

engine is a Wally Booth-built one of around 439 cubic inches, with .100 in longer than stock rods. The rods are Chevrolet with 7/16 in Boron rod bolts, and these are generally torqued up using a micrometer to measure the bolt stretch rather than any set figure. The pistons are TRW, with some reworking done, and a compression ratio in the 13 to 1 range, though some of the modifications are not talked about. The block is a regular four bolt mains Chev, blue-printed and deburred, whilst, of course, the crank assembly is balanced and "clearanced" as well.

For some time now the cam to use in Pro Stock Camaro engines has been the General Kinetics 332B, and this is what Gary uses, installed at 108 degrees. However, during the year, the switch has been to various brands of roller lifter cams, which besides using less power to drive, enables the use of stronger valve springs without wiping lobes off the cam, a common failure of the regular flat tappet designs. Garry, in fact, found his GK cam had a couple of chipped lobes even before he had run his Booth motor this year, and had to wait some time for a replacement one with hard face overlay.

Part of the reason for the failure is the weight of the valve train. The pushrods are a massive 7/16th diameter standard Chevrolet, whilst the equally large valves are also heavy with their 2.3 in intake and 2 in exhausts. The rockers are standard stamped steel Chevrolet, which have proved to be more reliable than two different brands of needle roller aluminium rockers. With the original super strong GK 3014 springs, the motor would go safely up to 9,000 rpm, but in the interests of cam life, softer General Kinetics 2010 springs are used, which limits the engine to around 8,500 before valve float. Tappet clearance is held at 26 thou all round, and with this set-up the engine has proved to be pretty reliable.

The heads themselves are Booth-worked aluminium open chamber ones, around 70 lb lighter than the cast iron units and these are carefully matched to the Edelbrock TRX2 tunnel-ram intake manifold. On top of this are two Holley 660 cfm "centre-squirter" four barrels. These are not in fact "double pumpers" with two accelerator pumps, but have a single pump with four discharge tubes mounted in the centre of the four chokes, or barrels as they are known. They are mounted sideways on the manifold to facilitate easier jet changes, and are fed from a long distribution tube which has a fuel pressure gauge feeding off the end. This is mounted in front of the windscreen, and ideally shows around 7 psi across the finish. Twin Carter electric pumps mounted under the tank feed through half inch line to a Holley filter and pressure regulator, although next year Gary may fit a cool-can to keep the fuel cold. This is quite simply a large can with a coil of fuel line in it which is packed with dry ice, but in England this is not so necessary as it is in California, where high air temperature can be a problem.

Ignition is a Mallory MiniMag with 40 degrees maximum advance, whilst the plugs are Champion N9Y, and other points on the engine include a clutch fan and M/T ally rocker box covers which have Dzus fasteners with Posidriv heads screwed into the head for quick removal. The cam drive is by a stock nylon tooth/gear chain set-up, and although this has given no trouble it may get replaced with a roller chain or gear drive set next year.

The oil pump has been improved to reduce cavitation, but otherwise the oiling system remains standard, whilst the bearings are TRW throughout. Finally, two and a quarter inch diameter Hooker headers with four inch collectors exit just under the front seats.

Inside the Hydro-formed Lakewood bell-housing is a 50 lb flywheel with a Booth modified Borg and Beck-type clutch with around 3800 lb spring pressure. A Hays Glass-lock disc is used, and the whole set-up has been very reliable, the only disadvantage being a tendency to cause failure of the crank thrust bearing when power shifting.

The box itself is an aluminium case Chrysler four speed. This has been "Pro-Shifted" by Doug Nash, and this basically involves removing the synchros altogether and making up new slider hubs to engage the gears. The original idea here was to remove every other tooth to enable faster engagement, but now these rings are made specially, and have only one tooth in three machined into them, and these are thicker and stronger than the regular ones. The internal shifter detent has also been modified to ensure that the gear does in fact engage fully.

Shifting is via a Mr Gasket vertical gate unit modified by the Balino Brothers. This has no H pattern to worry about, just push it forward into first, then back to second. With this move the mechanism goes up to the upper gate, and then it is forward and back again for third and top, as near fool-proof as possible. A Roadrunner propshaft and Dana rear end are used, all these transmission components being stronger than the Chevrolet items. The axle carries Scheiffer gears with a ratio of 5.38 to 1, and the longer halfshaft has been cut down to the same length as the other one so that the shafts are interchangeable, and also to get the axle in under the narrower Camaro body. Discs by Strange engineering have been grafted on, whilst the wheels are 15 x 10 Cragar Super-Tricks. These are three-piece aluminium wheels with the two halves bolted to a solid centre. The width can be varied by bolting on different inner or outer halves. Tyres are 14.50 Goodyears with a height of 31.5 inches, bolted to the rims with pointed Allen screws tapped through the rims that screw into the beads.

Suspension is by Loggie coil/shock units with a 75/25 action, with location by a Watts linkage and adjustable ladder type traction bars that pivot under the doors. The wheelie bar frame at the back has a valve spring at the top of each upright tube to absorb shock when the wheels touch the ground, though Gary hasn't got the car that far up as yet.

The front suspension is basically stock, though it has been lowered, and Koni shocks are used. Steering is by a rack and pinion from an NSU of unknown type, whilst the discs are again by Strange, and the wheels are 15 x 3 Cragars with Firestone funny car-

type front high-speed tyres.

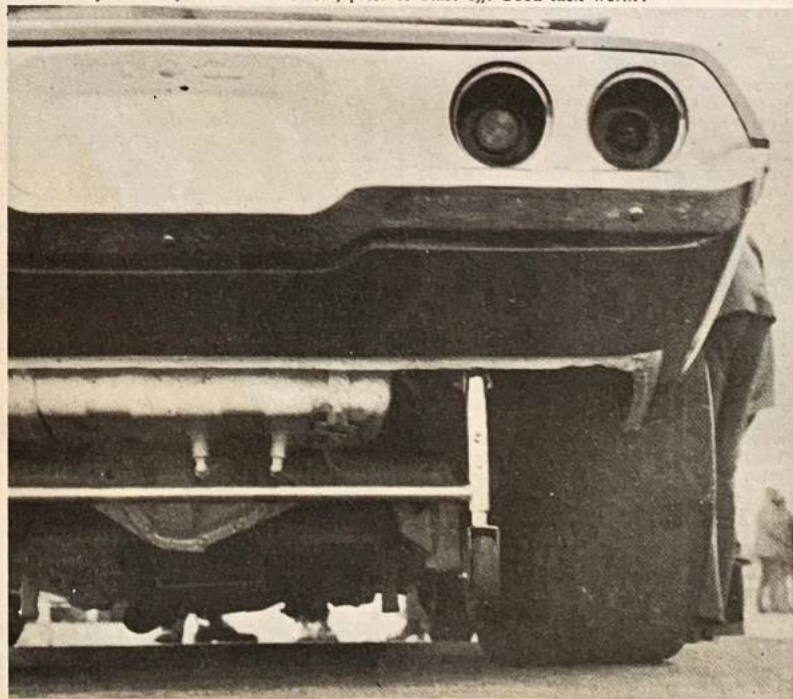
The bodywork has been extensively lightened, and starts off with a one-piece fibreglass front end which has the stock Chev radiator bolted into it so that the whole lot comes off in a few minutes, whilst the hood and scoop are a separate item held on with Nascar pins. The boot lid is fibreglass, and covers the battery, and the bodyshell has been acid dipped to reduce the metal thickness, which makes the larger panels rather susceptible to denting if you lean on them too hard. The inner body panels have been trimmed or removed where possible, but a carpet keeps everything looking neat, and two Baja "off road" racing seats are fitted. A full roll cage serves to stiffen the car and tie the front and rear sections together, whilst the dash and door trims etc are more or less stock, with rev counter, oil and water gauges mounted on the dash top.

Overall weight at present is around 2900 lbs, but Gary plans to reduce this over the winter, though he isn't too sure exactly what's left to take off. Performance to date includes a very commendable 11.0 s with the single carb Corvette engine, a 10.8 s from the truck block, and currently both ends of the strip record with the Booth engine at 10.4 s and 136 mph.

Next year he hopes to try the truck block again, as this should do a lot better than it has, whilst he still has to fit a different tunnel ram with 1150 cfm Holleys, which should give more top end. With various other modifications, he will be trying very hard to make a nine, though these last four-tenths will of course be the hardest, and it will probably be late in the year if he, or anyone else for that matter, does manage it.

A lot of the initial preparation was done with the assistance of rival and STP champion Kevin Pilling, but the Page brothers also help out from time to time. At the track, his wife Liz also lends a hand with the plug changing and generally helps to organise things, whilst it is a pleasing feature of the current Pro Stock scene that all the drivers help each other out as much as possible in order to put on a good show for the spectators. This year the racing is likely to be even closer, but the chances are that Gary, a staunch supporter of the genuine Pro Stocks, will still be the man to beat.

