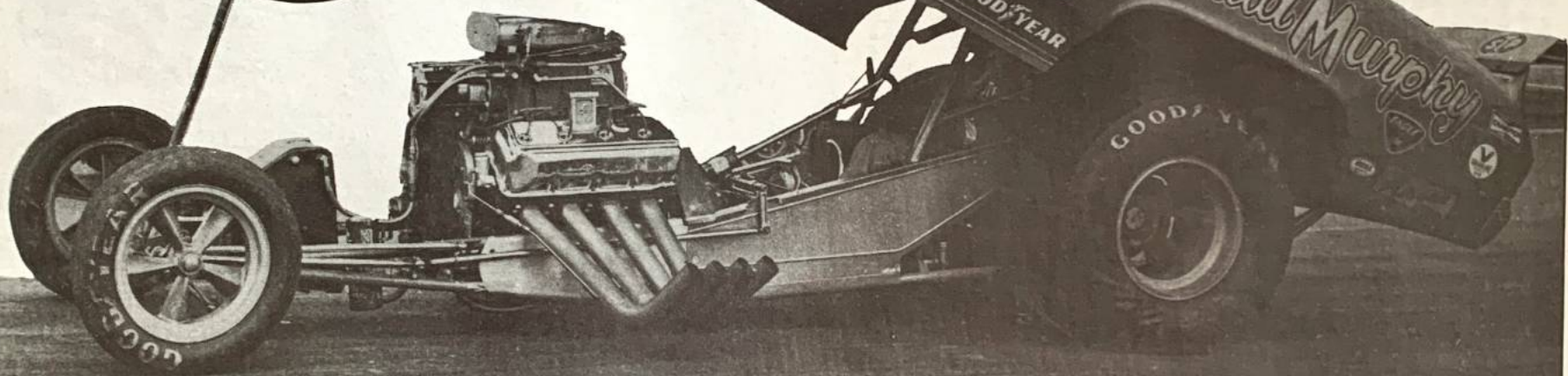
Her first run was a 7.8, but the bumpy top end knocked a hole in the sump. Later runs after a repair session saw a further improvement in times, and when she left after

the three week stay, she had lowered the funny car record to 7.18, faster even than Schumacher had run earlier, though he still held the speed record at 202.

That e.t. record will probably stand until either one of the Americans returns to lower it. Neither of the promising new English funny cars are likely to get near it for a long time, although with both the American

funnies staying here, a determined effort could get either of them there after the drivers and crews have got used to them.

But how did Paula come to be driving the 1800 horsepower monster? Well, she first got hooked back in the late fifties, driving in a whole bunch of roundy-round events, mostly in Porsches, Ferraris etc, though her first race was at the wheel of an Alfa Romeo, entered more or less as a dare in a women's race at Pomona. She won this, and from then on was into the sport for good, driving in all manner of events, including the Mobil Economy run, and many stock car races on



small California dirt tracks.

This led to an offer from Andy Granatelli to join Studebaker as a test driver, perhaps the best salesman since P.T. Barnum, and later to head the giant STP Corporation. In a Studebaker Avanti, one of the company's last-ditch efforts to keep solvent, she set a speed record for women at 161mph at Bonneville, plus many distance records up to 1,000 miles.

In 1964 she drove Walt Arfon's jet car to a high of 243mph, setting a two way record of 236. But despite all this activity, she was finding it increasingly hard to make ends meet, (heard that before somewhere) and moved into the steadily growing drag race field, driving mostly stockers for some years before getting her fuel licence in 1968, around the time that the funny cars were getting off the ground.

In August '69, she topped 200 for the first time in the quarter, turning in a 7.55 e.t.

in an earlier STP Plymouth, whilst in '71, she was back in a stocker to set a new closed course record for women at Talladega Speedway of 171mph in Fred Lorenzen's Plymouth Nascar Stocker.

Last year she set a new world two way record at Bonneville in the now famous 'Pollution Packer' rocket car of 6.7, her average speed being 131mph (average taken from zero to the 250 plus terminal) and was named as one of America's leading women athletes by a board of newspaper sports editors.

This year she has driven the 'Pollution Packer' to a 6.00 at 258 at the Winterationals, whilst shortly after she set top speed at the famous Bakersfield 'March Meet', hitting 219mph in her new funny car.

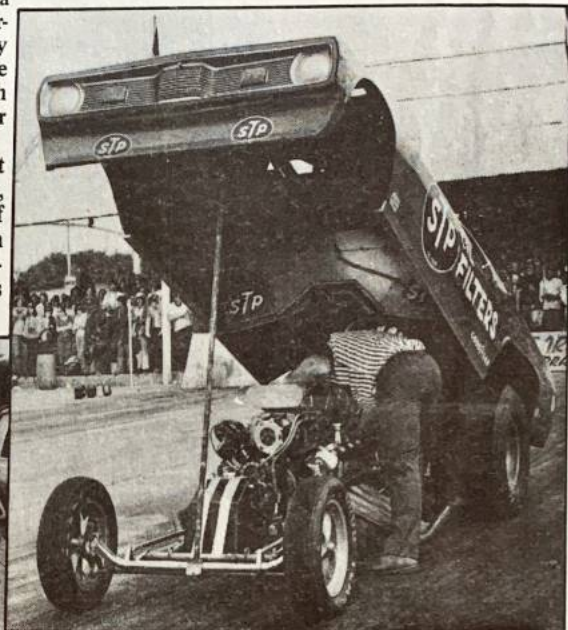
This was built for her last year by Romeo Palomides, who is famous for some of the early jet record cars in the mid-sixties, and compared with other chassis, seems

remarkably simple in construction. The front is suspended by torsion bars with Goodyear-shod American 5-spoke wheels controlled by a P&S steering box.

The rear end is a big Chrysler, with a Lenco two spoke and reverse passing the power through. The engine is one of Ed Pink's late model 'Elephants' displacing around 488cu in (that's big!) Enderle injection and a Vancharger blower sit atop the usual collection of parts, running on a nitro diet of 98%. This will be reduced to something in the eighties in the interests of

longevity over here. Paula's best time in the car was a 6.56, faster than any of the rails have gone to date apart from Norm Wilcox's stint in Mr Revell at 6.55, and a good target to shoot for.

Paula meanwhile, besides planning on a return whenever possible, is apparently going ahead with plans for a new rocket car similar to 'Pollution Packer', which is now one of the most heavily booked cars on the drag race circuit, and a match race series between the two is likely to make Paula and Dave Andrews, the 'Packers' driver, even more popular.



Top: The top flipped for last minute adjustments to be made before Paula makes a run at the Pod

Above: Paula, a serious looking 'Funny' pilot

Top left: Typical Stateside funny; plastic replica body with ram air scoop poking through the dummy bonnet

Bottom left: Paula's successor Owen Hayward smokes from

Skilton beats Priddle at 6.72s

SPONSORED by the Radio and DJ Monthly magazine, whose earlier attempts this year ended in a rain-off, the BDR & HRA's Nationals over the Bank Holiday weekend had plenty of action, several new strip and personal records.

One of these was Gary Goggin's 136 mph run in his Pro-Stock Camaro, new with its Booth motor really starting to turn on. His e.t. was a 10.75s, and he backed this up with a 135 run in 10.70s, just outside Pilling's record e.t. Running alongside him on the first run was Pilling, but he broke the rear end in his car after having just fitted some new slicks, but managed to get repaired in time to run an 11.02s later in the day. Tony Dickson's first run was slow at 12.2s, but a bad plug was replaced to produce a promising 11.7s at 126, not as quick as hoped, but certainly faster than before.

Gerry Andrews ran a 12.3s in the Escort/Chev, still sounding too low geared to most ears, whilst a new threat to the class turned up in the shape of Pete Bennet's imported Chevy Nova. Running a 4.27 with Clutch-Turbo trans similar to Pete Crane's, the ultra light car (2,700lb) looked very promising, and qualified on Sunday morning with a 11.8s whilst in practice, Goggin ran a record 10.54s, Pilling a 10.72s and Dickson an 11.6s/12.8.

The Top Street brigade was also busy, with Pete Andrews also breaking a diff in his Corvette and having to repair overnight, whilst John Ledster damaged the gearbox on his Mustang and retired, leaving Richard Smith with a 12.4s as overnight leader, and Dave Rose second at 13.0s in the Barracuda, running a new cam after tracing their recent troubles to some worn lobes. On Monday Bob Oram also had to pull out with a broken oil pump in his Jag, whilst Smith also retired with a broken gearbox after a practice run.

Andrews got running and took the car down to 11.9s, going on to win the first round over O'Connor's 383 Zephyr 12.06s to 13.55s. Morley and Mutton, Corvette and Torino, both had easy byes with their pairings out of action whilst Rose came through with a 14.7s to meet Mutton, winning with a 13.1s to 14.9s. Andrews ran an 11.8s to beat Morley's later model Vette with a 14.6s, then faced another final against Rose. Dave was trying a bit too hard and red lit to a better time of 12.5s, with Andrews going through in 12.1s, seizing the engine in the process and probably ending the Corvette's career as he moves on to a Pro Camaro.

In the Pro racing, Gary took the bye with an easy 11.1s at 130, then Dickson and Andrews ran together, poor Andrews getting the gearbox jammed on the line and leaving the Duckhams Camaro a solo run at a much improved 11.27s at 128. Peter Bennet also improved to 11.66s against Pilling's 10.79, and in fact was to get down to a very good 11.0s in a later match race against Pilling. With the uneven numbers, Pilling then had a bye at 10.70s, whilst Dickson red-lit

against Goggin to another 128 run, the later model Camaro hitting 133 in 11.01s. The familiar twosome again lined up in the final, with both really trying, pulling wheelies in each gear until Pilling did a Dan Gurney and pulled the gearknob off in his two-three shift, Goggin going on to a terrific 10.67s at 134.95 mph.

In Top Dragster, the Bruce Brown 454 Chevy rail turned up again, this time owned by Dave Prior, but driven by his wife Roz, who immediately endeared herself to one and all with a high ten first time out. Running better every time, she got down to 10.2s before meeting Ray Hoare in the Top Dragster final, slowing a bit to 10.4s as Ray ran a strong 9.7s. Tony Anderson, who had broken his own class record the day before with a stunning 9.3s from the blown 2.5 Daimler, was the other finalist, and with a good 'hole-shot' it looked like he would take it, but Ray's 302 Chevy really turned on at the top, streaking past with a 9.9s 164 to 10.02/12.9.

The new rear engined funny car that had debuted at Blackbushe the previous weekend with its long awaited body fitted, had had a quick paint job done in Castrol colours, and with Ed Shaver driving as usual, it made several rather hairy runs in the low nines before going into competition against Dave Stone, also a new record holder at 8.54s in the injected 440 Chev altered. Phil Elson, going better of late, was in with a 9.02s, and beat Freeman Rodgers in his

semi-final when the strong running 427 Ford broke another half-shaft.

Stome beat Shaver after a close race up to the mid point, when the funny car started to ease off, then lost the whole issue by red-lighting away a probable win in the final, Phil taking the Top Comp title for the second year running with his blown 392 Chrysler 'T'.

Among other events that even included a stupid bomb "scare" that cleared the commentary tower, Radio 1 DJ Emperor Rosko had a ride in Goggin's Camaro, and, emerging suitably subdued by it, had a go in the wheelie Stingray, doing well to get the car up on its back for twenty yards and clocking 101 mph, whilst DLT drove Mutton's Torino a couple of times, presented all the trophies and generally amused everyone with various antics. But entertainment aside, it is doubtful if there will ever be a race to equal the final of Pro Fuel which had everything going for it all weekend.

Priddle was low qualifier with a good 6.7s on Sunday in the Donovan powered Revell car, whilst Skilton was slow at 7.40s in the similarly powered Castrol car. Just behind him was Allan Herridge in the Raceway's own car, still handling badly but turning in good terminal speeds, whilst Mike Hutcherson was down at 8.14s. But with official qualifying over, not being too happy with the car, Skilton came out again late Sunday, this time sounding much stronger, and showing it with a 6.8s at 218, his best with the Donovan to date. All the cars made runs on Monday morning, Skilton improving again to 6.7s at 220, getting very close to Tony Nancy's speed record.

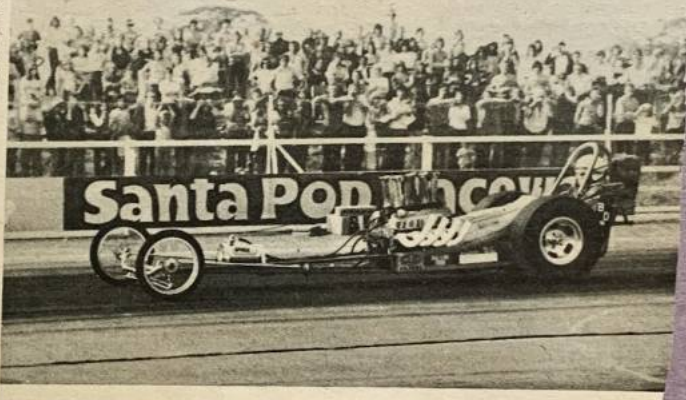
Priddle drew Herridge for the first round, and made a fantastic start to record 6.78s at 181 as the 426 Dodge powered car chased hard at 7.3s 206. Mike Hutcherson was even less fortunate as he pulled a wheelie against Clive and shut down as the Castrol car ran its best ever at 6.69s 223 mph, a fabulous top end.

With rain threatening, the final was brought forward to ensure a race, and once again, the old tension was there as the two superstars, their own supporters' clubs much in evidence, pushed down the fire-up road and barked into life. This was the first time the two had faced both running their Donovans, and with near-identical motors, the ultimate in both rear and front engined design, the best known strip to both of them, the winner was going to be the best man.

It was also obvious that the first one to move was likely to be the winner, but no one could have guessed that in a race lasting just over six and a half seconds, the lead could change three times!

But after two beautiful, smoky burn-outs that left the ground sticky for minutes afterwards with hot rubber, the two cars crept into stage. With Dennis's recent spate of lightning starts, it came as a surprise to see Clive reading the lights so perfectly and grabbing a slender lead only to have Dennis alongside and then ahead at around two-fifty yards. But the superior top speed told, and the green and red car was suddenly making up ground fast and sling shooting past at the finish to a 6.72s at 221, with Dennis quicker at 6.68s, 210, but still losing by a matter of inches. An incredible race and a suitable ending to one of the best meets in a long while.

J.D.



ROZ Prior endeared herself to one and all with a high ten first time out in the 454 Chevy rail.



Priddle at Blackbushe drag

BIGGEST drag racing news of the weekend was the appearance of Dennis Priddle at the NDRC event at Blackbushe, breaking the backs of the disputes between the two promoters, and perhaps pointing towards a happier future. The Swedish entry of Joan Anderson did not in the end make it, so it remained a three-car affair in Top Fuel, with the almost total lack of traction ending any hopes for really good times.

It was Roland Pratt who was fastest qualifier, having learnt from the other two that horse-power was the last thing needed as he ran a strong 7.4s run, ahead of Skilton's smoky 7.5s, and Priddle's even worse 13.2s as he shut down with hopeless wheel-spin.

His luck was to stay bad as well, for in the first round, he broke the diff again as Clive laid down a 7.5s at 202 mph to 8.2s at 192 mph. The second round was an even bigger surprise as Roly Pratt shut down Skilton with a beautifully judged start that ended with a cloud of smoke from a blown head gasket

at the finish, with a 7.4s to 7.5s. Skilton's last run of the day netted another 7.5s as the sleek car fought for grip to no avail, although once again it was dead straight.

Top dragster was also decided between two rear engine cars, with Tony Anderson's Daimler coping best with the conditions to run a 9.7s to defeat Ray Hoates very fast Chevy rail at 9.9s, while Senior also went to a rear engine car when Ian Frazer ran an impressive 11.04 to beat John Rowatt's Chevy at 10.8s, the side mounted Ford V6 going better than ever before. In fact, counting Ken Penfold's Junior-

winning kart at 13.6s, all but Middle of the dragsters classes were won by a rear engine car. Yet another to make headlines was Ed Shaver in the Stratton funny car, at last fitted with an unfinished glass body Vauxhall, and handling in it's own peculiar way to win against Liam Churchill's Capri when he shut down whilst staging on both runs with minor ailments.

In Senior Comp, Freeman Rogers has been the man to beat lately with the 427 Ford, but after he ran out of brakes, hit the straw bales and bent the front axle, the class was left wide open to Dick Sarpe and Pete Smith, the next fastest two, and sure enough, it was these that faced each other in the final, with Pete Smith braking and letting the little A35 Pontiac win with an easy looking 11.66s.

In Top Street, only two cars really stood a chance as well,

for after Dick Smith found ominous traces of bearings in the oil of his Chevelle he pulled out of competition, leaving Derek Rose to face Pete Andrews in the final 440 Barracuda against 427 all alloy 'Vette. Definitely down on power, the Rose's Cuda made a good start, but could do little about the power of the big Chevrolet and went down with a slow 13.7s to 12.0s. Pro Stock had the usual three Camaros, the other cars in the class all being laid up with various problems.

Garry Goggin was running the Booth motor that he had found with a bad cam in earlier this year, and he looked promising with a 11.3s to be No. 1. Kevin Pilling was troubled with gear selector difficulties with his car, but managed an 11.8s just ahead of Tony Dickson, running an 11.9s with new 5.13 gears.

After repeated burn-outs to try and get some grip, Garry Goggin took the bye, then left the two 67 models to fight it out. Coming away stronger than it has for some time, Dickson's car was alongside all the way until Pilling's slipped out of third gear to a disappointing 12.8s to 12.1s. Running together in the final for the first time in a long while, the long time friendly rivals again went through the burn-out ritual to try and get some rubber down, then Garry left Tony 'sleeping' at the lights with an 11.8s — but Tony's time was a best ever of 11.57s a welcome step in the right direction after a bad month or so.

As promised, the general facilities were even better than the other Castrol/RAC rounds this year, with good seating, washrooms and entry into the airfield much improved over last years jams, and a truly enormous crowd turned out for the ever popular event, vindicating the work that is being carried out to turn the venue into a semi-permanent strip run in the direction of the original Drag Fests back in the mid-sixties.

J.D.



BLASTING off the line Goggin's Camaro leaves the similar machine of Tony Dickson.



Clive Skilton chases sub 6.5 second Drag record

Ask Clive Skilton what it feels like to travel a 1/4-mile strip in 6.69 seconds reaching a speed of 223 mph and he'll tell you it's like coming down Mount Everest on skis. However, that gives you no indication of the size of the machine under him. With a 7.4-litre engine producing an incredible 1,700 b.h.p. at 10,000 r.p.m., on every run it eats up five gallons of 80% nitro fuel at a cost of £25. All of which goes to make drag racing the noisiest and most spectacular of all motor sports.