Worm's eye view of the Camaro's rear, prior to blast off. Good luck worm!





DRAG

MICHAEL KEY

THE EUROPEAN GRAND PRIX started off in great style at Santa Pod last month, racing not starting for four hours because the doctor failed to turn up and another had to be found. Consequently the **street qualifying** runs were postponed until later on Saturday. The rest of the classes ran that afternoon, but when the allocated time came for street, with all the drivers ready, it was decided to cancel all street qualifying runs and move them to Sunday morning. This meant that the street drivers waited around all Saturday and then went home without laying any rubber, which was sad for all.

The crowd attendance was also small on Saturday. Perhaps people don't like drag racing on Saturdays?

But after the chaos of Saturday, the racing on Sunday was well up to the usual standard of the Pod, seeing the return of both the STP funny car driven by Owen Hayward and run by the Hounddog team, and Stardust driven by Bootsy Heridge and run by

the Santa Pod raceway team. Each did separate runs with crowd-pleasing burnouts, then came down to race against each other. The STP funny fired okay, but as Stardust fired and they dropped the body over the chassis, the engine blew its head! It was incredible—a one-inch gap between the head and block on one side of the engine, leaving the STP car to a great solo run.

The Santa Pod raceway team topped back Stardust to the pits and replaced the head and were out racing again at the end of the meet. So the spectators then saw the two funny cars burnout simultaneously and do a successful run side-by-side. All credit must go to the Pod team who took only an hour to repair Stardust and get it running again for a double.

● After the dramatic performance of Miss STP Paula Murphy, it's nice to see another lady starting in drag racing. **Roz Prior**, wife of Dave Prior who had a hand in the racing of "Texas T", has recently purchased Bruce

Brown's 'B' class dragster, running a Chevy 454 cu in. Hillborn-injected methanol. Roz has been keen on driving in drag racing for some time. Her performance on the strip has been very creditable for a new driver.



After a dozen or so runs she is regularly running in the 10s. Her best time and speed at the moment is a 9.58 sec at 158 mph.

● As you people out there in **street-is-neat** land will probably know, at the moment I'm nailing together a 1932 Ford B two-door sedan for the purpose of family transport. One gets to the stage of wondering what sort of wheels and tyres to use with an S-type axle off a Jag at the rear, and B hubs converted to Jag discs at the front. I just managed to squeeze 15 in X 10 in rims with Goodrich tyres on the back. I ordered the 15 X 7 Woolferrace wheels for the front to match the rear: when I received these I was horrified to find that they now stamp Woolferrace GKN on the outside rim, together with size and a 73D mark, spoiling the look of the

wheel. If it has to be on at all, why not on the inside rim? Mr Woolferrace, see them, so why spoil the look of a great wheel?

● Clive Skilton's ex-Revolution III was the first **rear-engine** top fuel dragster last month it was written off at the National Drag Racing Club's final championships at Blackbushe.

Sponsored by Accles and Pollock, and maintained by the ex-Hillbilites team, the rail was piloted by Roland Pratt. This has not had too much luck with blower problems at Silverstone, and blower belts at Long Marston, although some fine runs between.

There was a cross wind at Blackbushe at the finals and as Roland progressed on his first run for qualifying in the morning the wind drifted him further and further across of straw around the timing lights at the top. At the speed he was going both wheels off and wrecking the front of the chassis. Photograph shows Roland in a fine burnout at Silverstone earlier this year.



DRAG NEWS...

First joint series for 1974

● Winning all six rounds in his Lotus 7 Middle Street car, newcomer Brian Bucknall took the NDRC championship and the VW Beetle presented by the Skilton Motor group, and now plans to move up to something faster in Senior or Top Street for the 1974 season. Close behind with 56 points to the winning 60 was Robin Tallis in his Junior Street Mini, more of which later.

Other class winners were as follows:
Top Fuel: Clive Skilton, 50; **Top Drag:** Ray Hoare, 46; **Senr Drag:** John Whitmore, 16; **Mid Drag:** Gerry Cookson, 50; **Jun Drag:** Ken Renfold, 40; **Top Comp:** Fred Whittle, 26; **Senr Comp:** Dick Sharpe, 23; **Mid Comp:** Dick Fielding, 24; **Jun Comp:** N. Conrad, 15; **Pro Stock:** Gary Goggin, 30; **Top Street:** Ivan Fryer, 26; **Senior Street:** Bob Oram, 40.

● Failing to sign on at the start of the season cost Bucknall the Castrol/RAC championship, the £250 going to Robin Tallis's quick Mini. Next year, Robin plans to have a full race 140 bhp motor in his spectacularly fast Mini.

Losing out through his final round defeat was Clive Skilton, who had won all five rounds up to that point, and stood to take first prize. But Dennis Priddle stopped all that, and Clive had to be content with 50 to Tallis's 56. With less than the minimum five runners in Top Fuel, the runner-up spot was not awarded any points. Third was Bob Oram with 50 in his Jaguar E-type and then came:

4, Gerry Cookson, 46; 5, Ray Hoare, 36; 6, Eddy Shaver, 36; 7, Gary Goggin, 30; 8, Team "Midst Mnt.", 29; 9, Team "Strip-teaser", 26; 10, Fred Whittle, 26.

● Next year the sport takes a giant step forward with the first joint championship to be run. Considerable discussions and debate have been going on to come up with fairer rules, and one result of this is that none of the

rounds will be at International events, when the Swedish entries (who do not normally conform exactly to the British rules), have made a habit of winning valuable points. With drag racing still comparatively new in Europe, a common set of rules is still some way in the future, though moves are being made in this direction.

With a total prize fund of £2,050, the Castrol/RAC Championship will be held over eight rounds as follows.

March 24, Santa Pod, BDR & HRA; April 7, Blackbushe, NDRC; May 12, Blackbushe, NDRC; May 27, Santa Pod, BDR & HRA; June 2, Fulbeck, NDRC; July 21, To be announced, BDR & HRA; August 26, Santa Pod, BDR & HRA; September 29, Blackbushe, NDRC.

The winner will receive £700 and a Castrol trophy as well as the RAC one, whilst the prize fund goes down to £40 at 10th position. Castrol will also be running a £500 motor-cycle championship at six events.

● Although the rain stopped any chance of them really trying the car out, the Page brothers ran their 427 Chev/Fiat at the last meeting with a borrowed tunnel-ram and twin Holley set-up in place of their regular single Dominator. On Saturday, Clive Page, driving for the first time in some while, managed a near-best 9.9 s, but really surprised himself and the rest of the team by getting up to 146 mph, near 10 mph faster than before. The following day he spun the car completely around on the burn-out in the rain, and on the run only shut off after coming dangerously close to both fences as the car crossed lanes. With bigger tyres, the team are looking to get down to low nines with the car next year, staying on petrol and carburation for the foreseeable future.

● One of Pages' main rivals has been the Dick Sharpe A35 Pontiac, and after a very successful meeting that netted a best of 11.0 s, it is ironic that they should have blown the engine up in a private testing session last week after it had been the

model of reliability all year. Sharpe will probably stay with another 421 Pontiac motor, having already planned on fitting it with aluminium rods and new pistons.

● Aiming at the very promising Top dragster class next year, the Stone Racing team plan to take the blown Chevrolet engine out of the recently acquired ex-Bennet dragster and drop in their very successful all aluminium 440 engine from "Tea Rat." Jumping straight in against Priddle, Skilton and all in a blown fueller might be a bit much for their first attempt but they should be in a very strong position in the injected fuel class with their proven ability at running such a set-up. The blown engine will go into the Altered, which again is a known quantity as far as the chassis goes. All of which makes it that much harder for Phil Elson to close the gap between them in his known Chrysler car.

● Also switching to this class are the "Oblivion" team, who got their injected 283 Avenger down to 10.9 s this year. They have sold the car and are well into the construction of a rear engine 427 powered dragster with Crower injection, roller cam and Crower-glide slipper clutch. Aiming at running as high as 80 per cent, they are looking for low 8s.

● Roz Prior is taking steps to keep abreast of the competition with a complete rebuild of what has proved to be a rather secondhand motor, and her 427 will also have a roller cam, the flat tappet one having lost a couple of lobes during the last few meetings.

● Three of the leading Pro Stock cars are currently up for sale: Kevin Pilling's STP-winning Camaro, Pete Bennet's Nova and Tony Dickson's Camaro all offering a good start to the sport for an enthusiastic newcomer with a grudge against the rubber companies. Providing the sales go through, all three should be out in new cars next year, though plans are not yet finalised.



Ed Shaver driving Mark Stratton's most promising project to date already into the 8s

The last meeting of the year at Santa Pod was similar to the first, if my memory serves me, it rained nearly all day Sunday. However the Saturday qualifying had been pretty active, with the weather warm and very 'un-November'.

Highlight of the day, and to an extent, the year, was the tremendous run of Owen Haywood in the STP funny car. Running a new pair of slicks, the car powered to a 7.4, only just behind Paula Murphy's 7.1 time in the car, set at the Internationals. Although neither of the two American funny cars have been out too often since being bought by Santa Pod

Raceway, the sight of the two cars at their first outing at the first International will be one that lives in minds of fans for a long time.

Don Schumaer's electrifying 204mph blast and fire burn-out and little Allan Herridge's equally amazing 7.3 run, which ended with the blower going out of the roof, are just two of many outstanding highlights. The initial efforts of the two

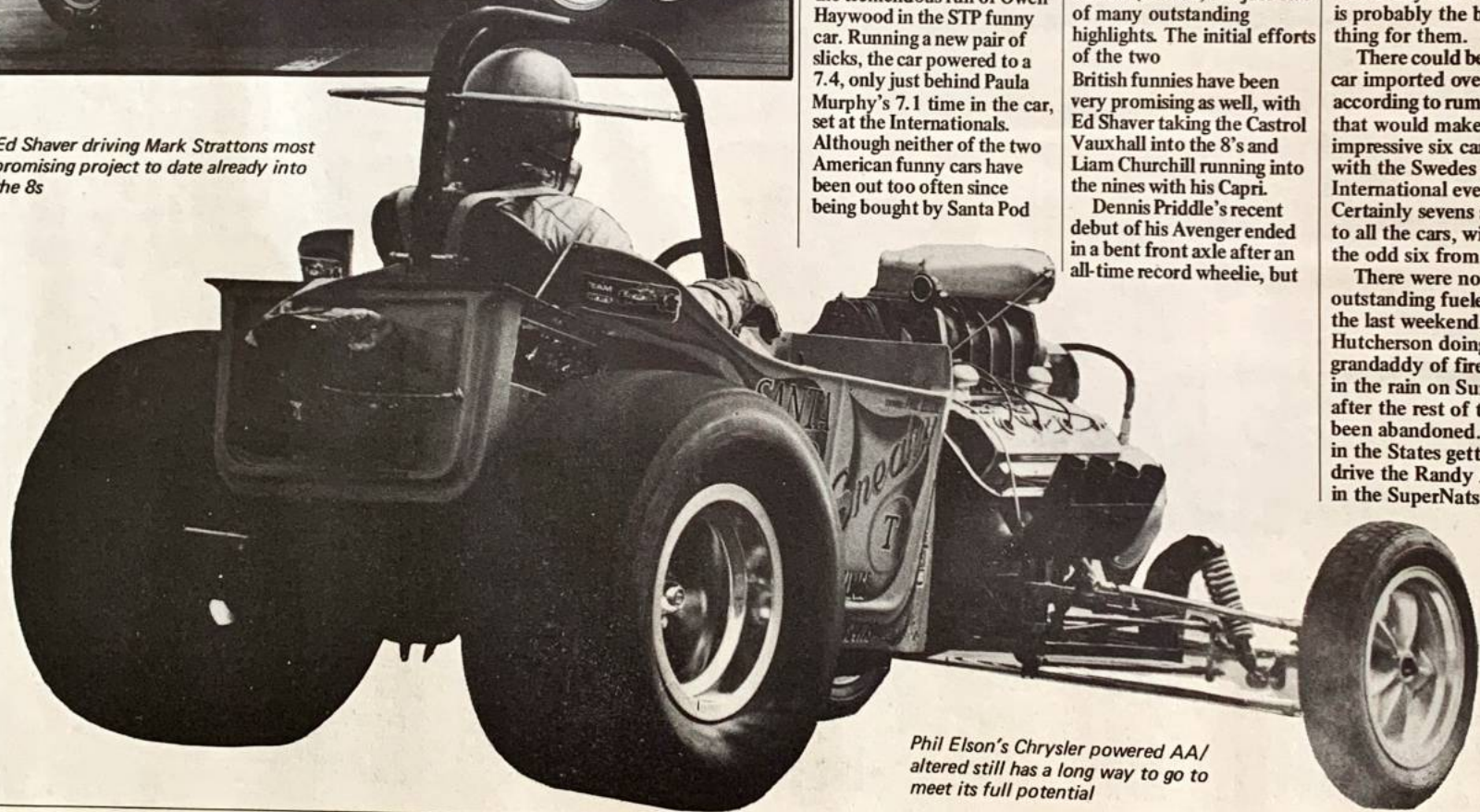
British funnies have been very promising as well, with Ed Shaver taking the Castrol Vauxhall into the 8's and Liam Churchill running into the nines with his Capri.

Dennis Priddle's recent debut of his Avenger ended in a bent front axle after an all-time record wheelie, but

the car sounded very strong, as well it might with its Mr Six engine. Whether all the funnies will be running in open competition next year remains to be seen—obviously the two American cars will have a big advantage, but without a real challenge, the English cars would probably not develop into really fast cars, so this is probably the best thing for them.

There could be another car imported over the winter, according to rumours, and that would make an impressive six car field-eight with the Swedes at several International events. Certainly sevens should come to all the cars, with perhaps the odd six from the leaders.

There were no really outstanding fueler runs on the last weekend, Mike Hutcherson doing the granddaddy of fire burn-outs in the rain on Sunday night after the rest of the meet had been abandoned. Skilton was in the States getting ready to drive the Randy Allison car in the SuperNats, whilst



Phil Elson's Chrysler powered AA/ altered still has a long way to go to meet its full potential

continued from page 47
Priddle was absent working on the funny, leaving just Herridge to join in. After the stunning racing earlier in the year, at the Whitsun Big Go and the Internationals, it was tame stuff.

Picking a highlight from the Pro Fuel action is nearly impossible, Tony Nancy's visit and defeat was certainly one of them, although unfamiliarity with conditions over here, as proved by the famous start-line scene with Roly Pratt, was a contributory factor.

The continuing Skilton-Priddle feud came to an all time high at the BDR & HRA Nationals with Skilton's incredibly close win. Despite going on to a high of 224mph, it is worth mentioning that apart from Norm Wilcox's 6.55 in the Revell car, the British record is still held by Priddle at 6.59—set last year in the old car.

Thankfully, the fueding between the two rival promoters seems to be near enough at an end, with Priddle running at the last three NDRC meets, and a joint Castrol-backed championship lined up for next year—one of the best bits of news in a long time.

The Top Dragster class has at last arrived in terms of entry, although at this last meeting only John Whitmore was on hand to run his usual 9.4 times. The injected V8's of Prior, Benbow, Dancy, Rowat and Hoare have all gone well this year, with Hoare's 8.9 from his small block being the outstanding performance. Next year should see several new entries in the class, including the Stones, who plan to drop their injected motor into their rail, swapping the blown motor into the altered.

With the funny cars hopefully running in their own eliminator, this will leave just Phil Elson and the Stones in the Top Comp division and, good as they are, one can't help wondering how long the class can continue with just two cars. But growing in strength has been the Senior Comp division, with a decent entry of both B and CC class cars putting on a really good show all year. One of the first to really impress was

Freeman Rodgers, running 10's with his 427 Ford, and rather unluckily ending up in Top for much of the year.

Dick Sharpe showed what a stock block could do by getting down to 11.0 in his Pontiac/A35, notching up several wins until the Page brothers at last got their Fiat/Chev sorted out and zipped off a 9.8 on one carb. At the last meet they had a

Pilling himself having used several gearboxes and rear ends.

A point worth mentioning here is that the stage beams have been only four inches this year, as opposed to 8 inches last year, the distance used in the States. Depending on whom you talk to this could be as much as half a second on the

allowed the near stock cars to run against some pretty wild machinery forced several people out, but still going strong at the end was Dick Smith with a 12.5, Dave Rose with a 12.7 and Bob Oram with a 13.1.

Next year things should also improve, with some sort of split for the production and modified classes.



Top: Allen Herridge 480ci funny car, not too lucky at the last meeting when yet another super-charger split.



Left: Garry Goggin finished 2nd in the STP championships with his 10.04 sec machine

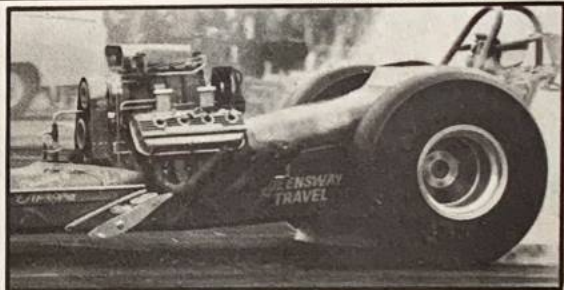
Below: Dennis Priddle's new Donovan powered car has still to beat his own record set last year

Bottom: Ray Hoare has the fastest unblown dragster in Europe with a best of 8.98 secs

tunnel ram and twin carb set-up, and apart from spinning completely round on the burn-out on Sunday, ran a terrific 146 on Saturday—the car to beat next year. With rules and discussions still going on, how the various classes will be run is still open, but all agree that something needs to be done to keep the small and big block cars apart.