Although this American based sport has only really caught on in England in the last few years it's fast increasing in popularity. And in Clive Skilton we now have one of two drivers with the necessary talent and drag machinery to challenge the Americans.

His new machine, is powered by an aluminium Donovan engine designed specifically for the job.

In setting his seal on the BDR & HRA National Championship (the title being decided over a 2-day meeting at Santa Pod in August) Clive beat his arch rival Dennis Priddle, and in the process set up a new record of 223 mph. His fastest time for the distance is 6.61 seconds set at Silverstone earlier this year and he currently leads the

Castrol Championship (the first drag series to be recognised by the RAC) and hopes to achieve a fantastic sub 6.5 second run at a terminal speed of around 230 m.p.h. before the end of the season.

Although Clive's machine is very much the cream of the cake, there is also an incredible variety of dragsters in the lower classes, many of which are currently turning in performances as good as the Americans. 'Strip-teaser' is a good example of these. Handled by Roger Bishop and Roger Missent it's basically a mini van equipped with a vastly modified 3.8 Jaguar engine. Ed Shaver's Castrol-sponsored Funny Car is based (very loosely) on a Vauxhall VX4/90 and is capable of performances not far short of the Top Fuellers. Freddie Whittles' 'Shutdown' is another Castrol-sponsored car powered by a 6.4-litre Chrysler engine. It currently leads its class in the Castrol/RAC Championship and looks like finishing around 3rd overall.

But to explain the excitement of drag racing is virtually impossible. Far better that you experience it for yourself at Blackbushe on September 30th for the final round of the Castrol/RAC National Drag Racing Championship.

Strip Run-Down

The return of the funnies to active competition on Sept 15/16 did not quite live up to expectations, with only one good run coming from the two cars all weekend. The Hounddog/STP car made several good burn-outs but new driver Owen Haywood was still not ready to give it the gun for a full quarter, whilst Allan Herridge, driving the Stardust car, had another drama when the motor cracked one head in half and lifted it off the block when it was fired up. This was repaired during the course of the afternoon, and in one of the last runs of the day, he cranked off a good 8.1 at 185 after one of the smokiest burn-outs of all time. His luck was little better in the Pro-Fuel action, despite a respectable 75 qualifier in the big 'Firefly'. Priddle was in at 6.8, with Hutcherson third at 8.0.

Dennis's first bye run was an easy 7.2, then Herridge and Hutcherson faced each other, with Allan again having to shut down as the monstrously handling car got out of shape again. This left Mike with a shot at Dennis in the final, but he then broke his diff on firing up, which left Dennis with another solo run at a mind-bending 6.68/207.

Kevin Pilling took Pete Bennet's Nova down to 10.6 in the Pro Stock action, the third car to make it, and the second in his hands. His own Camaro was still out of action with a broken diff bearing, and he only ran the Nova on Sunday after going home to rob the water pump of his car to get the Nova running.

Gary Goggin was slower than usual with 11's whilst trying out a new ignition system that proved to be a failure, whilst Tony Dickson, running 11.2's, was finding that his torque convertor and camshaft were just not compatible, and couldn't get off the line decently. Dennis Stone was driving the team's Escort with a modified exhaust system, but stayed in the 12's, whilst Mike

Aitken spent most of the weekend sorting out his troubled Capri.

In the end it was Goggin who came through to win with a perfect hole-shot at 10.8 to Pilling's 10.6, the car regaining most of its form when it needed it most.

Action elsewhere was pretty good, with Dick Smith taking Top Street over Dave Rose in a close race, and Dick Sharpe beating a very strong field of Chevy runners in Senior Comp with his Poncho-powered A35 with an 11.45 over Phil Carlyle, who broke his prop coming off the line in the Black Night Viva/Chev.

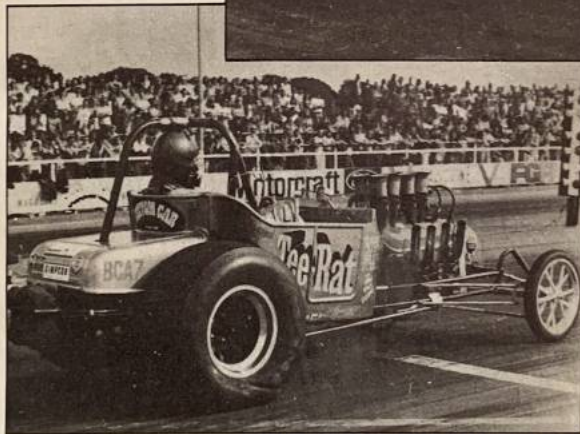
In a similarly strong Top Dragster class, it was Tony Anderson's Daimler that got the win, with Dick Carpenter driving it to a 10.0 over Derek Benbow's 10.4 in the immaculate 421 Pontiac rail. Mike Treutlein, John Whitmore and Roz Prior had all challenged with 10 second runs, while Brian Ringsall in the small hemi-powered 'Taxi' also ran well, but lost fire against Benbow, victor over Jim Read's amazingly fast, but unfairly matched stock block 390 Ford that ran an 11.9 in qualifying.

A new and welcome Competition Altered running at the meet was Pete Atkins' 'Slo-Mo-Shun' Olds/T. Although the car itself is not new to the strips, having first run back in the sixties with a 289 Ford for power, it has been a long time since Pete actually raced. Last year, he was out with a blown 394 Olds that did itself to death in two runs, so now the car sports an injected, stroked and bored engine of some 8-litres.

Coming off the trailer

Two from the Stone's drag racing team. The V8-powered Ford Escort recently ran 12s in the Pro Stock class their famous Chevrolet Competition Altered Tee-Rat. Dave managed a winning run of 9.57secs. Running two dragsters proves expensive so Dave and father Dennis are looking for sponsors for the '74 season

Photos Mike Key



European Grand Prix at Santa Pod

THE weekends drag meeting at Santa Pod was billed as the European Grand Prix of drag racing, but in fact the intended European entry had to be put any other, except for the return of the two funnyies to active competition, and despite good runs by England, Morris, Hall and Carville, all in small-block Chev powered cars of one type or another, it was the Pontiac that was still running strong at the finish with an 11.4s as Carville broke in the Viva/Chev.

Phil Elton was away with 'flu in Top Comp, but his place was filled by Pete Atkins' 8-litre injected Olds car, running well with an initial 10.1s, then seeming to slow up with every run. But he got to the final against Stone, who was slower than usual at 9.57s and went out with a red light 10.8s, the car sounding strong at the top, but losing a lot through wheelspin.

In Top Street, with the end of the year and the STP championship coming up, several people seem to have given up now that the leaders cannot be caught, although the growing disparity between the cars is obviously a big factor here.

Dick Smith's Chevelli led with a 12.1s ahead of Oram's fast 8-type at 12.88s, Al O'Connor behind with a 13.36s. Dave Rose ran a 13.4s in the big 440 'Cuda, having just overhauled the engine and still easing it along.

It was the two big saloons that got to the final, Rose beating Oram by the narrowest of margins in the semi-final after the Jag driver had made a terrific start to a losing 13.2s to 12.8s. Smith ran two 12.2's to get through, then another 12.2's to win from Roses 12.83s. In a later friendly run, Rose got down to 12.42s on the new motor, so at Blackbushe he will be looking for his first 11.

There were five entrants in Pro Stock, with Gary Goggin and Tony Dickson in their Camaros. Pilling still in Bennetts Nova and Dennis Stone in the Escort/Chev and Mike Aitken in the Camri/Chev.

In spite of a modified header system, Dennis could still not get the Escort going as it should, though it did seem to come off the line better, whilst Aitken spent most of the day in the pits working on the injection. Tony Dickson ran three good 11.3's and ended up as fastest over night, Goggin making only one run at 11.8s with faulty ignition, and Pilling not running at all with a broken water pump.

By Sunday this was repaired, and he moved smartly to the top

with a terrific 10.71 in the Nova. Goggin improved to 11.24s, whilst Dickson got worse trying to get the car off the line effectively. Kevin took the first bye run, then Stone and Dickson raced, with the Escort making a very good start to a 12.4s, with the Camaro stumbling off the line to a 12.1s that did the trick at the top end. Aitken fared no better against Goggin, who then went on to the second round bye, with Pilling and Dickson first out in the semi. The better 'launch' of the Nova again proved decisive against the Camaro as he ran a 10.6s to 11.6s.

Facing a stiff challenge, and not having run a ten all weekend, Gary went into the final up against the wall, but made a perfect start and dipped into the tens again at 10.8s, 132mph, enough to beat Pilling, even faster, 10.6s at 131mph and pulled off another good win.

Lastly, the much heralded funny cars were back in action, although only one made it onto the strip on Saturday, and that was as it started to drizzle, so little came of that apart from the sheer thrill of the burn-out and the incredible bark of the engine, the big stroked 426 sounding like nothing else!

Joining Owen Hayward in the STP car on Sunday was Allan Herdridge in the repaired Stardust car, and after one short burst to see that everything worked, the two cars came out to race. But fate struck again, as with a giant bang, the right hand head was lifted clean off the block, split in two, apparently through a hydraulic build-up of fuel in the cylinder. So Owen had another single pass whilst the other car was pushed back to the pits for some frantic repair work.

Somehow, the rest of the engine seemed to be in reasonable shape, and by late afternoon, was ready to run, and the bark of its engine was heard in the pits as the portable starter brought it to life.

Within minutes, the two cars were readied and back at the line with Herdridge doing a terrific burn-out that smothered everything in the pure white smoke boiling out from the back. On the green, it was the Stardust car all the way, and sounding strong as it rocketed through at 185mph in 8.11s. The crowd had waited all weekend for that, and showed it, whilst Owen was still not happy with the STP car although he held on well initially.

Priddle's drag title

NOT one of the best of the NDRC's meets, the weekend's Blackbushe RAC/Castrol championship final was really saved by a good entry of British and Swedish cars. With so much in promise, the Blackbushe site attracted another good crowd in what was hardly ideal weather. But try as they obviously did, the club never quite got themselves into gear, leaving an inter-mittent electronic gremlin struck again, leaving an inter-mittent countdown and eventually a flag start—at times without the flag!

But the action was good, and the traction improved, but still erratic for the more powerful cars, particularly the four funny cars, all of which sounded good, but none could really get hooked up to the track. Liam Churchill avenged his defeat at Long Marston by beating Ed Shaver's Vauxhall with his Capri with a 9.4s then went out in the final to Bhorn Anderson's Opel, the run taking place virtually in darkness, nitro flames providing their own unique illumination.

To get there, Bhorn had run a bye when Pete Atkins lost fire in the big Olds altered, whilst Churchill disposed of the fabulous blown 427 Volvo of Jan Carlsson. Anderson's 10.34s was just ahead of the big Capri's 10.56s.

In Senior Comp it was Pontiac again that came out on top with his team taking on allcomers with their A35 with a string of 11.4s to 11.5s times that seemed little affected by the surface. Even the big 427 of the Pages Topolino was not enough to do the job as they ran an 11.4s to 11.5s to take the Senior Comp title, one of the many decided that day.

Ray Hoare also seemed little affected by the surface, only running slightly off his average times, and qualifying at 9.7s with the rear-engined 302 Chev, just ahead of Tony Anderson's rear-engined blown 2.5 Daimler. These two, old friends and rivals, came to the final with little to choose, so when Ray was away first to a strong 9.9s there was little that Anderson could do to catch up.

The big dragsters numbered four, with John Anderson making up the now usual threesome at NDRC events. Skilton took his usual position at the top with a 7.5s, chasing hard for the Castrol RAC championship, with Priddle at 7.9s, despite having shut off very early. Anderson lost a blower running his 8.7s, but had the opportunity of borrowing the Accles & Pollock unit. After another of his promising runs, Roly Pratt got caught by the crosswinds and drifted into the concrete mirrors, losing it, and hitting a straw bale hard enough

to damage the front of the car, though again without personal injury.

After some brake trouble, Skilton took the bye as fastest qualifier with a 7.5s, then Priddle took care of Anderson with an 8.0s as Anderson's good crowd in 'chute early as he got crossed up in the mid run.

With Robin Tallis close behind Skilton in the overall points race with his Mini, all hinged on the final, for with less than five cars, there would be no runner-up points.

With night approaching, the start was lit by the flashing header flames as the two big Donovan-powered cars staged, then both cars were lost in boiling white smoke, which drifted clear to reveal Priddle the winner by 7.4s to 7.7s, ending his bad streak, and robbing Skilton of the title. Tallis having already won Junior Street and overtaken Skilton's points lead. Brian Bucknal had meanwhile taken NDRC prize of a new VW by taking Middle Street with a 14.9s over David Vizard's fast Avenger at 16.1s.

Nile Rodeblad, previously here with his turbocharged Chevelli Malibu, showed up with a very smart Volvo, also 427 powered, but carburetted. This ran unfairly in Top Street, getting easily to the final against Errol's rebuilt Hemi/Cuda, vector over the Rose's 440 version of the same car. The final went to the big Volvo with a 12.1s to 12.8s, Errol's best in the car to date.

Pro Stock, with Pilling absent, and Aitken, Dickson, Goggin and Back, the great Gunne having returned with his injected 462-inch Camaro. He was not running as well as usual, though, managing an 11.7s in qualifying, third spot, behind Dickson and Goggin. Gary, late in arriving, only made one morning run, but that was enough as he hit a phenomenal 10.6s on the slick track; Tony, with another engine change to try out "this year's" engine again, was 11.5s. Again in near dark, the two cars came out for the final, with Back leading all the way as the Capri ran out of petrol, or all things.

For once, the odds seemed to be against Gunne Back as Gary left him all the way in the first run, only to have shifter trouble and lose the race in the closing stages. The Camaro driver was unaware of the flag start, and was unsighted anyway by his Capri as well as watching the thick roll cage, without any apparent signal. For the first time that anyone could remember, the usual re-run was refused. Again in near dark, the two cars came out for the final, with Back leading all the way as the Capri ran out of petrol, or all things.





Now that should give Mick Hill something to think about . . . Liam Churchill (6.4 s/c Capri) was runner-up in the Top Competition class.

BLACKBUSHE

Priddle pips Skilton

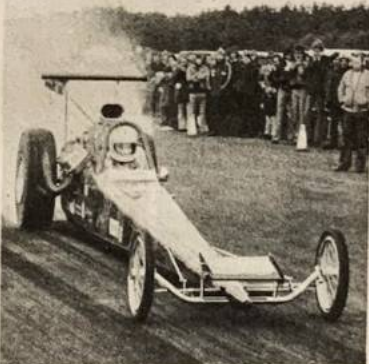
Sunday's Drag meeting at Blackbushe—second of the year at the Camberley venue and last of the six round NDRC championship—was held in blustery, cold weather that threatened rain all day, but thankfully held off. The venue again showed its worth by attracting a crowd little short of the previous event, held in far more favourable weather. The entry was first class, with five Swedish cars over for the day, two of them new.

The traction compound spray did improve the grip, but not greatly, so once again the big dragsters were scratching for grip, with Skilton getting low spot at 7.5 s, Priddle doing a glorious smoky run to shut off early at 7.95 s, and Bjorn Andersson in the foreign car running an 8.7 s. Roy Pratt then wheeled the Accles and Pollock car out, did an impressive 8.0 s, but clipped the centre mirrors at the finish in the windy conditions, and veered off the track into a straw bale, demolishing the front of the car. The throttles jammed open, and for several long seconds, the huge Chrysler engine screamed at full revs off-load, but somehow stayed together until Roland could shut it down.

Skilton was first out on what would now be a bye run, but after firing up he found his brakes had failed, so retired to the pits to find the problem. Andersson and Priddle were next, the Swede running Pratt's blower after losing his during the qualifier. This time, as Priddle was pulled back into stage after the burn-out, a start line marshal stumbled and fell under the back of the car, pulling the parachute out. Both had to shut down to give Dennis time to repack, then, as expected, the front-engined car outpowered the other with an 8.0 s as Andersson shut down early with more traction problems. By then Skilton was fixed, and laid down a smoky 7.58 s, leaving the usual twosome for the final. With electronics trouble all day, the race was started by flag, with Priddle away first, headers belching fire in the gathering dusk. With smoke covering the track, the race was lost to sight from the start, but Priddle held on to his slender lead with a terrific 7.47 s to 7.74 s—a result that cost Skilton the RAC championship, which went to Robin Tallis in Junior Street, with six straight wins to Clive's five.

The funny car entry consisted of four cars, and although they were not quite in the "Stardust" calibre, all four cars put on a

great show in difficult conditions, with the finish and detail work of the two Swedish cars being particularly impressive. Liam Churchill's Capri, sounding stronger than ever, avenged its recent defeats by leading Ed Shaver in the Castrol Vauxhall all the way with a 9.3 s. Carlson's mean looking Volvo, with blown 427 Chev, was an immediate hit, but went out to Churchill. The more sorted Opel/Chrysler of Bjorn Andersson went on to beat Churchill with a 10.35 s to 10.56 s, both cars again slipping the power in and out in search of some grip. Running in a strong Senior Comp field were the Page brothers, back in action again after months of trouble with their gearbox, but after getting to the



Bjorn Andersson's Top Fuel suffered traction problems.

final, it was again Dick Sharpe in the little Pontiac/A35 that did the trick, with a close 11.44 s to 11.55 s, giving him the NDRC Senior Comp title for the year.

Ray Hoare, hailing from the same West Country town as the Sharpe crew, led Top Dragster qualifying with an impressive 9.78 s, with Roz Prior and Martin Rowat on 10.3 s and Tony Anderson at 10.0 s in the Daimler. It was these two who met at the first Blackbushe meeting, with the smaller car taking it, but this time, Ray turned the tables with a 9.92 s to a slow 11.79 s as Anderson backed off early. Pro Stock had four entries, with the popular Gunne Back joining the home com-

petition. He was not running as well as on his last visit, qualifying with an 11.7 s. Tony Dickson had his new engine back in the car, albeit with a "street" cam, and ran an easy 11.5 s, whilst Gary Goggin really went well to hit a 10.6 s, his new Goodyear "stickys" really helping him. Mike Aitken's Capri was sounding strong in the pits, but not on the strip, and his best times eluded him. First pairing was Goggin and Black, with Gary storming away to a convincing lead, only to have Gunne sneak past in the closing inches as his shifter hung-up which prevented him from getting top gear. With the lights at this stage being intermittent, Tony Dickson arrived at the line having just been told to expect a Pro Start, and shielded by his roll cage and windscreen pillar, failed to see the flag starter, or Aitken, until he was two car lengths away. Instead of offering a rerun, usual practice in such occurrences, Aitken chose to go to the final the easy way. But he ran out of petrol anyway as Gunne took his injected Camaro to its first win in the UK.