Making the single biggest improvement in class records have been the Pro Stocks. Last year the class did not exist as such, but running as a Top Street car, Keith Harvie got down to 11.2. Gary Goggin has since lowered this to 10.4. Top speeds for the leading cars have been up in the mid 130's.

At the last meet, Goggin was quickest in practice with a 10.6 to Kevin Pilling's 10.7, with Tony Dickson at 11.4—about the position he has been all year. The class has not been easy for anyone, all the entries, apart from Pilling, having sustained engine damage from mild to disastrous, and



et's, certainly a couple of tenths, which perhaps explains why the Top Fuel record has not moved down. Tony Nancy was three-tenths off his best as well, which points the same way.

Top Street has been pretty good all year, with entries up in the twenties at some of the early meets. Anomalies in the rules which

There have been so many good performances and great meetings, that to go through them all would take up pages, but there can be no doubt that drag racing has just finished its best ever season, with more harmony between clubs and promoters, plus more meetings at Silverstone and Blackbushe lined up. Next year.

DRAG NEWS...

Series finals at Santa Pod

● With both the last rounds of the STP Top Street and Pro Stock championships and the final round of the BDR & HRA Points race this weekend, the traditional Guy Fawkes meeting should close the season down in style with fireworks and bonfire on Saturday night.

Kevin Pilling has the Pro Stock side sewn up, for although he only leads Gary Goggin 62 to 61 at present, he will get the bonus of 10 points for attending all events, while Gary missed a couple at the beginning of the year. Third is Tony Dickson with 37, but his bonus will not be enough to affect the overall standings. Way down at 8 is Gerry Andrews, while various mechanical ills have kept all the others out of contention.

The situation in Top Street is a bit more open, for although Pete Andrews cannot be caught with 42 points, the battle for the next three spots is quite open. Bob Oram with 26 is just ahead of Dave Rose with 21 and Richard Smith with 20, while none have any bonus due to them. John Ledster with 12 and Ivan Fryer with 9 lead the rest of the entries.

● The overall championship is divided into two groups, Top and Senior, and Middle and Junior. David Vizard with 63 leads the lower group, with Gerry Cookson at 62 and Robin Tallis with 47 and Brian Parkins with 48. All four have attended every meet, so final positions here depend on the weekend's results. In the upper group, Dave Stone leads with 60, but he has missed one event, giving Kevin Pilling, 53, a strong chance. Pete Smith, 46, Gary Goggin, 45 and Phil Elson, 46, and Dennis Priddle with 37 have all missed at least one round, while Ray Hoare with 45 is now out of action with engine failure.

● Ray has clinched the Castrol/Custom Car championship though, his 14 points leading John Whitmore's 8. Roz Prior's solo run at the last meeting gave her 6 after only competing in two rounds. Ray was unable to make the event, and conceded the race to Roz, taking his runner-up points automatically. With the recent improvement in the class, the 1974 season should see a much closer fought championship, with two or three new cars being built for this very reason.

● Dave Stone predictably leads the Competition side of the same championship, with 18 points to last year's winner, Phil Elson, with 12, with Freeman Rodgers doing well to get 5 points with the carburetted Ford against the two fuel burners of Stone and Elson.

● Lastly, leading the list for the trophy that no one wants is Tony Dickson, who has managed to do five red-light starts in competition. Tony Merry with 4 can only equal him at the last meeting, but there is no truth in the rumour that Dickson will do another one to get six if this should happen. Well, not deliberately anyway!

● Sad news comes from America, where Paula Murphy, who endeared herself to all at the Santa Pod Internationals with the STP funny car, recently crashed in her new rocket car. Apparently the parachute failed to open and the car took off at some 300mph. Paula suffered a broken neck in the crash, but is said to be out of hospital and recovering well, while the car has also been repaired. The new breed of Rocket cars currently touring the strips for demonstration runs are putting up almost unbelievable times, with Dave Anderson, driving the "Pollution Packer" recently hitting 346 mph in 4.6 s, and several other similar cars over 300 mph in the 5 second range.

● Ray Hoare, faced with a host of big block Chevrolet dragsters in Top Dragster this year, has apparently decided to switch from his own very successful 302 Chev to an injected Chrysler 392, which will make an interesting addition to the predominantly single-make field.

Rumour has it that Clive Skilton's "Revolution Two," his last front-engined car, will also appear in a similar guise but with new owner and driver.

Sports extra

DRAG NEWS...

Cars switching hands and new rules

● The car shuffling continues in the drag racing world, Martin Hall recently buying Freddie Whittles supercharged Altered. Martin came into drag racing only this year when he bought Colin Mullen's Invader Firenze/Chev around mid-season. This is now up for sale again, and he will be taking on the fastest cars in the class with the big 392 Hemi powered car. Holding the A class record at 180 mph and 8.67 s, the car has still got a lot of potential left in it, and should be easily capable of running in the 7s with terminals near the 200 mark, and after over two rounds.

● Having co-sponsored Tony Dickson's Pro Stock Camaro last year with Duckhams, Roy Osbourne (a director of Osbourne and Son, the Sutton based insurance brokers) will be joining in the team next year with his own car, the Peter Bennet Nova, which he has just bought. Tentative plans at the moment are to spray both cars in the same colours if Dickson's car is not sold, and to attract an overall sponsor for the two cars and the 474 Olds powered Popular Altered that Marshall-Dickson Racing have been slowly progressing with for two years.

● The very fast injected 283 powered Oblivion Avenger Altered with a best time of 10.9 s to its credit is now in the hands of Lawrence Burn. Lawrence has ordered a 354 Chevrolet small block for the car from the States, and will probably back this up with a BM Clutch-Turbo, which should solve shifting problems inherent with Altered design. With a central seat, usually more or less right over the gearbox, it is virtually impossible to change gear rapidly with the usual gear lever somewhere between the knees.

● Another going the same route is Roger Bishop, co-owner of the indecently fast Strip-teaser Jag/Minivan. In 1972 this recorded a record 11.4 s time, and with a new, lighter chassis built more like a miniature funny car, the team had hoped to get into the 10 s with the car. One of their improvements was to graft a Chevrolet Muncie four speed on to the bellhousing, to hopefully speed up the slow changes of the Jag box.

Unfortunately, the box was not in too good a condition when it came into use, and gave problems, but the main trouble they had with the car was the rear axle. The extra traction they were getting with the slicks over the previous racing tyres proved too much for the axle, which broke half shafts with boring frequency—even some super strong aircraft quality steel ones they had made.

So to cure this, a '57 Oldsmobile unit suit-

ably narrowed has replaced the Jag, whilst they too will fit a Clutch-Flite transmission to get over their gearbox troubles, and with this set-up it is hard to see how they can avoid doing their elusive 10 s run. The rest of the Jaguar powered cars will certainly have a job keeping up with this combination, the Skinner brothers' Midas Mist is the only one that regularly gets on terms with them, and it will be interesting to see what they come up with.

● During his trip to the States, Clive Skilton ordered a new Donovan motor for his current car, the plan apparently being to take the present one out and fit it to the Accles and Pollock car, which will be rebuilt. He also ordered a new Ford axle and Lenco two speed transmission to update the Castrol car, which is yet to achieve its potential in this country and that must be in the 6.3-6.4 range. Clive will be returning to the States in the New Year for another shot at the Americans on their own ground if plans work out, whilst Freddie Whittle is rumoured to be taking over the driving of the Accles and Pollock car, his first dragster drive.

● At yet another rules meeting, this one held by the BDR & HRA a few days ago, some really positive progress was made towards more equitable racing in the future.

The Pro Stock rules finally got straightened out, effective in 1975. This will keep Pro Stock for modified production based cars, with no non-factory based engines, transmissions or axles. This excludes the use of Donovan type Hemi engines and Lenco four speeds, which are in fact three dragster underdrives coupled together, complete with four gear levers, but no neutral position—and needless to say an astronomical price tag.

The Altered type cars will run under a Silhouette formula, and although some of the basic rules are the same, engine swaps from make to make are allowed—this could attract some of the circuit Super Saloons when they are not busy elsewhere.