Rodeblad's very clean 427 Volvo had the class of the Top Street entry, although once again running what amounted to an upholstered competition altered against regular street cars was hardly fair. The idea of bringing over foreign competition is very sound, and should eventually lead to European rules common to all, but with ever increasing championship awards at stake, running such cars against the regulars is not too healthy. As it happened, Mustapha Errol in his extensively rebuilt Hemi-Cuda nearly pulled it off with a good start, but the Volvo made it up with a 12.1 s to 12.86 s.

Otherwise, the meeting again showed up some flaws in the NDRC's running that keep occurring. After a late start, qualifying went smoothly enough, but some time after losing the lights, they seemed to lose touch with the meeting, even allowing for a share of bad luck. Lack of room in the control van and general communication difficulties all seem to contribute to this, for once something goes wrong, the system collapses. And after all this time, it really is inexcusable that the electronics, so vital to the sport, should still give so much trouble. But despite this, the promoters, sponsors and club have made a genuine effort to put an alternative series without a home strip, and with an increased programme and more permanent track facilities, next year it should and must improve.

Class winners: M. Wildash, 14.28 s; W. Barry, 11.92 s; S. Austin, 11.58 s; M. Chapman, 10.35 s; R. Tallis, 10.35 s; B. Bucknall, 14.90 s; R. Oram, 13.60 s; N. Rodeblad, 12.16 s; B. Andersson, 10.34 s; K. Dancy, 10.55 s; R. Hoare, 9.92 s; G. Back, 13.5 s; G. Sharp, 11.44 s; R. Messeri, 11.93 s; G. Cookson, 11.98 s; G. Masters, 13.33 s; D. Priddle, 7.47 s.

Finals at Santa Pod

THE days are drawing in and the weather is getting worse after several months of good racing conditions, but even so, records continue to fall at Santa Pod drag strips, and last weekend was no exception, with many cars going better than ever, and Skilton pushing his already renowned speed up further to a new high of 224.7 mph, a new European record.

Rain on Saturday brought proceedings to a halt in qualifying, whilst a damp track and a large programme to get through left most of the Dragster and Street finals unfinished as it got dark on Sunday afternoon.

The next meeting being slated for the run-offs. With Castrol points on Top Competition, it was the two big alters of Stone and Eason, plus Churchill and Shaver in the two fancy cars who paired off for the semi-finals. Stone taking on Churchill with a 9.0s to 10.1s and Eason beating Shaver 8.92s to 10.2s, none of them running quite to form at this stage. Stone's Chevy is rapidly running out of clutch, but in the final, Dave managed to get it all together for a back-to-form 8.7s at 13.9 mph as Eason ran a 10.3s at 102 mph, the car losing traction near the finish and forcing Phil to shut off to correct it.

Top Dragster was the other championship class, and it was Roz Pryor who really shone here again, actually leading qualifying with a fabulous 9.4s not far off Bruce Brown's times in the car last year. Again, the darkness prevented the eagerly awaited duel, but Roz got through against Tony Anderson's Daimler with a 9.6s, whilst Hoare made it over Brian Riggsall in his blown 332 hemi with an 11.3s when the other driver red-lit. John Whitmore, usually a strong challenger, was out of action with a bent car after losing his brakes on a qualifying run, writing off the front of the car at the bottom of the fire-up road.

For once the Dick Sharpe Austin/Pontiac did not dominate Senior Comp, in fact it looks as if the team has at last met their match in the Page's Topolino. After no end of gearbox trouble, the crew at last got everything right, and following last week's success at Blackbushe they were right on form with a 10.7s in practice. Backing this up with a 10.4s in the first bye run, they were obviously going to take some stopping.

Sharpe pulled out all the stops on the way through, running a best ever of 11.08s before getting beaten by Martin Hall in his Firenze/Chev with an 11.4s to 11.2s 'hole shot'. Page got down even further to a 10.1s before going to the final and turning 10.5s at 132 mph to beat Hall's Firenze as he missed a gear.

In Middle Comp, Bob Messent and Pete Sinner in the two quickest Jag altercos again met in the final, with Messent's Mini van beating the Falcon bodied car with a close 11.9s/117 mph to 12.1s/116 mph. Messent's time being exactly the same as his previous round win over Steven Lowes in his similar car.

Another to improve on his best, although only just, was Dave Rose, who took his 440/Cuda to a 12.38s in Top Street. Both Errol and Ledster were sidelined in qualifying with mechanical problems, whilst Dick Smith found himself without a tow car to get his Chev to the meet, making Rose and Oram favourites. After his 12.38s, it looked like Rose's race, but after a poor burn-out that left one wheel wet, Rose was left as the line by the sharp E-type driver as he recorded a 12.9s to Rose's too-late 12.6s. Ivan Fryer was the other semi-final winner over Ralph Napolitano in the old Mike Yun Corvette. But when his clutch exploded just before the run, with no injury thanks to the scatter shield, Fryer went through with a 14.1s. The final was another to be postponed until the next event.

In Pro-Stock, the ex-Harvie Camaro was out in the hands of Steve Petrie, who entered into the spirit of things well for a newcomer to the sport. Kevin Pilling had his Camaro out again, and led qualifying with a good 10.7s just ahead of Goggin's 10.9s. Tony Dickson was next at 11.38s, just ahead of Bennett's 11.41s in the Nova. Andy Andrews ran a 12.2s in the Stone Racing Escort, but withdrew with a breakage, whilst Petrie ran a 13s to get into the field. This he improved upon to a

12.8s against Bennett, who ran an impressive 10.88s. Tony Dickson had a bye at an economical 12.3s, whilst running two consecutive byes. Pilling red lit alongside Goggin, who was back in the right place with a 10.66s/121 mph. Pilling ran along with Dickson on his second bye, the Ducksams Camaro turning an 11.5s as Kevin tore off to a 10.8s. Goggin then paired against Bennett's car, and left away to his best ever at 10.55s — still at only 122 mph though.

For the final, Tony knew that things were stacked against him, so he tried to leave a little early and drew a red light 11.28s then had to watch Goggin get the win despite having his gearbox jump out of gear and trail across the line a second behind him. So to the fakers, and Skilton, Herridge and Hutcherson, the three entrants. With the rain, Hutcherson never got a good qualifying run in, and had to be content with a 10.1s on Sunday morning, whilst Herridge went well to a 7.4s at 211 mph in the 426 powered Raceway car. Skilton led with a 7.0s at 214 mph and took the bye run with the first of his terrific top-end charges at 224.2s in 6.88s Hutcherson got very crossed up against Herridge coming off the slick start line, and nearly hit the other car, rolling through to a 13.0s as Alan got clear with an 8.0s.

After the white cloud had cleared, the two cars crept into stage. At the very sniff of the green, Skilton was gone in as good a start as he has done all year, cutting his time down to 6.7s, and pushing the speed up a fraction to 224.78 mph — faster than the Tony Nancy established record. Herridge trailed with a 7.5s at 204 mph the heavy car lacking the initial acceleration to really get to grips with Skilton or Priddle, all though the engine has virtually as much top end in it as any other. J.D.

Strip Run-Down

The last round of the RSC/Castrol championship saw the NDRC move back to Blackbushe, which had been sprayed with traction compound to try and improve the grip. It helped to an extent and from all accounts had been pretty grippy on Saturday, the day before the event. However the all-important traction for the fuelers was still missing, leaving all the big cars to go up in smoke to run perhaps a second under par.

With John Anderson back from Sweden in his rear-engined 392, we were promised a four-cornered fight, but then Roy Pratt got

was out of luck in the final. With Pratt out, he took a bye run after fixing a hydraulic leak in his brakes, turning another 7.5.

Priddle and Anderson got to the line together, but as the cars were being pulled back to stage, a marshal tripped under the back of Priddle's car, taking the chute out with him. Shutting off to re-pack and re-fuel, the two cars were out again, with Priddle taking it as Anderson got out of shape and dropped the laundry.

By final time, it was nearly dark. The sight of the sixteen glowing headers spitting great balls of flame,

smoked wildly after him with a 7.7 to a nicely judged 7.4 for the Revell car.

There was also a four car turn-out of funny cars, which all looked and sounded terrific. The two Swedish entries included the Chrysler/Opel of Bjorn Anderson and, new to this country, Jan Carlson's Volvo. This car, with blown 427 Chev and Torquifite trans, was just about the meanest thing ever seen on the strips. Its steeply raked and chopped 'Saint' style body lurching up to the line in little leaps as the driver fed the power through the automatic box.

Again conditions were not really too good, and all had to back off several times, precluding any really good times. Liam Churchill's Capri sounded good. He beat Ed Shaver to the punch in the Castrol Vauxhall, but went

Goggin who really flew though, finding some grip with his new Goodyears to blast off a 10.6. But in the racing he missed top gear, and watched helpless as Back inched past in the last few yards.

The lights at this time were still on the blink, with some races starting with a flag, some using the countdown. For the second semi-final, Tony Dickson, having been told to expect a Pro Start, didn't even see the flag starter, and with Aitken already long gone, opened the door to see what was going on.

Amid apologies from the marshal's etc, they said they would have a re-run, but Aitken refused. He went through to race Back but ran out of fuel to a 24-second run. Must be some justice there somewhere.

A second Volvo, this one a 144 saloon with 427 Chevrolet power, was entered and driven by Nils Rodeblad, who last appeared here with the twin-turbo Malibu 480 at last year's International.

Pointing up the mistake of running such cars in with the regular street cars, it easily handled the mostly standard production cars, only Mustapha Errol's Hemi-Cuda giving it a race in the final of Top Street, starting with a good hole shot to a 12.8, but losing as the Volvo got moving to a 12.1.

Light on the subject

Next year, the NDRC are apparently to have an imported set of clocks and lights. These are made by Chrondek, who have been supplying the equipment for American strips for years. The move will be welcomed by all, as the equipment in use this year has really become a joke as far as reliability goes.

The new set-up will also have the American Sin stage beam, which was run here last year, but in deference to an FIA ruling was reduced to 4in to qualify for official status to be given the times. However, as records as such cannot be recorded over a single run in one direction, and the narrow beams have given no end of trouble and red lights, the sooner both organisations can get back to an 8in set-up, the better.



down to Anderson's Opel in the final 10.5 to 10.3.

Senior Dragster went to Ray Hoare again, who took his neat rear-engined Chevy to a win over Tony Anderson's Daimler with a 9.92 to 11.7 as Anderson backed off. Dick Sharpe continued his winning ways with the 'Dorset Horn' Austin by beating the Topolino/Chev of the Page brothers — definitely the surprise of the year that car.

Gunne Back returned with his injected 462 Camaro to take on Goggin, Dickson and Aitken, but could only manage a pair of 11.7's in qualifying, whilst Dickson, with a mild cam in his new engine was at 11.5. It was

caught by a strong cross-wind and hit a straw bale, demolishing the front of the Accles & Pollock car after a respectable 8.0 run.

Priddle looked good with a smoky 7.9, shutting down early, whilst Anderson lunched his blower running an 8.7. Skilton as usual powered his way to a low e.t. with a 7.5, but for once he

surrounded by billowing smoke clouds as they burnt out; well it was something else again. Night racing will have to come.

With the start relying on a flag man, Priddle took his chance and left early, as indeed Skilton had at the previous event when there was no red light working. This did the trick as Clive

IT'S A FUNNY SITUATION..

being in a Capri doing a standing ¼-mile in under 11 secs
Text: Ken Goddard Photos: Mike Key and Julian Bajzert

What makes people go drag racing? They spend a lot of hard-earned cash and all of their spare time to spend their weekends at a meeting where if they are lucky they might get a minute or so of actual racing. Seems crazy don't it? In fact anything sounds bad if you boil it down as basically as that, so we thought we would go along with a team and see what really goes on.

The meeting we picked was at Blackbushe near the end of September and the driver we were to meet was Liam Churchill. We had been to see Liam and his Funny Car and thought the best way to get details and pictures of it would be at a meeting rather than in the workshop.

Liam and all his followers usually get to the venue the night before the meeting as an early start at the scrutineering means you often get a bit more time for some practice runs. As this would only be about the seventh time both the car and driver had travelled down a drag strip he felt that the more practice he could get the better, although by the results he seems to be doing OK up to now.

By the time we arrived the crew had been up and about for a while and the car had already been through the mill and checked out. A few days before we

had seen the car in the workshop where it was still partly stripped for the rebuild required after every meeting. As we said, running a top car is not cheap. Behind was another car that we recognised from the workshop, the Cuda of Mustapha Errol. This had also been in several pieces not so long ago and it was hard to imagine that both vehicles were here now, ready to race.

Liam was in the process of being strapped in as tightly as possible and his mask fixed on. Then the top was lowered and he gave the thumbs up. The push van came up and off they went along the fire-up road. Before the pair of them had gone far the engine burst into life and the scream of the blown Hemi echoed across the track.

The car was quickly joined in the burn-out area by the crew. They all rush about like mad and Liam does his first burn of the day, a real lulu with smoke every where, completely filling the car.

The crowd are now watching the next car but the work is just beginning for the crew. The mechanic brings the tool kit over and starts to get the car ready for the next run.

An engine like this costs around £4,000 and time spent checking all the things that could go wrong on a run may save an expensive blow-up.



Chassis: Built of 1½in seamless tubing; wheelbase 117in
Body: Built and painted by Barnet Motor Company
Engine: 354cu in Dodge Hemi; forged steel crank; Isky 550
Magnum cam; Kieth Black budget head; Moon GMC blower; slider
clutch from Scott Performance Industries; Lenco reverser unit;
narrowed Olds' rear end;
Wheels: Rear either with 10x15 Woolferace and M&H slicks ;
front 15in American mags with Firestone racing tyres

Apart from the check-over, the oil is normally changed after each pass down the strip, no chances are taken by skimping on things like this. Draining the oil can sometimes reveal particles of a bearing which is breaking up and catching it in time means a minor bottom end rebuild instead of blowing the whole thing to pieces by carrying on unaware.

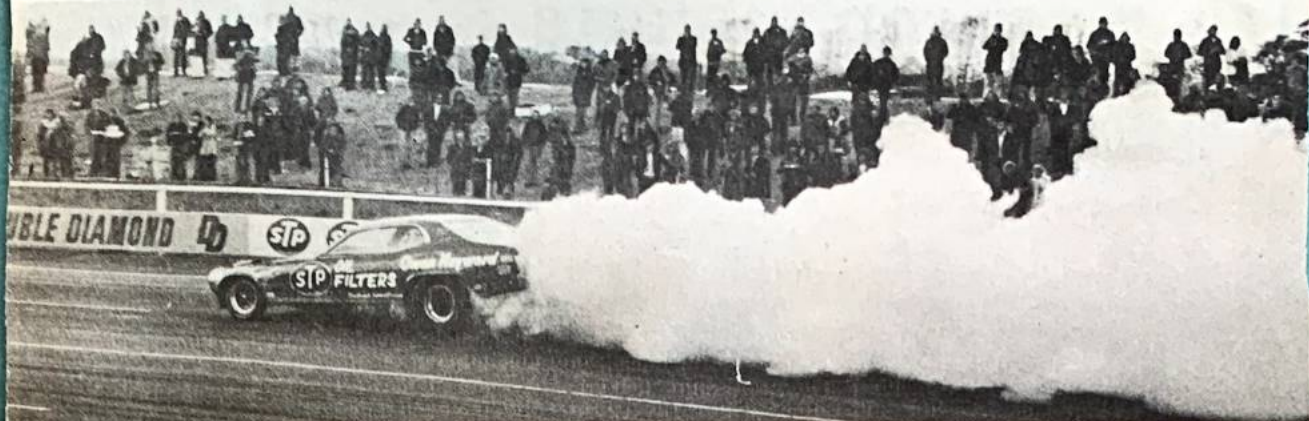
It may seem to the spectator that the crew would have a lot of time on their hands but by the time everything is back together and the chute folded up it is time for another run and in a few seconds they will start all over again.

A spectacular run and the car seems to be going well, but as we hear over the PA system a few seconds later, there was no time on this one.

As Liam and the crew explain when they get back there was a bit of confusion between the car and the push van on the start line which resulted in an untimed run. Still the motor doesn't know what happened and once again the car and driver had given all they had got for those few seconds so it's clean oil for the Hemi and a rest for the driver.

We had a chat to Liam while we had the chance as he should have been due for another run before too long. Why did he build the car and what made him choose a Funny were the most obvious questions.

Barnet Motor Co had been involved in motor sport before when they ran a Lotus Elan in '66 an '67. This was driven by Gerry Marshall quite successfully. The decision to build the funny car wasn't made until February this year but once it had been decided to go ahead the building went on at an amazing rate meaning the car was ready for the meeting at Silverstone on June 24th.



Owen Hayward's STP Funny car produces a great deal of smoke on this run.

SANTA POD

Hutcherson best

Slipped into the calendar at rather short notice and lacking any proper publicity, it was not surprising that both entry and attendance were down at last Sunday's Santa Pod meeting. The meet did not count towards any of the current championships, but some competitors took advantage of this to keep something in hand for the final event. The trophy awarded by Drag Racing News for the terminal speed nearest 230 mph was also a bit of a let down, as only Mike Hutcherson made a run in Hill's fueler, and this at a mere 163 mph after some start line troubles. Close behind was Roz Prior at 158 mph on her last run. During the morning's qualifying, both Bob Oram and Roz Prior had bye runs to win the unfinished races from the previous event—neither opponent being able to make it.

The Pro Stock entry was the best yet, with all six Camaros at last at one meeting together, and both Kevin Pilling and Gary Goggin were out to grab the number one spot, Gary just getting it with a 10.67 s to 10.69 s in a thrilling side-by-side run. Next was Tony Dickson at 11.5 s, not running quite right, whilst Pete Crane was next at 12.8 s but once again his now legendary misfortune struck, his engine seizing after the run. Steve Osmond-Petrie seemed to be having fuel starvation troubles with a 13.1 s, whilst Peter Bennet had handed over the wheel of his Nova to the latest candidate in the glamour stakes, Sylvia Read, who did a commendable job in the situation with a 13.3 s at her first ever attempt at the strip.

For a change, Top Street was smaller than Pro, with four cars entered: regulars Rose, Smith, Ledster and Oram. Dick Smith was fastest with an impressive 12.1 s with Dave Rose next at 12.6 s, Oram and Ledster following with low 13's. Smith and Oram were first to run, but a gremlin in the count-down gave Oram about 6 s start, so the pair had to rerun. This time, leaving absolutely together, the bigger engine of Smith's Chevelle told over Oram's E-Type, pulling out to 12.4 s to 12.9 s. Rose then beat Ledster's Mustang with a 12.8 s to 13.5 s to go to the final. This was one of the best races of the day, the two drivers having really got a rivalry going between them in the best possible way. This time Rose was out first, but only just, and Smith was alongside his door at a hundred yards, the two cars almost touching over the centre line. But again the Chevy had the edge, with Smith running his first ever 11.9 s/116 mph to Roses' 12.38 s/115 mph—his best ever as well.