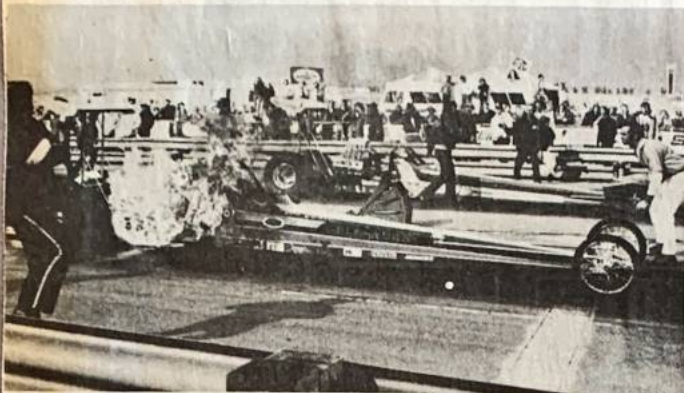
Another good move came when it was decided to run the five funny cars and three blown Alters (all AA class cars) in a single Pro-Competition class. Although the two types have run together on occasion, and in fact would eventually prefer to have separate eliminations, this will make very exciting racing, and also lead to a healthier situation for the B class cars, most of which are running pump fuel, and wish to stay this way. With the existing cars and the new ones being built or rebuilt, this too should be a close-fought class.

The Top street set-up will also be improved with a capacity to weight system, with the more modified cars carrying greater weight. Although all these rules have to be finalised and agreed with the NDRC, it does look as if the sport has taken another positive step forward.

Roger Bishop in Strip-teaser leads Mick Gleadows' 302 Chev Anglia off the line at Blackbushe.



Skilton's second USA attempt



Clive Skilton had this lucky escape on the start-line during qualifying for the Supernationals when fire broke out. He can be seen still in the car but escaped with singed overalls.

Castrol team driver Clive Skilton recently had his second attempt at running in a major American drag meeting at the Ontario "Supernationals" in California. Unfortunately, like the abortive Winternationals back in February, when both he and Dennis Priddle qualified, the weather was bad and the event was postponed for a week, so that most of the English enthusiasts came home without seeing all the action.

With careful treatment of the track, Ontario produced drag racing's first 5 s run last year, and great things were expected at this year's running. Leading the entry was Don Garlits, who was running the new all aluminium Milodon version of the 426 Dodge Hemi. He had already run a fantastic 5.79 s with the car at a match race with Jim Bucher's unique record holding Chevrolet powered car, handily winning all three rounds. At Ontario he unloaded the car and ran at 5.80 s at 247 mph without even a warm up, then returned to his hotel to let the rest of the 72 car-entry try to match it. Several got into the fives, and Skilton ran a good 6.22 s in the ex-Randy Allison 480 Hemi powered car that he was driving for its new owner, a plumber whom he had met back in February when racing his current car.

At one stage this was enough to get him in the field at the 16th and last spot, but three other cars "bumped" him out. A later attempt to get in ended when the car caught fire on the start line, a nasty moment for Clive, who was wedged tightly in the car and had to be helped out with a singed freuit.

Don Prudhomme led the funny car class with an equally sensational 6.16 s, but on Sunday, race day, the heavens opened, so the meeting was abandoned. Unfortunately, by the following weekend, the track surface had deteriorated, and only Garlits seemed to be able to get to grips with it. Running a different clutch set-up to everyone else, in a car that was some two feet longer, every run was in the fives. Clive made another practice run at 6.4 s, then sat and hoped he would get in as an alternate for a broken car in the first round, but it was not to be. While Garlits continued to run steady fives, the rest of the field was down in the 6.4 s range, with many cars blowing up trying to match his times. Eventually Garlits had to make a bye run for the final as his would-be opponent destroyed his car whilst winning his semi-final. Garlits really let fly on this one, hitting a

staggering 5.74 s at 244 mph, just short of his hoped for 250 mph top end.

A similar situation prevailed in the funny car elimination, with all the favourites falling out with mechanical ails to leave Tom McEwen a solo run to win. Prudhomme had had to shut off when it looked as if his opponent would cross the centre line and hit him, but the other driver managed to save the situation, but by then was too far ahead to catch.

The now farcical Pro Stock saw Bill Jenkins set a qualifying time of 8.62 s in his 332 powered Vega; a staggering enough time, helped by the new weight rulings that were in force for this event for the first time, which left the bigger production based cars an even more impossible task. So much so that several have apparently stated they will pull out of the class until some sanity returns.

Rose's acquisition

Having finished third in the Top Street Championship, Dave Rose has just brought Musta-

pha Errol's 426 Hemi Cuda complete with numerous spares. Since rebuilding the engine with all new Sox and Martin parts, and doing extensive work to the car, Errol only ran it a couple of times before breaking the cam, so after replacing this, Rose plans to take the engine and rear axle out of the car and put them into his current Cuda—a more suitable saloon as opposed to Errol's convertible model. Rose will keep his 440 wedge engine as a spare, meanwhile putting a 340 engine back in the convertible. This will come from his brother and team-mate Dereck's car, which will then receive an original 273 from yet another Barracuda, both of these cars to be sold. The resulting machine should be extremely competitive complete with a glass front-end and could well be a Pro-Stock contender if it does prove to be fast enough.

Meanwhile, Errol himself is said to be very interested in Pete Andrews' Corvette, which at present is without engine following its expensive seizure towards the end of the season. Andrews has also taken delivery of a new car, a Camaro, again less engine, that has just arrived from America, where it is rumoured to have run in the high nines. Andrews plans to stay in Top Street to defend his STP title, and will fit a new engine using some of the parts salvaged from his Corvette engine.



Kevin Pilling receives his cheque for winning the STP Pro Stock championship from Mrs Dave Lee Travis at the BDR & HRA's function. STP's Bill Dunne looks on.

Drag dinner and dance presentations

At the NDRC's annual dinner and dance a couple of weeks ago, Brian Bucknall, after his first year in drag racing with his Middle Street U2 took the VW Beetle presented by Clive Lanson Enterprises for winning the NDRC championship. Castrol/RAC winner Robin Tallis was also on hand to take his award for winning the Junior Street title with his Mini, after having received the RAC trophy at their dinner a few nights before.

Among the other awards and trophies presented was the Manufacturers' Cup to BLMC for winning the street car points race. This was accepted by Basil Wales of the BLMC Special Tuning department, who will probably be hard chased by Ford and Chrysler this year.

Awards from Sperex and Formula One went to Joan Cheeseman and Dereck Benbow/John Fullerton, for best performance by a lady driver and best turned out car and team respectively. Despite Roz Prior's late-season rise to fame, Joan has been a regular competitor for some time now, while the injected Pontiac dragster of Benbow and Fullerton is well known for its flawless construction, including a home-made injection system that includes their own cast manifolds.

For his equally impressive work on his 156 mph 1300 cc dragster, John Whitmore took the Mechanic of the Year award, while Kevin Pilling took a special trophy for the most spectacular burn-outs of the year with his Pro Stock Camaro.

Following the NDRC's dinner and dance, the BDR&HRA's event was an even bigger success, with former Association chairman

Brian Taylor doing an excellent job in hosting the affair before handing over to the Hairy Monster from 200 miles up you know where. Among the many awards at this event were the Castrol Championship trophies to Dave Stone and Ray Hoare, and the STP awards and cheques to Kevin Pilling and Pete Andrews, covering Top Comp, Top Dragster, Pro Stock and Top Street. Roz Prior was selected as the year's most exciting newcomer and came up with the quote of the evening as she collected her award by saying that "Dave does all the screwing I just push the pedals!"

When things had settled down again, D.L. took an award for the fastest time on a bicycle, while the Kelly Springfield Cup went to Nobby Hills and team for their unending efforts in the furtherance of the sport last year. Apart from running the "Hound dog" fueller with Mike Hutherson, they also took on the STP funny car, a prodigious task by any standard, and after several disappointments, got it all together at the last meeting when Owen Haywood took the car to a 7.4 s.

This year, STP will continue to back the funny car, while the fueller as seen at the Showboat will go into its third year on strips. Future plans do include a new car, which would be far more competitive, but like Priddle, this would depend on sufficient backing, and it certainly will not appear at an early date.

STP are also stepping up their involvement in the sport with increased championship awards, details of which will be announced shortly.

DRAG NEWS...

● Despite the uncertainty and gloom that hangs over the country at the moment, Clive Lanson Enterprises are going ahead with plans to further develop Silverstone and Blackbushe for the drag race meetings at the two sites this year.

Silverstone strip, which runs from Woodcote up to Becketts, is to have Armo barrier installed, with a graded banking down one side at a distance from the track similar to Santa Pod. Drag racing, like other events at non-permanent sites, has not been too good from the spectator point of view at the fast end, because of the distance needed for safety between them and the track with rope or other temporary barriers. Arrangements in the paddock have also been made to speed the running of the event with easier access to the cars, which last year queued the wrong way down the start/finish straight, with the bigger cars firing up around Woodcote corner.

Blackbushe, even now is perhaps best known for the Drag Fests of '64 and '65, but the success of the meetings held there over the past few years has once again put it in the public eye as the south's own drag strip, and further improvements are planned there as part of overall developments to the site for various leisure activities. It will still remain as an aerodrome, however, so grandstands will still come and go with each event, the first of which is on April 7th, second round of the Castrol/RAC championship.