Gary Goggin started off the Pro Stock action with the first Resin burn-out in this country. This involved carefully laying down

tracks of special powder over the start and burning out through it. After carefully lining up in the tracks, he showed it was no gimmick by pushing the class time down by 10.40 s on his bye run. Sylvia Read also had a bye at 13.6 s, as did Pilling, who broke a selector in his gearbox and retired. Petrie had more trouble with fuel against Tony Dickson, who ran an 11.7 s for the win. Then, in a reversal of their last meeting, Gary red-lit against Tony despite running another sensational 10.5 s to 11.7 s. With another bye for Sylvia, she was in her first final, but didn't do so well here as her earlier runs, turning only 14.7 s to Tony's equally off-form 12.4 s—his second rather lucky win in the Duckhams car this year. Gary later backed up his 10.40 s with a 10.46 s to establish the record, this with the resident doctor on board as well!

Once again the sensation of the Senior Comp field was Dave Page in the Fiat/Chev. Qualifying with another low 10 s, his first run was a best ever 10.08 s. This he followed up with a fabulous 9.8 s win over Bob Deichen's Daimler. Although still two tenths off Pilling's 'petrol' record, the car has only one carb, and left the line on that run as well, if not better than anything that day. The only driver with a chance of getting near it was again Dick Sharpe in the A35/Pontiac, but despite a 'hole shot' and a better than usual top end, the engine lacked the power to pull it off, going down 11.1 s to 10.01 s—Pages start was not quite so good in the final.

In Top Dragster, John Whitmore surprised a few by returning with a rebuilt car after his recent accident, and with Anderson and Hoare both out with 'terminal' problems for this year, it was down to him and Prior in the final, Jim Read and George Davie losing their

first rounds. Whitmore's better start betrayed his years of experience, a slower 9.69 s/142 mph beating Prior's good 9.58 s/158 mph.

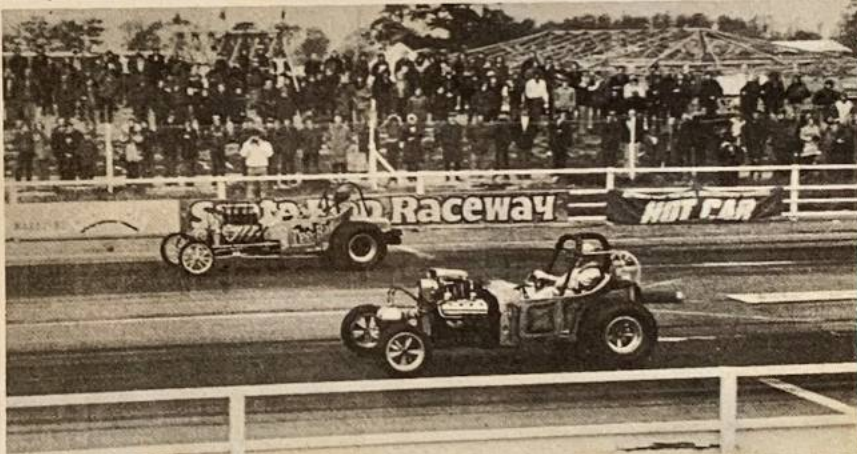
Owen Haywood in the STP funny car was joined by the long awaited Priddle funny car, a Chrysler Avenger with the 'ShellSport' car engine fitted. Although not yet finished to the usual high standard of the team, the car attracted plenty of attention in the pits and as it was towed down to the start line. Using the usual portable starter, the engine immediately responded with the peculiar exhaust note that all the funny cars seem to have, despite it being essentially the same as in the dragster. After a short burn-out, Dennis backed up with the aid of the Lenco reverser, staging with care as the crowd watched eagerly for what looked like being a strong run. As the green came on, the car leapt forward, but about 20 feet out, the front end suddenly lifted way up in the air as the power hooked into the track. As the front crashed down, the back wheels bounced off the track and Dennis rolled slowly through the ¼ mile, the front axle badly bent. However, it was a very promising debut.

Misfortune also struck Haywood, as, after another really terrific burn-out, he went up in smoke on the run, got a 'bounce' going on the soft slicks, and broke another blower belt as this was transmitted throttle foot.

The meeting also saw the official retirement from commentating of Brian Taylor, who has done the job for the past three years or so, and will take some replacing as the best 'voice' the sport has had.

Class winners: J. Whitmore, 9.69 s, 142.25 mph; M. Treutlein, 10.64 s, 135.69 mph; T. Riddle, 13.72 s, 74.52 mph; G. Masters, 13.14 s, 101.94 mph; D. Page, 10.01 s, 132.10 mph; J. Williamson, 13.86 s, 88.18 mph; A. Dickson, 12.40 s, 115.06 mph; B. Smith, 11.95 s, 116.96 mph; D. Grady, 14.78 s, 94.52 mph; D. Wolfman, 14.52 s, 96.15 mph; C. Pogmore, 15.42 s, 86.13 mph.

Competitions Altered at Santa Pod with Stone's Tee Rat-Chev and Elson's Sneaky-Chrysler.



SANTA POD

Wet end to good season

Last weekend saw the final meeting of the 1973 drag racing season at Santa Pod. Unfortunately Sunday's racing was rained off, so the placings and the STP Top Street and Pro Stock championships were decided by the Elimination runs on Saturday. Kevin Pilling claimed his 10 points for attending every meeting and took the 1973 Pro Stock championship, although his Satan's Toy Chevrolet was beaten by Garry Goggin's 7-litre Clunk Click Chevrolet which ran an elapsed time of 10.66 s to Pilling's 10.72 s at 132 mph. Tony Dickson was third with a fine run of 11.40 s at 117 mph.

The Top Competition section was won by Dave Stone's Chevrolet-powered Tee Rat.

Kevin Pilling won the 1973 STP Pro Stock Championship with his Satan's Toy Camaro.



Stone ran a 8.74 s and 8.72 s/155 mph with Phil Elson second on 9.40 s and 9.25 s/149.9 mph. While John Whitmore won the Top Dragster section with a 9.61 s/147 mph, there was no attendance from Priddle, Skilton or Pratt but thanks to Alan Herridge in Santa Pod's own Firefly and Mike Hutchinson in Nobby Hills' Houndog, the crowd was kept alive with some good demonstration runs. On Saturday, Owen Hayward really powered his STP Funny car to a terrific run of 7.43 s—his best run yet.

Unfortunately on Sunday the rain-soaked tarmac prevented any outstanding demonstration runs from either the fuelers or funny cars while Tony Dickson won the Red Light award with five red-light runs to his credit.

Next year, Santa Pod's action starts on March 10th—we hope with better weather and other race dates in '74 are March 24, April 14/15, May 5, May 26/27, June 23, June 30, July 6/7 (International), July 21, August 4, August 25/26, September 8, October 6 and November 2/3.



DRAG RACING

Picking the highlights from a very full drag racing season is not an easy task, but if any particular meeting stands out, it would be a choice between the NDRC's Silverstone event, a landmark in itself for the sport, and the first of the three international events at Santa Pod, when for the first time we had an eight-car Top Fuel eliminator, and we also saw the debut of two American funny cars in this country, and although they have been seen and joined by others since, the first time will always be the best in most people's minds.

Don Schumacher and Paula Murphy put on a terrific show, setting the funny car record at 202 mph and 7.1 s during their stay, and the welcome they received stunned them almost as much as their runs stunned the crowds. Both cars are still in the country with Owen Haywood handling the STP car, and Allan Herridge the Schumacher car, and although they have had their problems, both have neared the American times in them.

The two American dragster drivers, Tony Nancy in his rear-engined 488 cu in rail and Norm Wilcox in Priddle's Donovan-powered car, gave us the quickest race ever, with Nancy winning with a 6.59 s to a red light 6.55 s, but in the end it was Priddle who notched up the most points over three meetings and took the title. Skilton started the year with a regular stroked 392 Chrysler in his new Castrol car, switched to his own Donovan in mid season and was then virtually unbeatable, winning a terrific duel with Priddle at the August Nationals at Santa Pod by an incredibly close "hole-shot" start 6.72 s to 6.68 s and ended the year with a record 224 mph.

Silverstone attracted a strong entry from Europe, Sweden in particular, and was blessed with glorious weather. The NDRC coped well with some awkward time schedules and put on their best-ever show, running some 200 cars and bikes through in not much over half the usual time. With everyone keen to impress at the prestigious circuit, the racing was close and fast, whilst the traction was better than anywhere else in the country.

Apart from the two previously mentioned American funnies, Liam Churchill and Ed Shaver appeared in theirs during the year, with Priddle debuting his Avenger right at the end of the season. Churchill's car was a conventional 392 Chrysler-powered Capri, whilst Shavers', actually built and owned by Mark Stratton and crew, was in a novel rear-engined design, and whilst running without its Vauxhall body, got well down into the eights at over 170 mph. It showed up a little when the body finally did get fitted, but was still a little ahead of Churchill's car which was steadily being sorted out by the Barnett Motor Co. Priddle's car had his cast iron 392 from Mr Six, and so was not short on power, and on the first run suffered from an abundance of it when the car did a wheelstand off the line and splayed the front wheels out on coming down again.

The big Fuel Alters had a lean year, with Phil Elson, 392 Model T, and Dave Stone, injected 440 Chev T, slugging it out all year with occasional interventions from the funnies and Fred Whittle in his blown 293 Bantam.



Old face, new location: Clive Skilton powers off the line at Silverstone, used for drag racing for the first time in 1973.