Snetterton's new drag strip will use this straight in the opposite direction.

● Meanwhile, Clive Skilton, best known half of Clive Lanson Enterprises, is currently in Ireland, where, as well as exhibiting his dragster in the Belfast Motor Show, he will be running the car for a BBC film unit—the first time that any drag racing vehicle has appeared in Ireland to the best of his knowledge.

On return the car will undergo extensive rebuilding incorporating the latest ideas (one of which will be a Lenco two-speed transmission). A new Donovan motor will also be on hand, although at present he is undecided about which car to fit it to. With two regular iron block motors, both the team cars will have complete spare engines ready to run.

● Barnet Motor Co, who ran Elans a few years ago, and are now heavily involved in drag racing with Liam Churchill's Capri funny and various customer cars, have been rebuilding the Accles and Pollock fueller that Roland Pratt crashed at Blackbushe last year. The damage was not as bad as had at first been thought, and with one of the two Donovans fitted, should get back into the sixes without undue effort, possibly with Fred Whittle as driver. It may be remembered that Skilton took the car to a 6.8 s against Priddle at the '72 Nationals meet at Santa Pod, but the car has since missed running in the six second range.

● This Saturday night (19th) at the Strathmore Hotel in Luton, Dave Lee Travis and his Road Show disco will be on hand to entertain at the BDR&HRA's annual dinner/dance. As well as many trophies and prize monies won during the year, there is the infamous Red Light trophy for the dubious honour of having jumped the gun a few times too many. Competition was actually quite fierce, but with five to his credit, Tony Dickson leads the table. Films of both the Silverstone and Santa Pod Internationals events will also be shown, with the Silverstone one in particular surpassing anything made in this country before on the subject.

● Next weekend, the second Manchester Custom Car show takes place at Belle Vue opening on the 25th, and going on through the weekend. Apart from the usual array of hotrods and show cars, vehicles from the drag racing world will include both the American funny cars, Roz Prior's Chevrolet dragster, Custom Car magazine's novel rear-engined supercharged Ford V6 rail, Santa Pod's Wheelie Stingray, the Stone Racing altered and their new rail which features the injected engine from the altered that ran so well last year. Films and trade stands complete the show, which opens at 6 pm on the Friday night.

be a suitable comment. I decided that it certainly was something else and not quite my cup of tea. It was certainly nothing to do with motorsport or transportation. It was somewhere between art, engineering and complete lunacy.

Looking around that display was a complete negation to surveying a similar scene of ordinary cars in a bomb site NCP car park almost anywhere. Average cars slowly rusting and disintegrating, forlornly waiting their owners' return for the bumper to bumper drive home. I am lucky to find myself virtually always driving new cars. No matter how bad some might be, at least they are clean and they work. Having to drive a worn-out vehicle with dampers which are no longer in charge of their springs, steering which wanders from its job and engines which drink heavily and no longer hold their oil must be a very evil chore. Constantly reminded of our ever increasing throw-away consumerism, I am beginning to age after only 9,000 miles. It has a clunk and a creak in its suspension. Both front seats are wearing loose on their runners. The direction indicators have suddenly started to eat fuses. The lights switch died without warning. It resists all efforts to re-align and run straight. The brakes have never worked properly and it is now becoming prickly about the weather I use it in; spluttering in rain if it's a bit cold outside. The first service was carried out at 1500 miles (as per service booklet) but the service agents managed such a lousy job it had to have a 6000 miles service just 500 miles later. It has another 9000 miles to run before replacement and already I am beginning to look at passing Volkswagens like I could live with one. No wonder the Beetle has become the world's most popular passenger car.

As the complete lack of rallying in this country seems to advance my depression week by week I decided to pay a visit to the display of customised and generally odd-ball vehicles held at Crystal Palace sports centre just recently. It proved to be quite a tension just recently. It was so funny (peculiar) I had to call with another 20p for a second dose. The display was most impressive. None of the cars, vans, or motor cycles were remotely sensible for their original purposes but in their psychedelic freaked-out states most were admirably well assembled and painted. A few of the exhibits were quite worthy of wall of an art gallery. I must admit that the space in an art gallery, I held only a very superficial interest for me but the teeming thousands who thronged the display were fascinated. Most looked just as weird as the exhibits and after surreptitiously listening to their casual comments the impression was that I had happened on a very deep and meaningful pilgrimage for these funny car followers to pay their respects and dedicate themselves to even more absurd creations for next time.

My amusement was obviously out of place and inexcusable. This was a serious thing. Looking into the eyes of all, worshippers revealed nothing—nothing at all, just a vacant unflickering stare into infinity. Many seemed to be in an almost trance like state, open mouthed and dribbling saliva. "Like what else is there, man?" seemed to

Dragster "rails" like Denis Priddle's had the crowds spellbound at the Custom Car show.



● Following the announcement that motor racing would receive a 20 per cent cutback in events this year, it is interesting to review drag racing's position in this situation. As all meetings are combined car and bike events, it is reasonable to say that over 60 per cent of the entries at any meeting are running on Nitro or Methanol fuel, which is not petrol-based. Even including the thirsty Top Street and Pro Stock cars, the amount of petrol used by the street cars and some of the Competition Alters during the course of a meeting must be negligible compared with other racing, so drag racing may be in a better position than other branches of motor sport.

● BDR&HRA Chairman Jim Read has bought Dennis Priddle's "Mister Six" dragster less engine and clutch to run in the promising Top Dragster class this year. Perhaps the most famous dragster ever to run in England, with the country's first six second run to its credit, the three year old car should still have plenty of life left in it. Read has bought a blown gas dragster engine from the States to install in the car. This is basically the same as Priddle's fuel burning engine, apart from being set up to run on pump petrol. This class of car ceased to have its own eliminator in America a couple of years ago, leaving many similar cars to run in the various handicap classes.

Dennis meanwhile will concentrate on running the Revell-sponsored car he bought last year, which has still a long way to go in development. Plans for the exciting new Avenger funny car have had to be shelved for the time being pending sufficient sponsorship to run both cars. Damage following last October's "wheelie" was worse than originally feared, as the chassis itself was slightly bent, but fortunately not beyond repair.

Skilton's American upset

Back from his most hectic visit yet to the States is Clive Skilton, who finished up on his head at the NHRA Winternationals at Pomona, California. Driving John Durkee's Pegasus fueller again, Clive started off with the AHRA Winternationals at Phoenix, Arizona (the NHRA and AHRA are the two leading, and rival drag racing, bodies in the US). He got into the field with a promising 6.3 s in the 12th spot. The much fancied Don Garlits was slower than expected and was tenth, and went out in the first round when a brake caliper broke on the burn-out, leaving him to sail through the finish at 40 mph before the race had even started. Skilton faced Jerry Ruth, one of the fastest drivers in the sport, and the self-styled "King-of-the-North," having won a string of Northern Division championships.

Neither driver wanted to stage first, and a "burn-down" developed before Skilton edged into stage, followed by Ruth after a monstrous burn-out. Skilton was by then worried about having sufficient fuel, and together with an unfamiliarity with the lights in use, jumped the gun to a red light, but Ruth drove right past him anyway with his first ever five-second run—a 5.95 s. But the competition was so fierce that four of the first eight winners in the first round broke, and it was the virtually unknown Mike Wagoner who came through to win. Sadly, the meeting was marred by the death of Irv Beringhouse in his Chrysler Pro-Stock, who rolled several times at high speed after losing control.

The following weekend at Pomona it took a 6.16 s to qualify, with the low spot being 5.94 s for James Warren. At Phoenix, Wagoner had been plagued with oil problems with his engine, and had had to fit a new parachute for each run as they became coated in oil. One of these came from Skilton's car,

and as it has not been cleaned in the intervening week Skilton's crew had to borrow a funny-car chute. Being slightly larger, this did not fit into the pack as well as it should have, with the result that it failed to open after Clive's qualifying run. The rather marginal brakes were unable to stop him before he hit the catch fence at some 70 mph, and after spinning round the car flipped over and ended up with Clive hanging from his straps, shaken but unhurt. In the next hour, three more cars, including Tom McEwen's brand new "aerodynamic" funny car ended up in similar fashion.

The attrition continued, with Garlits again going out with a broken caliper—the other side this time, and Gary Beck from Canada running a string of 5 s to beat Ruth in the final. Dale Emery won the funny car eliminator in Jeg Goughlin's car, whilst Bill Jenkins was again victorious in his Vega in Pro-Stock.

The new Pro-Comp eliminator for cars such as blown gas (petrol) dragsters and injected fuel funny cars, was a big success, with both types of car dipping into the high sixes for the first time. Record crowds attended both events, with 63,000 at Pomona and 40,000 at Phoenix, and with the fuel problem worrying everyone concerned with the future of the sport, it was an encouraging sign—particularly as many of them had "doubled-up" in their cars to get to the events.

Following the event, there was apparently some talk about banning fuel altogether, similar to the nitro ban of the late fifties. The cost of running a Top Fuel or Funny car is getting so high, and the engine failures so common, that there is some logic to this, but this would ultimately be a retrogressive step, and other solutions to the problems will doubtless evolve in the coming months.

Palace news, DLT goes drag

The Custom Car shows have recently been taking place in England, with the biggest at Crystal Palace attended by nearly 20,000 people. Many familiar drag racing cars were there in modified '74 trim including two rival Top Dragster contenders already well publicised, and a new 354 Hemi-powered car from Pat Cuss, who has been responsible for most of the fibreglass bodies currently running on the strips—including several Topolinos, Ed Shaver's funny cars, and the Transcontinental destroyed in '72. His car, based on a rather short chassis that was part of a still-born Chevrolet-powered device, now has a very potent-looking Hilborn-injected Chrysler for power, with a new full bodywork, complete with "flame" paintwork rather suited to the short wheelbase.

Roz Prior's Accles and Pollock/Castrol sponsored car was not far away looking well prepared for the season, whilst perhaps the biggest threat to them all, the Stones "Hemi-Hunter" with all-alloy engine from "Teo-Rat" and Lenco two-speed transmission was between the team's Escort/Chev street altered for the Pro-Stock class, and the well-known Altered. This looked awesome with its big supercharged engine and lengthened chassis. Other obvious changes include a larger fuel tank in the radiator shell for the thirsty engine and torsion bar suspension in place of the leaf spring used before at the front. It was announced at the show that Dave Lee Travis would become honorary team captain, and would share driving with Dennis Stone of the Escort whenever possible, and that he will be taking some driving lessons in preparation for this.

Gerry Andrews will drive the rail, whilst Dave Stone will continue in the Altered against Phil Elson, whose car was also present, and the various funny cars.



Without doubt the most impressively turned out car of the visiting American team at the recent Petersen Publishing Internationals was Tony Nancy's 'Loner' rail, latest in a long line of Wynn's-sponsored machines, and the most potent to date.

Tony had run in the low 6.2 range at 240mph before coming over to the UK, and perhaps too much was expected from him on a strange track and under rules that were alien to him. But still, he did manage a 6.59 on the last run he was to do, and left the track record at 223mph, as well as clocking a staggering 220mph on the short 1,000 foot track at HMS Daedalus.

After running a very successful front-engined car that held the NHRA Top Speed record for some time in '72 at 233mph, like so many others, Tony made the switch to rear engine late last year, going to Kent Fuller for his chassis.

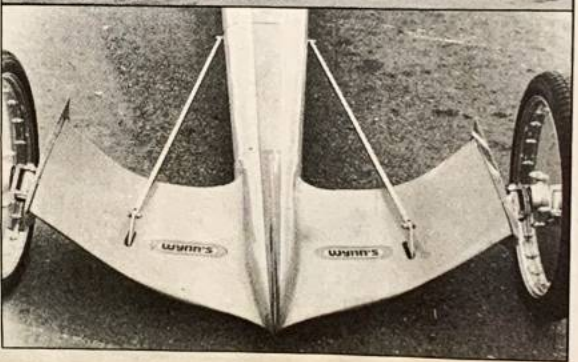
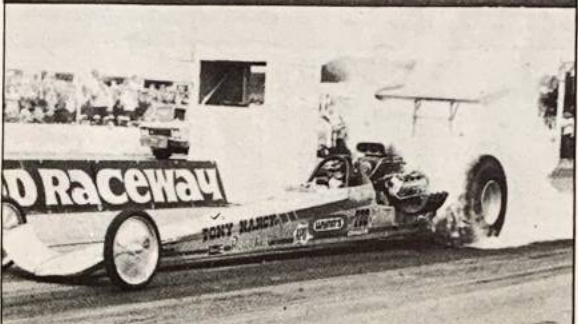
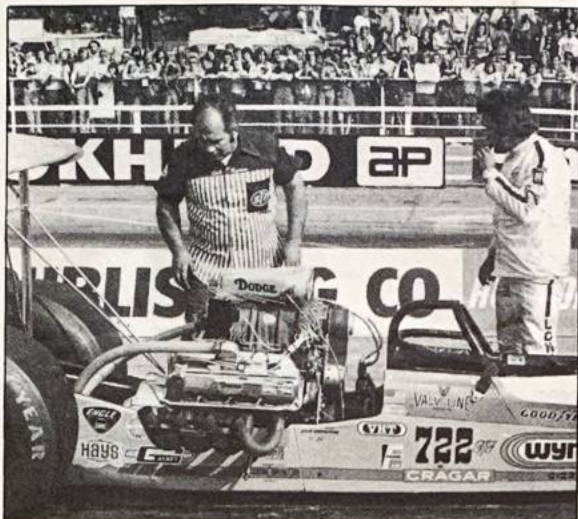
This is laid out on similar lines to other fuelers, using chrome-moly tube of 1½in diameter for the main rails. The front axle is also Kent Fuller's, conventionally 'sprung' by torsion bars and located through long radius arms that extend from attachment points sticking through the novel nose-piece/spoiler.

The steering is handled by a P&S box, whilst the wheels themselves are the very latest Cragar SuperTrick

aluminium discs. Like the rears, these are bolted together to whatever rim width is needed, the fronts being as narrow as is feasible and carrying Goodyear tyres. Tony's car is among the first to have these highly polished wheels fitted at the front, and with their low-weight and guaranteed 'finish-light tripping' ability, they will probably catch on fast in the Top Fuel ranks. (A spoke wheel sometimes goes through the finish beams so fast that the tiny width of tyre doesn't break the beam, which is why most cars have a band of aluminium round the spokes to make sure that this does happen.)

The body work was made by Doug Kruse to a Steve Swaja design, and was painted by Carter's Custom Paint shop. The lettering and artwork, including the painted 'stickers' was handled by Jim Moser, these four being among the longest established in the business. Tony Nancy first got into the sport through his interior work, so it was natural that he should stitch up his own seat, although this is quite straightforward, and not as fancy as might be expected from the best known needleman in the States.

The engine is a late model 426 Dodge, stroked to around the 480cu in mark, though like most of the top names, frequent engine changes and modifications could leave any one of several different units in the car. Built for him by Keith Black, it uses a Velasco modified Dodge crank



Colour: Nancy burns out at Santa Pod Above: Tony in a cheerful mood Top: Mechanic checks out the engine before a run Centre: A smokey take-off Bottom: The mean-looking spoiler-nose piece.

running in Federal Mogul bearings. The rods are Brooks, also with F-M bearings, and the pistons and rings are from the same company. An Engle cam and kit with D&D tapered adjustable pushrods works stock Dodge intake valves and Donovan exhausts with Donovan spring and rocker arm shafts.

The engine was balanced by Fisher Engineering with other work done by Childs and Albert, neither of which will mean too much to the non-drag racing fanatic over here, but are just two of the hundreds of specialist machine shops serving the sport in the US.

A Mallory mag with Accel wires fires Champion plugs to ignite the 90+% nitro, force-fed by an Air Research blower. Cragar provided the manifold and drive, whilst the injection is Enderle.

Cragar also made the 'Hot Pipes' headers, whilst the engine runs on Valvoline and Wynn's through Fram filters.

Going back through the drivetrain, Hurst-Scheiffer triple plate slider clutch inside a Lakewood bellhousing is coupled to the basically Ford rear end through a Creek coupler. The narrowed axle uses Summers brothers shafts (current holders of the wheel-driven World Land Speed record) and Hurst-Scheiffer gears.

The whole was set up by Pepe's, another specialist in his field, and features a massive strengthening rib across the back of the case. Hurst-Airheart discs and a Simpson 'chute stop the car from its 240mph runs, whilst other safety equipment is also supplied by Simpson.

Considering the mileage the car does each year, the condition and finish is unbelievably good. Keeping a top running competition car in shape is not easy, and the car had only just returned from a demonstration tour of Japan before it arrived in the UK.

The biggest disappointment of all came on the last run at the Pod, when for the first time at that track, both finalists were rear-engined and American-built. Widely tipped to win against Skilton, who was still getting his new Donovan 'dialled-in', Nancy lost his clutch on the burn-out, preventing one all out attempt to further lower his times.

But the car will be long remembered, and hopefully seen here again one day.

In the States Econorails are generally accepted as a class for carburetted stock block dragsters, but here the ranks of Junior and Middle Dragster are well-filled with small, predominantly 4-cylinder mini-diggers, and to be honest it was not until we went into the subject in detail that we realised that there is some fine machinery to be found there.

Built to a budget without doubt, (else they would all be bristling with cubes), but full of loving care and plenty of ingenuity—nearly all seem to have home-made injection. The fact that a large number seem to be in the 1500-1600cc Ford range would seem to point to an ideal 'Formula Ford' class.