Stone won nearly every time with boringly consistent 8.5 s/170 mph runs that showed just how good a driver he is. This year, with a blower added, the team will probably still be looking for some opposition—and with luck should get it in spades in the new AA Comp class.

Dick Sharpe and Dave Page ended up as the two top names in Senior Comp, with Sharpe's little 421 Pontiac-powered A35 looking faintly ridiculous as it rumbled up the strips in 11.0 s times at over 120 mph. The Page team had a troubled year, but finally got their 427 Chev/Topolino running and ended up with one of the strongest cars around. In a qualifying run alongside Stone's far more powerful altered, the car easily held on for the first 200 yards with phenomenal traction, eventually hitting 9.8 s at 146 mph, still on pump petrol. Freeman Rodgers' 427 Ford/Rochdale was also a car to be reckoned with, although he was frequently running in with Stone and Elson,



Tony Nancy, above, along with Norm Wilcox gave Britain its fastest-ever drag race, Nancy winning with a 6.59 s to a 6.55 s red light.

where his 10.4 s did him little good.

Ray Hoare and John Whitmore turned in the best performances in Top Dragster, with Hoare getting down to 8.9 s in his rear-engined 302 Chev, with Whitmore hitting an amazing 156 mph from his 1300 cc car in 9.4 s. Benbow, Trautlein, Ringsall and Roz Prior also ran well in this promising class.

Gary Goggin and Kevin Pilling were the two names that did most of the winning in the new Pro Stock class, which, starting more or less from scratch, put on a terrific show, and improved its class record by a larger margin than any other. Keith Harvie's time in what was a Modified Production class in '72 was an 11.2 s, Goggin lowered this to 10.4 s

in his 427 Camaro, with a 136 mph top end. Pilling's older car was always right with him, and with a better start to the year, won the STP Pro Stock championship, with best times of 10.6 s. Tony Dickson, Peter Bennet, Keith Harvie and then Steve Osmond Petrie in the same car, provided the opposition with varying degrees of success, whilst Pete Crane was struck by one misfortune after another in his car, and only made one competitive run all year at the first meeting—and then he broke his gearbox. All the cars were 427 or 440 Chevrolets, with Bennet's Nova the only non-Camaro among them, and all suffered from fairly regular breakages as they found the right way to do it.

Giving them ample support was a host of Top Street cars, somewhat more street legal, and also chasing an STP championship Pete Andrews took this with his Corvette, with Dave Rose, Bob Oram and Richard Smith in 440 Barracuda, E-type and 427 Chevelle respectively doing most of the winning when Andrews wasn't.

A more professional attitude, both from the organising bodies and the racers themselves, was rewarded with more commercial involvement in the sport, and although the weather was generally unkind, particularly at the beginning of the year, upwards of 150,000 spectators can have had little to complain about.



DRAG

MICHAEL KEY

LOOKING BACK OVER THE past months of drag racing run by the National Drag Racing Club, it seems to have been a smoky season. The first meet I personally attended was held at Fulbeck Airfield, where traction was fair and the weather had intervals of rain. This was the first time I had seen Skilton's new rear-engined rail, a beautiful piece of machinery, freshly-brought from over the pond. Running with Clive was Roland Pratt in Clive's old Revolution III—Roland found this rail to be a powerful machine, but both treated the crowd to fine smoky burnouts.

The next meeting on the calendar was Silverstone race circuit; this must have been the drag racer's paradise we all try to find, with visiting Swedes and Germans and their cars, 2nd Invention Funny car, 1933 Plymouth five window, a Camaro Pro Stock and Valkyrian rail. The size of Silverstone gave lots of parking, and the weather was just great with plenty of sunshine, plenty of English cars,

and bags of traction. Boy was that traction traction.

I don't think I have ever photographed so many cars with their front wheels off the deck, and some bikes also did great wheelies and smokies too. After some of the burnouts, you could hardly see the stands behind the start line—this was a great



Popping the front at Silverstone

day's racing for all!

After came two meets at Blackbushe, the first meet a very hazy day but warm, with Dennis Priddle arriving with one of his rails (nice to see Dennis at NDRC meets after early season problems). The strip of

runway used at Blackbushe seemed to have traction problems, and on close inspection it seemed to be on the gritty side. The really high-powered people like Skilton, Pratt and Priddle had gripping problems on the start line. After fantastic burnouts they smoked off the line at the start of the quarter-mile runs. When Liam Churchill came to run his funny car the first time, he eased off the gas half-way down the strip as he smoked so much he filled the car with smoke!

The finals of the NDRC were also held at Blackbushe with more Swedes visiting our strips. They brought a new funny car called The Saint, a Volvo body just recognisable after a stretch here and there. This proved to be a problem day with the lights. Everything had been going fine and all myths from previous meets about NDRC Christmas tree lights seemed to be forgotten. Unfortunately, with a strong cross-wind, Roland had a disastrous accident with the timing lights at the end of the strip, the lights getting such a hammering that the start marshals went back in time to flag starting! This put the schedule a bit behind and at about 7 pm we saw a run by Dennis and Clive in near darkness. It was incredible to see two AA fuellers go at night: the flames from the headers were great. It's a great shame we can't enjoy night racing in this country yet.

● Clive Skilton broke Santa Pod Raceway's record for Pro-Fuel dragsters (made by Tony Nancy at the International series of meets during the summer) at the October European

Grand Prix meet. Clive did a huge burnout in the start line area (as had Nancy) and then raced to a top speed of 224.72 mph, at a time of 6.86 sec. Now to break the existing record Clive had to do two runs. On the second run Clive burned out in the same place on top of the rubber from the first run, and then recorded another top speed of 224.72 mph with a time of 6.75 sec.

At the October 21 meet, Gary Goggin in Clunk Click also went for a record-breaking run when he laid down some powdered resin on the strip in the start line area. He did his normal burnout, then came to the start line and did a burnout in the resin: he recorded a 10.40 sec run—a new record for Pro Stock.

Also at this meet, Pete Bennet's Pro Stock was driven by Sylvia Read and she recorded a best time of 13.5 sec at 100 mph. The gals are driving anything that goes these days!

● Melvyn Wooding, who used to run his '57 Chevy Blue Rose, has made a return to the strip with a super clean '61 Ford Falcon, christened Blue Rose



Blue Rose II fraeking at the Pod

II and running in street. The car was found in a scrapyard and all the work was done on an open driveway.



"To the drag racer, the name of Gary Goggin is as well known as Frank Gardner is to the circuit racers."

Go — Go Camaro!

An appreciation of Gary Goggin's Pro-Stock Chevrolet Camaro

Although he finished second to Kevin Pilling in the STP Pro Stock championship this year, it would be fair to say that if he had attended the first two meetings, Gary Goggin would almost certainly have clinched the title. Although in fact the two cars were very close nearly all year, each improving bit by bit almost together, it was Goggin's car that ended up fastest by a couple of tenths, whilst even when he was running slower, he seemed to be able to pull all the stops out on the all-important runs, and towards the end of the year was almost unbeatable.

To the drag racer, the name of Goggin is as well known as Frank Gardner is to the circuit racers, and he has been successfully racing a selection of street cars for almost as long as drag racing has been going in this country. He started with a Shelby GT350 that also saw a few hillclimbs and sprints. But it was with the purchase of his now legendary Corvette that he started to make a name for himself. Although initially raced in near stock trim, in 1971, he really started to dominate the Top Street division, running regular low 12s times with the car. Towards the end of that year, there took place one of the most famous drag races of all time, when Jack Pearce turned up with the ex-Paul Hawkins GT40, and qualified at 11.9, ahead of Goggin's 12.1. Predictably these two made it to the final, and with the traditional drag/circuit rivalry at fever pitch, the two cars came down to the start to some of the loudest cheering ever. So eager were both drivers that they both red-lit, and came down again for a re-run. This was almost more than the crowd could stand, but this time, Gary judged the lights to perfection and put a car's length over the Ford right

at the start. Jack apparently turned the Ford over 9,000 in the gears trying to catch up, and even had his door come open half way up, but the blue Corvette was there first by a whisker at 12.0/116 to a quicker 11.78/129—a perfect example of the drag racing "hole-shot."

But the writing was on the wall, and in '72 Tony Dickson imported his Camaro to give Gary some support on such occasions, and also of course to beat him. This he did regularly for about eight meetings, then, slowly but surely, the Corvette got quicker and quicker with the addition of a Tarantula manifold and new Holley double pumper, ending up with the Castrol Top Street

Championship and a best time of 11.5 s. The previous year he had also turned a 157 top speed at the Brighton speed trials in 22.2 s, a kilo record that still stands in the sports class. But Keith Harvie eventually stopped him at the last meeting of 1972 with an 11.2 s, and so the car had to go, overweight and uncompetitive with an independent rear end for really serious work.

During the yearly trip to the States, Gary met Don Wolfson, a lawyer from Michigan, who had run his car to an occasional 9.9, and regular tens. Gary liked the look of the car, and soon the deal was made, including loads of spares, with a choice of engines.

The Corvette had meanwhile been sold with a stock 396 motor, so, for a start, Gary had the well-proved single carb 427 to try the car out with, and this was to prove a valuable standby during the year.

The first of the two engines that came with the car is a truck block built up by Ron Hutter, this having more deck height in the block to accommodate a longer stroke if this should be required. Most of the internals of all the Pro Stocks are basically the same, the stock high performance Chevrolet parts being sufficient for most of them. The second

Goggin's Goodyears set up a smoke screen on a "bleach out."