A sponsor could do a lot worse than back a championship for this type of car



ECONORAILS

LOW COST STRIP RACERS

next year, at a cost that would be small compared with the needs of larger classes, whilst he would be helping the sport from the bottom end.

Terry Riddle's 'Interphase' uses one of the ubiquitous Harold Bull frames consisting largely of small 1 in diameter tubes, with a similarly made front axle using Raleigh Wisp wheels suspended by torsion bars and friction dampers. The rear axle is a narrowed BLMC unit with 4:1 gears with Kelly Springfield tyres. Lacking vast amounts of horsepower, larger than normal street tyres are usually found to be about right for the job. Tyre choice is a problem for all small car campaigners, slicks are just not available, so it is either racing tyres or street tyres.

The engine is a 1650 Ford, with Lotus rods and steel main bearing caps bolstering the bottom end, whilst a Piper cam is used—another common item. At present running straight methanol through their neat home-made injection, the team have run a best of 12.1 at 103 for an estimated cost of £400. Next year they hope to have a blower to help them along, but any way you look at it, 12.1 for £400 is a very good Top Street time for about 20% of the cost.

Already running a blower is John Rotherham's car, which usually runs in Middle as opposed to Junior. One of the very first dragsters built in this country, it is one of the Allard Dragon's, first appearing soon after the first Drag Fests. John's is No. 202, and was owned by Doug Harler two seasons ago. Doug, one of many US servicemen to race at the 'Pod was perhaps better known for his big Dodge Charger. Returning home, he sold the car to John last year, and it has been a regular sight ever since.

The frame is a little sturdier than the others, and as you will realise if you see it, is of a novel design that makes it immediately recognisable among the other cars. The motor is a 1600 Ford with Holbay head and Cam with an ex-RAF Cabin blower from some ancient plane. This is driven at twice engine speed and inhales 25% nitro.

Unlike Riddle's car, which is direct drive, John has a four speed using 2nd, 3rd and 4th gears, whilst the back axle is from a Lotus Cortina and carries 3.7 gears. The clutch is a regular Borg & Beck competition unit which performs admirably. Next year John plans to drop a 1760 Twin Cam in the car, which should make it a pretty potent weapon. Best time to date is 11.6 at 118.

Pre-dating Rotherham's car is the granddaddy of them all, your actual 'Worden', 12 years old and still going strong. Apart from vintage specials, this must be one of the oldest cars still racing anywhere in this country of any type. Originally built by Harry Worden

and Tony Densham, the car is now owned by Mick Snelling and Geoff Masters.

The frame is another unique design with one main frame rail one side and two the other, but it seems to work. The front axle is mounted on a rubber engine mount of unknown origin, with numerous linkages controlling everything.

A 1500 Ford lump pushes it along to a best of 12.01 at 104, whilst the car has achieved some notoriety as a regular wheel-stander. The usual Piper cam masterminds the operation, whilst another set of home-made injection feeds it straight methanol. Another Ford gearbox sans first gear is used, whilst the rear end is BLMC, with 4.1 gears. Mounting Dunlop racing tyres are D-type Jag alloy wheels that probably once whistled around Le Mans for 24 hours—even more nostalgia.

But all the entries in this class are not of the classic dragster mould, and there





John Dickerson's Drag Racing

Drag racing has one advantage over other forms of motor sport in that it relies to a large extent on nitro and methanol fuel, which is not petrol-based, and therefore not likely to be scarce.

As far as the sport is concerned things look pretty good with more development of Silverstone and Blackbushe and the newly announced plans for Snetterton.

This is unlikely to come into use this year, but in an extensive facelift at the Norfolk circuit, Motor Circuit Developments who also run Brands and Mallory, propose a new high speed straight which would include drag racing facilities. With the full weight of MCD's very professional promotion behind it, this could be a great bonus to the sport in 1975.

Meanwhile, at Silverstone, the strip used this year will have armco barriers installed with a full length banking along one side to improve the view for the spectators. Last year they had to be kept well back, or sit behind the start in the circuit grandstands over fifty yards away. Other improvements in the paddock layout will help the running of drag racing meetings, of which there are two International dates this year, on June 15/16 and September 14/15. Both are two day events, which is definitely the best policy even if the qualifying days do not draw too many spectators. There is a provisional rain date in October should any of the NDRC meetings be abandoned due to bad weather.

Blackbushe, with three meetings on April 7, May 12 and August 18 (International) will also have much improved facilities to turn it into what

amounts to the second permanent strip in the country. The site is being developed into a leisure centre with various sporting amenities, which should attract newcomers.

The timing system has been one major drawback at the NDRC's events, with repeated failures slowing down every meeting. This is to be rectified.

The Pod system has been pretty reliable, but has come under fire for having too narrow a staging beam—as indeed has the NDRC set-up. In 1972 it was 8 inches, which the RAC decided was too wide for accuracy, so last year it was reduced to 4 inches. There is no question that 4 inches does give a more accurate time, but for drag racing it is just not practical, and led to dozens of red-lights. With the super-soft slicks used by the dragsters, funnies and Pro Stocks etc, by the time the car had been rolled gently into stage and torqued up against clutch or brake as the case may be, the front of the car had moved to the front of the beam on the wrinkle of the tyre sidewalls so that the merest vibration could trigger a red, and frequently did. Also while the Americans were over here, they confirmed a suspicion that the narrow beam was making a difference of some two to four tenths. Nancy could not better 6.5 with his 6.2 car, whilst Schumacher and Murphy were slower than might have been expected. Also when Dave Stone went to Sweden, which still has the wider beam, he ran 8.0 with his 8.5 second car (one of the most consistent vehicles around and a good yardstick).

Peter Billinton, the Pod's resident electronics whizz-kid and the supplier of fuel to the racers through G-Max Research, has planned a new set-up that is accurate to a ten-thousandth of a second, will record driver reaction time in each lane from 'green' to movement and also give a digital read-out of time

and speed on the top of the finish gantry. At present the cost is the major prohibiting factor in installing this but it will doubtless be brought into use in due course.

Class structures have also come under much-needed review, particularly for Street ranks.

These will now run under a weight-to-capacity formula, the exact figures of which have not yet been decided. Basically, street altered type cars will now find themselves running in the competition brackets, which is much fairer for the regular street classes. The modifieds will find themselves running against production cars with less weight so they should, in theory, balance out.

Pro Stock will run much as it was for last season with some of the more exotic modifications firmly banned. Best news of all is that in 1975 they will have to be genuine modified production cars, not American-engineered European saloons, or even such cars as V8 Vegas until they are mass produced.

How well it will all work remains to be seen but at least it is a positive step in the right direction. Swedish and other foreign cars will also have to comply with these rules, so that the bad feeling caused by the infamous Jeep last year should be a thing of the past (the Jeep will now run in Comp. Altered).

The top class will become an exclusively 'AA' class for blown nitro burners and will probably be known as Pro Comp. It will include the Stones' altered, now sporting a blower; Fred Whittle's car, rumoured to have been bought by Martin Hall, (current owner of 'Invader'); Phil Elson's blown car; the funnies of Saver, Churchill, Priddle and hopefully Haywood and Herridge, which should make a pretty thrilling eight car eliminator.

Last year's Senior Comp showed up really well, particularly towards the end of

the year, and this year it looks even better. There should be enough 'B' class cars running pump gas to make up their own eliminator, with current favourites the Page brothers, Chev Topolino facing Dick Sharpe, Freeman Rodgers, Pete Atkins, Laurence Burn in the 'Oblivion' with a new 350 Chev engine, Richard Short with a 389 altered, and your scribe in a 477 Olds-powered Popular. The 'CC' class should be also well supported, whilst moving to the dragsters, Roz Prior, Derek Benbow, Keith Dancy and Mike Treutlein, Ray Hoare, the Stones, Jeff Morris/Kevin Burrows and Rob Spence, and Martin Rowat will all field injected rails, with more close racing promised here.

The big fuelers will be much as they have been with a rebuild for 'Revolution Three' by the Barnet Motor Co. and a new engine and some updating of Clive Skilton's car which will include a Lenco two speed transmission.

The other machines from the Priddle, Hutchinson and Santa Pod camps will receive similar up-dates and there are rumoured to be at least two more in readiness for the season—one being imported specially.

The joint RAC/Castrol championship run over 8 rounds at both Santa Pod and NDRC venues worth over £2,000 is sure to attract an all-out effort from all the drivers eager to win the biggest single prize ever posted, £750 for first place, so the racing in all classes is going to be very close and hard fought.

So, with a wholly more professional approach from Clive Lanson Enterprises, the NDRC's promoters, injecting more interest into the sport, more strips and better facilities for competing and for spectators, petrol permitting, things have never looked better for British drag racing.



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